



JANUARY 2023

WETHERBY TOWN COUNCIL

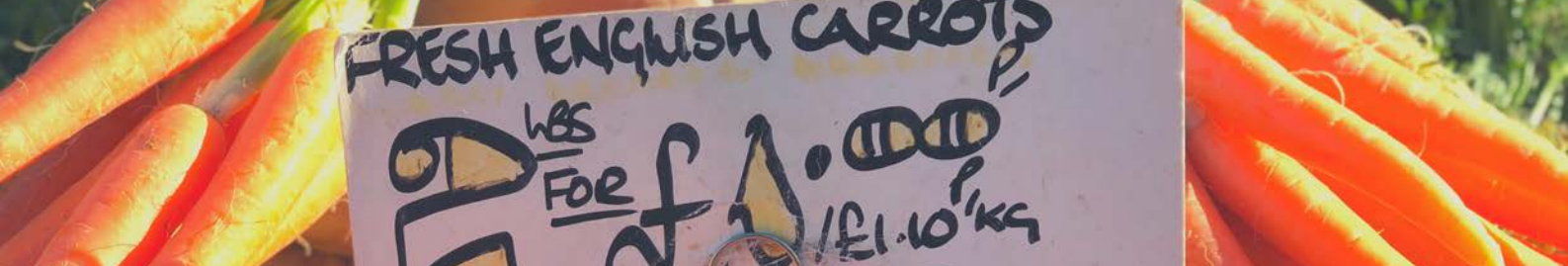
BUDGET BULLETIN

2023/24 BUDGET

The Council's main source of income is the precept, which is money collected by Leeds City Council through the council tax. Over the past few years Wetherby Town Council has sought to keep the precept as low and stable as possible, but it is now at a point where it needs to increase to continue providing and expanding its services in line with the wishes of, and feedback from, residents.



The Council has decided that it needs to increase the precept from £298,960 in the current financial year to £540,000 in 2023/24. You will see this increase when you get your council tax bill in a couple of months time. It works out at **91p/week more** for an average house but, as it's so significant when viewed in percentage terms, we wanted to write to you now to explain what we're doing and why.



WHO ARE WE AND WHAT DO WE DO?

Wetherby Town Council, in its current form, was created as part of the Local Government Act 1972 and covers the main town centre and an area up to the boundary with North Yorkshire, east towards the Young Offenders Institute and Racecourse, then southwards to Collingham. The parish is divided up into three wards, each represented by 5 Councillors. We are one of the largest parish councils in the Leeds city area, but are completely separate from Leeds City Council.

16,640
Electors

3
Wards

15
Councillors

The Councillors are all volunteers and are elected every 4 years, though the Council employs staff to run the services and facilities for which it is responsible. The Council is bound by laws and regulations which set out the way in which it must operate. The whole Council meets once a month, usually at 7pm on the second Tuesday of the month, in Wetherby Town Hall. Members of the public are always welcome to come and hear the matters being considered. We also have a set of committees who meet regularly to consider our activities in more detail prior to reporting to the whole Council.

Wetherby Town Council is fortunate to have a large property portfolio; including three playgrounds, two bike parks, the town-centre gardens, recreation grounds and several small buildings including the Bath House and Old Men's Parliament. We also own and operate the Hallfield Lane cemetery and weekly Thursday market, organise the annual community bonfire and fireworks display, Remembrance Parade and other special events such as the recent Jubilee party. The Council is the sole trustee of Wetherby Town Hall charity which has its own management committee.

We work with, and support, lots of other community organisations including Wetherby in Bloom, Wetherby Christmas lights team, Wetherby Bandstand Trust and Wetherby Arts Festival.

We signpost people to other organisations to get help with the services for which we're not responsible:



LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

T: 0113 222 4444

www.leeds.gov.uk/contact-us

Parking, highways, housing, bin collections and more.



REGISTRAR SERVICE

T: 0113 222 4408

www.leeds.gov.uk/births-deaths-and-marriages



BUSES

MetroLine: 0113 245 7676

www.wymetro.com/



OUR FINANCES

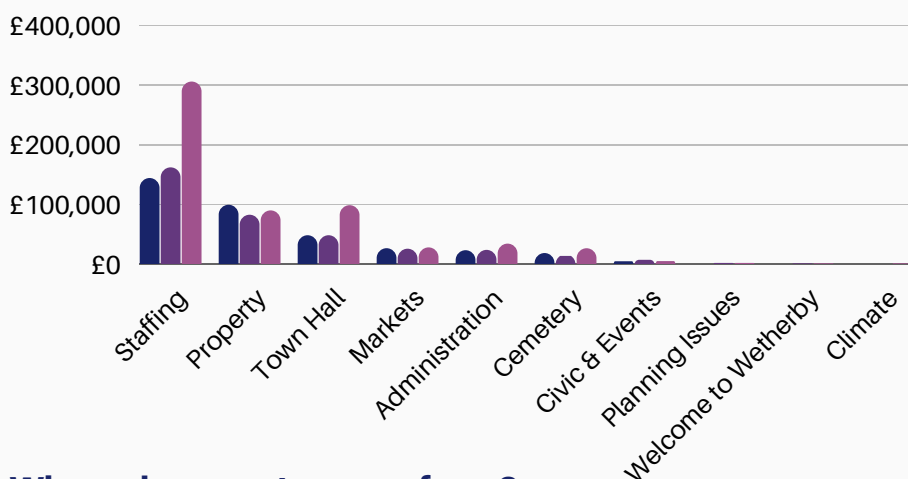
We publish detailed financial information on our website:

www.wetherby.co.uk

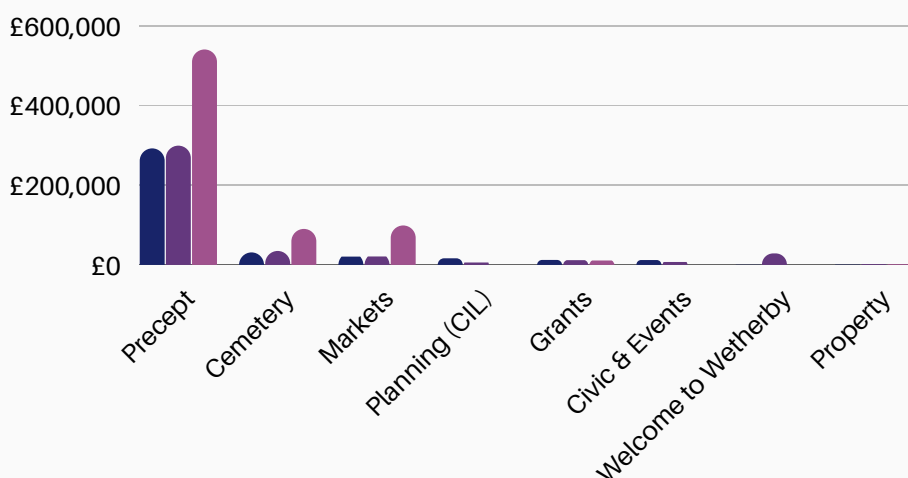
Lists of all payments made can be found in the minutes of each full council meeting. Our budgets, annual accounts and audit reports can all be found in the 'accounts' section of our website, under the 'council' header.

● 2021/22 (last year). ● 2022/23 (current budget). ● 2023/24 (next year).

What do we spend money on?



Where do we get money from?



The Town Council understands that this is a significant increase to the precept during the wider cost of living crisis. This is not a decision that has been taken lightly but only after careful consideration and detailed planning.

The Town Council still thinks that it represents good value for money when considering the services provided to Wetherby and in comparison to other councils.



Cost of Wetherby Town Council to an average 'band D' property.



BENCHMARKING

During the budget setting process we compared ourselves to other parish councils locally, regionally and nationally. The data we've looked at relates to 2022/23, before they also had to consider the impact of record inflation levels.

£122.60
Thorne
(S. Yorks)

£134.91
Ivybridge
(Devon)

£91.03
Otley

£106.43
Selby

£49.64
Thorp
Arch

£59.18
Wetherby
22/23

As a result of this precept increase, an 'average' Band D property in Wetherby will pay £106.41 from April.

“Wetherby will be a fair, inclusive and high quality sustainable place to live and work and will strive to maintain and enhance its character as a genuine market town.”

Wetherby Neighbourhood Plan - Vision
February 2020



LOOKING AFTER AND PLANNING FOR OUR FUTURE

We are a forward-looking Council with an appetite to provide more services, amenities and community events. Having acknowledged that our former staff structure was no longer fit for purpose we commissioned an independent, local council specialist to carry out a staffing review. The results are available on our website.

They recommended that we make major changes so that we have the resources to provide an ambitious programme of services which meets the Neighbourhood Plan vision and the expectations of the community.

As the first stage of implementing that review we have already appointed a facilities manager. There is lots of work to do on our properties and opportunities for improvements. As the guardian of several of the town's most iconic buildings, having a professional facilities manager means that we can put in place a proper planned preventative maintenance plan for the future.

The Council has agreed a list of priorities for projects at its sites, some required for the safety of the public.

- Repairs to the wall at Jubilee Gardens.
- Taking over the Sandringham Park playground and providing new equipment.
- Renovating the railings at the Garden of Rest.
- Further tree planting initiatives.
- Moving the Scaur Bank playground.



£50,000

Town Hall
Repair Fund

£65,690

Grounds
Maintenance

£15,000

Cemetery
Chapel

Key property budget items.

The Wetherby Neighbourhood Plan was adopted early in 2020, after 87% of voters supported it at referendum. The Town Council is working to implement the varied plans in it and we've been trying to do more with less, but we cannot continue to try to make our old model work. We know that we're not keeping up with people's expectations in areas such as the Thursday market and communications. **The time has come for us to be bold and invest in the town's ambitions.**

With an increased budget we will continue to work for the benefit of the town, providing the service that's being asked of us. This bulletin marks the first step in communicating how and what we're going to do.



**PLEASE HELP OUR EFFORTS TO TACKLE THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY
BY RECYCLING THIS BULLETIN**