



EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL

PRECEPT 2021-22

Earley Town Council sits in the tier of local government closest to its residents and Town Council officers and councillors work hard to deliver high quality services to the people of Earley.

The Council's finances have faced significant challenges as a result of the pandemic, with substantial amounts of income lost as a result of the closure of community centre halls and sports bookings being cancelled. However, Earley Town Council has responded proactively by reviewing its expenditure and temporarily redeploying staff. This has enabled the Council to keep any increase to its precept (the element of residents' Council Tax bills which funds services provided by Earley Town Council) to an absolute minimum whilst maintaining the delivery of its services.

In 2021-22 the annual precept for a Band D household will be £82.60, an increase on 2020-21 of 1.5p per week per household.

Earley Town Council Services

Town Council Offices & Help Shop

The **Help Shop** based at the Town Council Offices allows local residents to access Town Council services such as fishing permits and dog waste bags, as well as providing access to many of the services offered by Wokingham Borough Council but in a location convenient to the residents of Earley. These services include applications for travel passes, payment of Council Tax and purchase of refuse and garden bags.

The Help Shop has continued to offer a vital service, closing only when mandated to by government restrictions, however, the Town Council Offices have remained open throughout the pandemic. Our Officers have continued to deal with enquiries received by phone or email and have provided information, advice or signposting to relevant resources on the issues affecting residents during these challenging times. Our friendly administration team have helped over 6,500 customers in the last ten months.

We hope to be able to reopen our Help Shop doors and welcome back visitors very soon.

Community Centres

The Town Council is responsible for four community centres in Earley; **Radstock Lane**, **Maiden Place**, **Centrepoint** and **Silverdale**

The lockdown restrictions have meant severe restrictions on hall use and an average loss of income of 70% per hall.

However, we have used this time positively, taking the opportunity to give the centres a fresh coat of paint and we hope to be able to welcome back our hirers soon.

The Town Council is looking forward to reopening the popular bike workshop and youth club at **Silverdale** this year, and have exciting plans for expanding on our current youth services provision.

Parks & Public Open Spaces

The pandemic has seen a huge increase in visitors to our parks and public open spaces over the past twelve months and our in-house team of grounds staff and Park Rangers have worked tirelessly to maintain these sites to their usual high standards.

This spring will see planned pitch renovation works at **Sol Joel Park** to rejuvenate the site ready for the recommencement of outdoor sports and the return of cricket and football teams to Sol Joel.

The pandemic meant the Town Council's plans to upgrade the play equipment at **Meadow Park** were put on hold, however this project remains in the pipeline and we hope to be able to complete the upgrade works this year.

Visitors to the **Maiden Erleigh Nature Reserve** have increased five-fold this year. Our Park Rangers, supported by our dedicated volunteers, have continued to carry out vital conservation work to preserve and enhance the flora and fauna. We hope the year ahead will see the return of some of our much loved activities such as the bat walks and ecology talks.

Cemetery and Allotments

The Town Council operates **Mays Lane Cemetery**, offering provision for burial and interment of ashes as well as a special area for child burials, an area specifically for Muslim burials and a Garden of Remembrance.

The extension project to provide additional cemetery space was delayed by impacts of the pandemic on the Town Council's staffing resources but it is planned that work on this will begin during 2021.

The Council's **Culver Lane Allotment Site** has remained open throughout 2020 and offers a range of plot sizes including smaller plots which offer either the perfect introduction to having an allotment or a downsizing option for plot holders wishing to scale down.

Environment

Earley Town Council has pledged to make a Declaration of Climate Emergency and is drawing up an Action Plan which will be used by the Council to increase climate awareness and improve practices throughout the Council's operations.

Representation

Earley Town Council meets regularly throughout the year, either as Full Council or in its particular Committees. Legislation means meetings are currently being held over Zoom but we hope to be able to return to face-to-face meetings as soon as it is safe to do so. Details of these meetings are displayed on our website at www.earley-tc.gov.uk or on the noticeboards around Earley. Residents are welcome to attend. Meeting links are published on all agendas and can be obtained from the Council Offices.

Local Community

Each year Earley Town Council awards local charities and organisations a number of **grants** to assist them in their work with Earley residents. Town Councillors also sit on the boards of various local organisations and report back to Council on the groups' activities and issues they may be facing.

The Town Council has worked with a small group of enthusiastic residents to develop a **Local Walks Project**, offering free access to routes and information on 15 walks in or around Earley. Maps can be downloaded from the Town Council's website.

Earley Town Council has revised the **Town Plan**, setting out priorities and plans for the future. Regular reviews are planned and residents' comments will be welcome as part of that review.

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2020/21

Income	Expenditure	Net Expenditure
242,343	161,743	80,600
330,210	112,640	217,570
0	23,106	(23,106)
16,080	966,805	(950,725)
588,633	1,264,294	(675,661)

Community Facilities
Parks & Play Areas
Highways & Street Furniture
Help Shop, Grants & Admin
Total Expenditure/Revenue

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2021/22

Income	Expenditure	Net Expenditure
150,040	99,760	50,280
31,000	70,130	(39,130)
0	10,950	(10,950)
15,050	918,387	(903,337)
196,090	1,099,227	(903,137)

Contact Earley Town Council

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