



Town Messenger

Working for the People of Saltash



April 2019 Publications:

What Do We Get For Our Money

The ever-increasing number of services run directly by **Saltash Town Council** at local level gives **Saltash** residents the added opportunity to input into how their town is run. Most notable of the services recently acquired by the town is the Library, with its Information Centre, Registration Office and added space offering exciting opportunities for future development.

Elsewhere the town has acquired the four public toilets, some or all of which might have been otherwise closed, and which are being maintained by the town in the face of unfortunate vandalism issues.

Saltash can now safeguard and maintain its local environment with the acquisition of the Waterfront and Waterside including the pontoon and maintenance of the grass cutting thereabouts as well as weeding throughout the town. The Maurice Huggins Room will shortly be refurbished and available for community use. There are areas throughout the town that the Town Council delivers maintenance and health and safety checks, such as, Pillmere, Elwell Woods, Cornish Cross and a play area at Honeysuckle Close. Throughout the town residents can enjoy the hanging baskets, flower beds and bunting maintained by our town Wardens. These Wardens, while ensuring that the Waterside remains a credit to the town, are also active throughout **Saltash**.

The cemetery and churchyard are also now a local responsibility. The old closed churchyard at St. Stephens is maintained by the Town Council, though Cornwall Council contributes to the cost. The cemetery alongside is also maintained by the town, while across the road Churchtown cemetery in current use is fully owned, operated and maintained by the Town Council. As is the Memorial Peace Garden in the heart of the town.

The Town Council also runs the allotments and Longstone Depot. This is a useful community resource as the well-equipped workshop is used by council staff to carry out much work that would otherwise be contracted out at the town's expense.



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Meanwhile the Town Council continues to actively support the local community, notably and recently responding to the community desire to own and refurbish the derelict station building. It also supports local youth, for example with a recent £40,000 grant for Livewire, The Core and Junkyard Skate Park and supporting other community organisations with grants and assistance.

Why Did We Take On The Library?

Saltash Town Council was concerned at the very present risk that the town could lose its Library, Registration Office and Cornwall Council Information Centre if the town did not take on responsibility for it. Other towns in Cornwall had lost theirs and **Saltash** Councillors determined that they would keep the much-loved community asset open.

They were eager to ensure that it remained a thriving community hub for different age groups and interests ranging from David and his singing toddlers, to those of all ages who enjoy having a safe warm place to spend time and sometimes to offset loneliness with books, computers and downloads. At the Library residents may pay their council tax, seek advice or register a Cornish birth or death. All of this might have been lost to the town.

The library Sub Committee of the Town Council had projected their financial needs for the future and began to put money aside for further building work and running costs that may be needed.

There are several projects under current consideration to support the future running costs of the library and a new Senior Library and Information Assistant is starting shortly and will be encouraged to make appropriate changes and offer ideas.

The people of **Saltash** value their library, the Town Council believes, and they would not wish to be looked upon as a Council that refused to keep it open.

Looked at in context that Band D costs for **Saltash** residents at £1954 are less than those of other large Cornish towns including Truro £1989, Bodmin £2064 and Launceston £1961. They are similar to those of Callington £1940, Newquay £1954, Penzance £1940 and Wadebridge also £1940.

Saltash Town Council can assure residents that their money is being spent both wisely and prudently and that the Council are committed to providing first class services for the town that represent value for money.



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Why Has Our Town Council Tax Increased?

Saltash Town Council has agreed that the publicised increase of the overall council tax bill would not give a true representation of the facts. Postings on social media suggest that there is a misunderstanding that the overall council tax bill has risen by 56% but that is certainly not the case.

It is a fact that the 56% increase applies only to a tiny percentage (7.62%) of the previous year's council tax bill, whereas the overall council tax increase for a typical Band D property for the year 2019/20 is in single figures taken across all four charging authorities, Cornwall Council, Adult Social Care, Police and **Saltash Town Council**.

Budget meetings have been held in recent months both at county and local level, to determine the increase that is necessary to maintain the services that residents would expect, whether that be rubbish collection, social care, or services such as the Library. A programme of returning control of your services to local Towns and Parish's Councils is taking place across Cornwall whereby services that were previously provided by Cornwall Council have been transferred to Town Councils including **Saltash**. This is ongoing and will be for the foreseeable future. This means that the revenue needed to pay for these services are now collected at local level rather than at county level.

Overall the council tax bill for **Saltash** residents has increased by the equivalent of approximately £3.07 per week for a typical Band D property of which £1.48 goes to **Saltash Town Council** to pay for the services such as the Library, public toilets, maintain the Waterside and Waterfront, additional grass cutting and more. The other £1.59 is split between Cornwall Council, Police and Crime, and Adult Social Care. If the services mentioned were not being returned from Cornwall Council to Town Councils it is a fact that Cornwall would have to raise the additional revenue themselves, with the obvious impact on their budget. Alternatively, services such as the Library might have faced closure or curtailment.

Equally important, if not more so, is the fact that in 2018/19 **Saltash Town Council** received just 7.68% of the overall council tax, whereas for 2019/20 it is to receive 11% of the total bill. This is all money that will be spent locally providing better quality local services for local residents.