

# Didcot Town Council

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## Guide to the Town Council element of your council tax for the year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026

In 2025/2026 Didcot Town Council will receive £142.12 for each band D household. This is an increase of £8.88 per band D property for the Town Council element of your Council Tax. The percentage increase of 9% is offset by the increased number of housing and tax-payers – an increase of 2.2% - to leave the actual increase for tax payers of around 6.8%.

Didcot Town Council's part of your council tax bill is collected by South Oxfordshire District Council and this leaflet explains how the figure is arrived at and where the money goes.

Income from the hire of the Civic Hall helps to cover some of the running costs. Income from Willowbrook Leisure Centre (that the Town Council had to take back and manage in-house since December 2019) is doing well and bookings continue to rise. Utility bills across all DTC buildings largely negates any operating surplus which remains a challenge in terms of keeping the buildings open to the public and safe to use. It is a priority to ensure that all buildings are open to the public and are warm and safe to visit. Safety of our staff and visitors is important. The Town Council has had to implement additional measures to improve this during the year following an unfortunate incident.

Two major projects have dominated Council time over the past year - the new Community & Sports Pavilion at Edmonds Park and the splash park. The Pavilion is now open for hirers and regular bookings are being received. The splash pad will be opening for a full summer from April to September dependant on weather. This popular activity is free for all families. Solar panels on the Civic Hall, the outside services depot at Edmonds Park and Willowbrook Leisure Centre is beginning to lower our energy costs. The Council continue to make decisions with the climate emergency in mind and the aim to reduce our carbon footprint by 2030. This is a summary of our budget for 2025/26.

### Budget Summary for 2025/2026

Expenditure	£
Finance and General Purposes Committee	610,917
Grant Aid	60,000
Didcot Civic Hall and Willowbrook Leisure Centre	395,020
Environment & Climate Committee	608,703
Projects and PWLB repayments	342,382
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,017,022</b>
Less General Income expected	(414,250)
Less expected grant income – S106/CIL	(0)
<b>Equals: total expenditure to be collected via Council Tax (the precept)</b>	<b>1,602,772</b>

Dividing this precept figure by the tax base of 11,277.4 gives the Town Council's component of Council Tax for a Band D Property as £142.12 per year.

In more detail, the following describes how we have spent money in 2024/2025.

## The Finance and General Purposes Committee

The Town Council draws its income from relatively few sources and the Council Tax precept is by far the biggest source of revenue. The Council continually scrutinises expenditure and works to identify potential savings as well as other sources of income, particularly accessing relevant grants for some projects. Willowbrook Leisure Centre is now open for most of the week and is due to earn in excess of £100,000 this year. The Civic Hall is also on course to bring in around £130,000 income but we are working hard to increase bookings. This income is almost entirely consumed by the cost of utilities in keeping these public buildings warm and safe to visit. It is hoped to see this cost reduce as the solar panels bring important savings.

A major single cost remains the £297,556 paid annually to service the loans of a total of £4.23 million to refurbish and extend the Civic Hall; Town Council offices and the new Community & Sports Pavilion at Edmonds Park. Another major project – the splash park was covered by specific DTC reserves and CIL monies. The Council is currently looking at the running costs of this new facility which will remain free for residents to enjoy in Didcot.

The Town Council runs the Fleet Meadow Community Building as a charitable trust (CIO). Bookings have been constant with this well-loved building and improvements to the fabric of the building continue. Our popular grant aid to voluntary organisations and groups will continue to operate and has been increased to £60,000 for the new financial year. The grant application form is on our website – [www.didcot.gov.uk](http://www.didcot.gov.uk)

Since April 2024 grant aid has supported:

- Abingdon Bridge Charity
- TRAIN
- Riverside Consulting
- Didcot Home Start
- Didcot Bowls Club
- Keep Fit with Faye
- Didcot Cricket Club
- Citizens Advice
- Free Christmas Dinner Project
- Sustainable Didcot
- Didcot Dairy
- Be Free Young Carers
- Restore
- Bands at the Boundary
- Great Western Railway
- First Steps Baby Bank
- Oxford Play Association fun day
- Plus more applications being considered

## The Environment and Climate Committee

The Environment and Climate Committee oversees all outdoor services, which delivers the management and maintenance of parks and recreational open green spaces owned or leased by the Council and sports, leisure, and recreational activities. Additional sources of funding are explored wherever possible and DTC has recently been awarded a grant from SODC to improve accessibility for all residents to Ladygrove Mounds; the lakes and the Millenium Woods.

Amongst our projects for 2024/2025 the Council progressed the following:

- Construction of a Council and Community Polytunnel at the New Road allotment site
- Replaced/restored the community noticeboards in town
- New dog signs for the open green spaces/parks have been installed
- Repairs to the aerator at Ladygrove Lakes
- Robotic mower used to cut the mounds in Ladygrove Park
- New teen play area, Ninja Warrior inspired! Installed at Edmonds Park
- Inclusive picnic tables and benches installed in Ladygrove Park
- New sandpit and castle completed in Edmonds Park
- New gates installed at Broadway allotments, with a new pedestrian access gate installed at Cockcroft Allotments
- New fence installed at the entrance to Kynaston Road cemetery
- 420 tree saplings from the Earth Trust have been delivered and are establishing themselves in the Polytunnel
- New Community Planting area at the New Road allotment site is underway
- Re-instatement of the cutting of grass verges and hanging baskets in summer

## Our sites and day to day maintenance

Our large sites are at:

- Edmonds Park
- Ladygrove Park
- Smallbone Recreation Park
- Marsh Recreation Ground
- Great Western Drive Park
- Loyd Recreation Park
- Stubbings Land
- Millennium Wood
- St Anne's Court Playground
- Kynaston Road Cemetery
- Ladygrove Lakes
- Allotment sites:
  - New Road
  - Broadway
  - Wantage Road
  - Cockcroft Road
  - Mereland Road
- Didcot Civic Hall and Remembrance Garden

Including some smaller sites, the Council manages a combined land area of over 100 acres. In terms of allotments the Council administers over 420 plots in conjunction with a users' liaison group that reports regularly on problems and successes.

A dedicated team of full-time grounds staff, led by the Outdoor Services Manager, maintains land owned by Didcot Town Council.

The work of the team includes:

- Tree care and annual planting
- Allotment maintenance
- Litter clearance
- Cutting grass and hedges
- Maintaining flower beds
- Play area equipment repairs and inspection
- Sports pitch maintenance
- Sport court maintenance
- Vehicle and machinery maintenance

- Overseeing burials
- Cemetery maintenance
- Maintenance of the War Memorial and Garden

## The Property & Facilities Committee

This Committee manages the expanding property portfolio that belongs to Didcot Town Council. The properties include: Didcot Civic Hall and Council offices; Willowbrook Leisure Centre; Outside Services Depot at Edmonds Park; Loyd Pavilion and other facilities including the Civic Hall car park and the management of Fleet Meadow Community Hall (run under a separate Trust). The new Community and Sports Pavilion at Edmonds Park has been added to our portfolio since March 2024. We are also expecting the completion of a new Community Centre in north Ladygrove which will be known as Northbrook Community Centre.

Over the year the Committee has approved a range of improvements to ensure that the buildings are in good condition and safe to open to the public. Major projects include:

- Implementation of the Splash Pad at Edmonds Park along with specialist training of staff
- 2 team members achieving the National Pool Plant qualification to run splash pad
- Replacement of gas ovens in Civic Hall with electric ovens and induction hobs
- 4 year electrical inspection and repairs at Willowbrook Leisure Centre
- 5 year inspection and remedials at the Outdoor Services Depot
- First year snagging works at the new Edmonds Park Pavilion.
- Review of sanitary bins and achieving a saving at Willowbrook Leisure Centre
- On-going investigation on ways to improve waste management across all DTC properties

## Feedback

Didcot Town Council would like to hear your views and any comments you may have on the services provided or what you would like to see in the future. Comments may be emailed to [council@didcot.gov.uk](mailto:council@didcot.gov.uk), or in writing to Didcot Town Council, Town Council Offices, Britwell Road, Didcot, Oxon OX11 7HN, or hand them into the Council office on Britwell Road. In order to ensure you receive a response and so that we can verify you are a Didcot resident, please provide your name and address.

**ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**  
**7.30PM ON MONDAY 24<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2025 at DIDCOT CIVIC HALL**  
**Every Didcot resident is invited to attend. Light refreshments will be served.**  
**Please forward your questions to the Town Council by Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025 –**  
**[council@didcot.gov.uk](mailto:council@didcot.gov.uk)**