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Welcome

Now more than ever, people are turning to their local authorities for support. It is therefore vital that we continue to provide those services that are important to you. With a continuing reduction in the funding we receive from central government, we are working hard to ensure that we retain high quality, value for money services for our residents.

This booklet outlines how we plan to spend the money raised from your council tax this year. Please take a few minutes to read through this information. You may find you are eligible to claim an exemption or discount, which could reduce how much council tax you need to pay. See pages 3 - 7 for more detail.

About Your Council Tax

How is Council Tax Calculated?

Your council tax is based on two adults living in a property.

- › If only one person lives there, they are entitled to a 25% discount.
- › Certain properties could be 100% exempt even if they are occupied. See page 6 for more details.

Please remember, if you are waiting for the outcome of an application for a reduction, you must continue to pay your current bill.

If successful, you will be entitled to a refund of any overpaid council tax.

Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme

If you are unemployed or on a low wage, you may be able to get your bill reduced.

If you think that you may qualify for this reduction, please visit our website and use the online calculator www.staffordbc.gov.uk/benefits

Could You Get a Discount?

This depends on the number of adults in your house and their circumstances. If any of the adults are on the list below, they may not be counted for council tax purposes. If this takes the number of 'counted' adults below two, you are eligible for a discount.

- › Full time students, student nurses, apprentices, youth training trainees and foreign language assistants.
- › Young people for whom child benefit is payable and 18/19 year olds who have just left school or college.
- › Patients resident in hospital or being looked after in care homes.
- › Severely mentally impaired people.
- › People in hostels or night shelters.
- › Low paid care workers (usually working for charities).
- › People caring for a person with a disability who is NOT their partner or their child under the age of 18.
- › Members of religious communities such as monks or nuns.
- › People in detention (except for non-payment of council tax or a fine).
- › Spouses or dependants of students who are non-British subjects and are prevented by immigration regulations from working or claiming benefits.
- › Members of visiting forces, certain international and defence organisations and those with diplomatic privilege or immunity.

Empty and Second Homes

Council tax on empty or second homes in the Stafford Borough Council area will be payable as follows:

Type of Home	Description	Discount Period	Charge
Furnished and 2nd homes	Furnished and unoccupied		100%
Empty homes	Unfurnished and unoccupied for less than 2 years	up to 28 days 100%	100% (after the 28 day discount period)
Long-term empty homes	Unfurnished and unoccupied for more than 2 years but less than 5 years		200%
	Unfurnished and unoccupied for more than 5 years but less than 10 years		300%
	Unfurnished and unoccupied for more than 10 years		400%
Uninhabitable properties: undergoing major repair work or structural alterations	Unfurnished and unoccupied	up to 12 months 100%	100% (after the 12 month discount period)
			200% (after property empty between 2 and 5 years)
			300% (after property empty between 5 and 10 years)
			400% (after property empty more than 10 years)
Empty homes: where the liable person is living elsewhere in job-related or armed forces accommodation	Unoccupied due to liable person living in job-related or armed forces accommodation		50%

The council tax team can give you more information about how the above charges may affect you and may be able to refer you to someone who can give you advice about bringing your property back into use.

Council Tax Valuation Bands

The Valuation Office Agency, part of HM Revenue and Customs (not your local council) has put every property into one of eight valuation bands.

Your council tax bill states which band applies to your home and your home's valuation is based on an estimate of how much it was worth on 1 April 1991. Price changes since that time won't affect the valuation.

A full list of valuation bands is available on its website at www.voa.gov.uk.

Band	Range of values as at 1 April 1991	Proportion of Band D tax payable
A	Up to and including £40,000	6/9
B	£40,001 to £52,000	7/9
C	£52,001 to £68,000	8/9
D	£68,001 to £88,000	1
E	£88,001 to £120,000	11/9
F	£120,001 to £160,000	13/9
G	£160,001 to £320,000	15/9
H	More than £320,000	2



Reduction for People with Disabilities

If you, or someone who lives with you, needs a room, an extra bathroom or kitchen, or extra space in your property to meet special needs arising from a disability, your bill may be reduced. The bill may be reduced to that of a property in the band immediately below the band of your property. If your property is in Band A, a reduction (equivalent to a band) will be given. This reduction is not based on your income or savings.

Could You Be Exempt from Council Tax?

Some properties may be exempt from council tax.

Unoccupied properties which are

Owned by a charity (allowed for up to six months)

Left empty by someone who has gone to prison

Previously occupied by a person in permanent residential care

Owned by the estate of a deceased person and waiting for probate or letters of administration to be granted (continuous for up to six months after being granted)

Empty because occupation is forbidden by law

Waiting to be occupied by a minister of religion

Left empty by someone who has moved to receive personal care by reason of old age, disablement or illness

Left empty by someone who has moved to provide personal care to another person

Owned by a student and last occupied by a student

Subject to a Repossession Order

The responsibility of a bankrupt person's trustee

A site for a caravan, mobile home or mooring

Unable to be let separately because it is linked to, or in the grounds of, another property and planning conditions do not allow separate letting

Occupied properties where

All the residents are students

Used for UK armed forces accommodation, whether occupied or not

At least one liable person is a member of a visiting force

All residents are less than 18 years old

All liable residents are severely mentally impaired

At least one liable person is a foreign diplomat

It is annexed to a family home and occupied by that family's elderly or disabled relatives

Can You Appeal Against Your Council Tax Band?

There are several situations where you can appeal against the band in which your house has been placed:

- › Within six months of becoming the new tax payer for the property.
- › Within six months of the Valuation Office Agency making a change to the band.
- › If there have been specific material changes in the property value.

Any queries about appeals and bandings should be made direct to the Valuation Office Agency. See contacts on page 17.

What If You Don't Think You Should Be Paying Council Tax?

You can appeal to the council if you think you are not liable to pay council tax e.g. because you are not the resident or owner, or because your property is exempt or you are entitled to a discount.

You should not withhold payment if you are making an appeal. You should pay as normal and a refund will be made if you are successful.

Changes in Circumstances

If you have been granted a reduction you must tell the council of any change in circumstances which will affect your entitlement within 21 days. If you fail to do so you may be faced with a penalty of £70. For more details about council tax discounts see page 3, for details of Council Tax exemptions see page 6.

How We Collect and Use Information

Stafford Borough Council, as the data controller, will use the information that you provide to update your Council Tax account. We want to be able to provide appropriate, timely and effective services so it is important to us that we coordinate what we do for you properly. To do this, we will share basic information such as name and address between services within the Council. This allows us to keep our information on you as up-to-date as possible in order to improve our services to you.

Even though our systems are joined-up, we ensure that staff within the Council can only access the information they need to do their job. Please be advised, we won't sell or give your information to any third party for marketing purposes unless we have asked for your permission.

We will only share your information, when necessary, with agencies involved in the administration of your Council Tax account, or where the law requires or allows us to, for example, to prevent or detect fraud and error within the Council Tax and/or Benefit System.

For More information, please see www.staffordbc.gov.uk/PrivacyNotice or www.staffordbc.gov.uk/nfi.

About Your Council Tax

Your council tax bill comprises charges from four principal authorities in the area, Staffordshire County Council, Staffordshire Commissioner (Police and Crime), Staffordshire Commissioner (Fire and Rescue) and Stafford Borough Council.

The Borough Council is solely responsible for collection of council tax.

Average Bill for a Band D Property for 2023 / 2024

2022/23 (£)	Authority	2023/24 (£)	Increase (£) %	
165.38	Stafford Borough Council	168.52	3.14	1.90%
1401.30	Staffordshire County Council	1,471.23	69.93	4.99%
80.35	Staffordshire Commissioner (Fire and Rescue)	84.25	3.90	4.85%
248.57	Staffordshire Commissioner (Police and Crime)	260.57	12.00	4.83%
1,895.60	Total	1,984.57	88.97	4.69%

Charge for Each Property Band

Property Band	COUNCIL TAX				Total (£)
	Borough (£)	County (£)	Fire (£)	Police (£)	
A	112.35	980.82	56.17	173.71	1,323.05
B	131.07	1,144.29	65.53	202.67	1,543.56
C	149.80	1,307.76	74.89	231.62	1,764.07
D	168.52	1,471.23	84.25	260.57	1,984.57
E	205.97	1,798.17	102.97	318.47	2,425.58
F	243.42	2,125.11	121.69	376.38	2,866.60
G	280.87	2,452.05	140.42	434.28	3,307.62
H	337.04	2,942.46	168.50	521.14	3,969.14

In addition a further charge is included for the spending of parish councils where appropriate (see page 11).

How the Borough Council Charge of £168.52 is derived

The amount of money required by the Council for 2023/24 to carry out its functions and provide services (its Budget Requirement) is £12.696 million (£12.257 million in 2022/23).

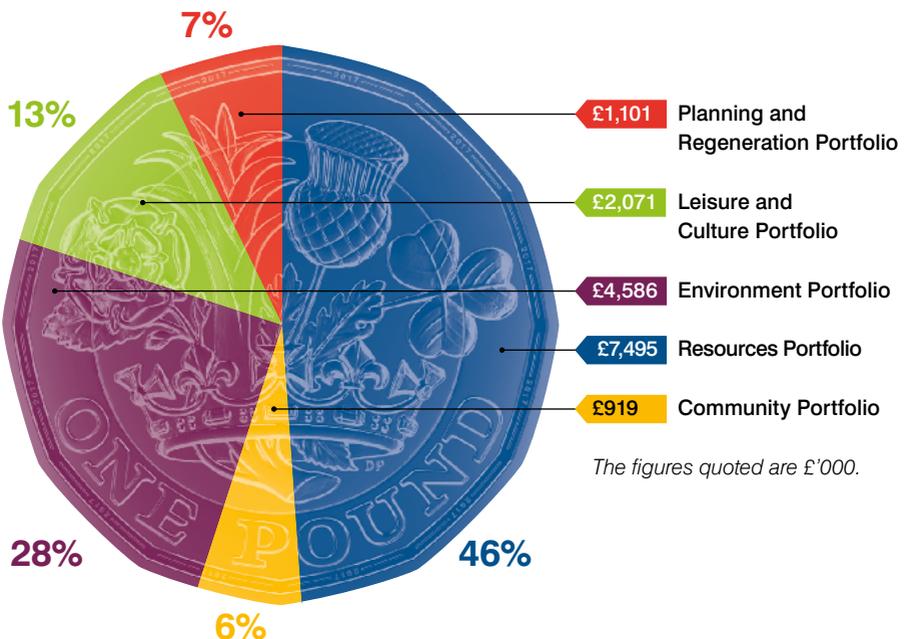
A proportion of this is met by Business Rates Retention with the balance being met from council taxpayers.

The table below provides an analysis of the funding of the budget requirement and illustrates how the charge of £168.52 is calculated.

2022 / 2023			2023 / 2024	
£000's	Band D Equivalent £		£000's	Band D Equivalent £
12,257	252.77	Budget Requirement	12,696	259.83
4,238	87.39	Less Business Rates Retention	4,462	91.31
8,019	165.38	Council Tax Requirement	8,234	168.52

Where the Money Goes - Spending on the Borough Council's Services

(Net spending before technical adjustments)



Why the Increased Spend?

The Council's budget requirement for 2023/24 of £12.696 million is £439,000 more than in 2022/23. The following table identifies the major reasons for this:

	£'000
Inflation and cost increases	1,641
Changes in income	(364)
Energy costs	400
Savings	(894)
Covid	(379)
Other changes	35
Increase in budget requirement	439

Other Information

Staffing

Budgeted staffing for 2023/24 is 236.7 compared to 240.5 staff in 2022/23 (part time staff are included as full time equivalents).

Capital Expenditure

In 2023/24 the Borough Council will be spending approximately £19.888 million on capital investment. Areas of investment include Future High Streets spend to redevelop the Town Centre (£13.801 million) and continuation of Stone leisure provision (£1.826 million). Resources will continue to be made available for disabled facilities grants to householders.

Borrowing

The Borough Council has no outstanding debt.



What is Your Parish Spending?

2022/2023 (£)	Parish	2023/2024 (£)	Band D Equivalent (£)
3,360.88	Adbaston	3,392.05	14.50
68,968.00	Barlaston	72,416.00	65.93
27,030.00	Berkswich	28,975.75	34.90
12,100.00	Bradley	13,900.00	60.74
14,500.00	Brocton	14,550.00	25.63
6,832.98	Chebsey	6,957.46	26.15
5,991.39	Church Eaton	6,656.69	21.95
171,630.00	Colwich	182,269.00	92.39
17,850.00	Creswell	20,780.00	26.77
23,760.00	Doxey	27,760.00	22.19
82,600.00	Eccleshall	82,950.00	36.51
250.00	Ellenhall	300.00	4.67
1,050.93	Forton	1,229.65	8.21
1,500.00	Fradswell	1,500.00	17.23
100,000.00	Fulford	110,000.00	46.11
3,943.00	Gayton	4,083.75	49.37
103,522.00	Gnosall	105,810.00	50.65
22,029.84	Haughton	24,000.00	50.08
4,990.00	High Offley	4,990.00	12.18
11,991.00	Hilderstone	12,455.00	43.78
35,045.60	Hixon	38,462.52	47.95
39,110.00	Hopton and Coton	28,500.00	31.47
6,738.00	Hyde Lea	7,074.00	37.34
2,675.00	Ingestre	2,975.00	34.88
Nil	Marston	Nil	Nil
5,000.00	Milwich	5,000.00	24.67
3,975.00	Norbury	3,975.00	18.93
4,520.00	Ranton	4,789.00	25.24
7,975.00	Salt and Enson	7,975.00	40.69
9,878.00	Sandon and Burston	10,345.00	59.70
19,693.27	Seighford	19,693.27	24.38
11,000.00	Standon	11,000.00	31.13
377,262.29	Stone Town	390,715.00	58.15
15,555.00	Stone Rural	15,555.00	20.32
14,854.37	Stowe by Chartley	19,392.00	95.50
30,930.00	Swynnerton	34,000.00	24.48
2,675.00	Tixall	2,975.00	22.24
34,900.00	Weston	34,918.48	71.23
1,349.50	Whitgreave	1,484.45	16.08
26,450.00	Yarnfield and Cold Meece	27,243.00	32.10
1,333,486.05	TOTAL	1,391,047.07	

Stone Town Council

Stone Town Council provides services for the people and town of Stone.

These services include the provision of community facilities, such as the Frank Jordan and Stone Station community centres, allotment sites at Newcastle Road and Mount Road and the Crown Meadow Nature Reserve and amphitheatre.

The 2023-24 budget, despite having to deal with excessive levels of inflation, especially in respect of energy costs, includes additional funding to provide further improvements at Crown Meadow and support for the King's Coronation event. This is in addition to the development and operation of a new Heritage Centre within the exciting redevelopment at Crown Wharf.

Investing in and working to promote a vibrant town and encourage visitors is a key Town Council priority. In order to support this, the Council organises regular events such as the Town Market and monthly Craft Market together with town centre events such as the Music Festival, Stone by the Sea, the Classic Car event and the St Georges Day celebration. Christmas lights are provided in the High Street and at Walton, with the Council's annual switch-on event being one of highlights of the town year. The High Street environment is enhanced by the Council's provision of hanging baskets and bunting along the High Street, and newly refurbished noticeboards and fingerposts throughout the town.

The Council provides bus shelters, benches and dog bins throughout the area and takes responsibility for the upkeep of many local amenities and planted areas. It also provides grants and other support to help charitable and community organisations such as the Stone Community Hub, supports various festivals, and the Council staff supply regular support and advice to local residents.

By considering the impact of every planning application, the Council seeks to develop and conserve the town, and the approval of its Neighbourhood Plan in May 2021 will help the Council to shape and protect the future of Stone for years to come.

At its monthly meetings the Council welcomes questions from the public and sets aside time to listen and respond. Assistance with public questions will gladly be given by the Council's staff.



Stone Town Council

	Revenue Budget 2022/23 (£)	Revenue Budget 2023/24 (£)
Community & Heritage Centres	225,600	46,870
Town Market	-10,400	-6,630
Town Maintenance	8,700	6,470
Grounds Maintenance	20,140	24,610
Crown Meadow Improvements	8,540	0
Allotments	-1,870	230
Enviromental Initiatives	0	0
Christmas Lights	26,650	21,660
Tourism & Town Promotion	28,250	26,750
Grants	8,300	4,000
Salaries & Employment Costs	183,000	198,700
Insurances	7,040	7,000
Administration & Civic Costs	45,850	51,490
Town Centre Elections	0	30,000
Contingency	0	50,380
Grants Received	-11,500	-11,500
Contributons from Reserves	-161,038	-59,315
Precept (incl. Local Council Tax Support Grant)	377,262	390,715



Environment Agency

The Council Tax (Demand Notices) (England) Regulations 2011.

The Environment Agency is a levying body for its Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Functions under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and the Environment Agency (Levies) (England and Wales) Regulations 2011.

The Environment Agency has powers in respect of flood and coastal erosion risk management for 2369 kilometres of main river and along tidal and sea defences in the area of the Trent Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. Money is spent on the construction of new flood defence schemes, the maintenance of the river system and existing flood defences together with the operation of a flood warning system and management of the risk of coastal erosion. The financial details are:

Trent Regional Flood and Coastal Committee		
	2022/2023 000's	2023/2024 000's
Gross Expenditure	75,561	78,822
Levies Raised	2,224	2,268
Total Council Tax Base	1,874	1,904

The majority of funding for flood defence comes directly from the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). However, under the new Partnership Funding rule not all schemes will attract full central funding. To provide local funding for local priorities and contributions for partnership funding the Regional Flood and Coastal Committees recommend through the Environment Agency a local levy.

A change in the gross budgeted expenditure between years reflects the programme of works for both capital and revenue needed by the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee to which you contribute. The total Local Levy raised by this committee has increased by 2.0%

The total Local Levy raised has increased from £2,223,637 in 2022/2023 to £2,268,110 for 2023/2024.

The Environment Agency has powers in respect of flood and coastal erosion risk management for 2486 kilometres of main river and along tidal defences in the area of the Severn and Wye Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. Money is spent on the construction of new flood defence schemes, the maintenance of the river system and existing flood defences together with the operation of a flood warning system and management of the risk of coastal erosion. The financial details are:

Severn and Wye Regional Flood and Coastal Committee			
	2022/2023	2023/2024	
	000's	000's	
Gross Expenditure	28,407	33,606	
Levies Raised	1,221	1,245	
Total Council Tax Base	1,003	1,017	

The majority of funding for flood defence comes directly from the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). However, under the new Partnership Funding rule not all schemes will attract full central funding. To provide local funding for local priorities and contributions for partnership funding the Regional Flood and Coastal Committees recommend through the Environment Agency a local levy.

A change in the gross budgeted expenditure between years reflects the programme of works for both capital and revenue needed by the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee to which you contribute. The total Local Levy raised by this committee has increased by 2.0%.

The total Local Levy raised has increased from £1,221,003 in 2022/2023 to £1,245,423 for 2023/2024.



Statement Concerning Adult Social Care Funding

The Secretary of State made an offer to adult social care authorities ('Adult social care authorities' are local authorities which have functions under Part 1 of the Care Act 2014, namely county councils in England, district councils for an area in England for which there is no county council, London borough councils, the Common Council of the City of London and the Council of the Isles of Scilly.)

The offer was the option of an adult social care authority being able to charge an additional 'precept' on its council tax without holding a referendum, to assist the authority in meeting its expenditure on adult social care from the financial year 2016-17. It was originally made in respect of the financial years up to and including 2019-20. If the Secretary of State chooses to renew this offer in respect of a particular financial year, this is subject to the approval of the House of Commons.



Contact Information

This information can be produced on request in other formats and other languages. Call 01785 619 000

Stafford Borough Council

www.staffordbc.gov.uk

Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford, Staffordshire ST16 3AQ	
24 hour telephone payment line	0161 621 4111 or 01785 619 271
To pay online	www.staffordbc.gov.uk
Business rates helpline	01785 619 282
Business rates information	www.staffordbc.gov.uk/businessrates
Council tax helpline	01785 619 279
Council tax information	www.staffordbc.gov.uk/counciltax
Benefit helpline	01785 619 478
Benefit overpayment e-mail	debtrecovery@staffordbc.gov.uk
Main switchboard	01785 619 000
Main fax	01785 619 119

Valuation Office Agency

www.gov.uk/voa/contact

Listing officer, Valuation Office Agency	03000 501 501
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Fire

www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk

Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue, Pirehill, Stone, Staffordshire ST15 0BS	
Fire Headquarters	08451 221 155
Emergency number	dial 999

Police

www.staffordshire.police.uk

Staffordshire Police Headquarters, Weston Road, Stafford, ST18 0YY	
Police non emergency number	101
Emergency number	dial 999

Staffordshire County Council

www.staffordshire.gov.uk

1 Staffordshire Place, Stafford, Staffordshire, ST16 2DH	
Main reception	0300 111 8000

CONTACT

01785 619 000

www.staffordbc.gov.uk/counciltax

www.staffordbc.gov.uk/businessrates

STAFFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford ST16 3AQ

www.staffordbc.gov.uk

If you need this information in
large print, Braille, other language
or in **audio format** please contact:

info@staffordbc.gov.uk

01785 619 000