

Ledbury Town Council

Your Money, Your Choice - Have your say!

Parish Meeting

Community Hall 14 November 2018

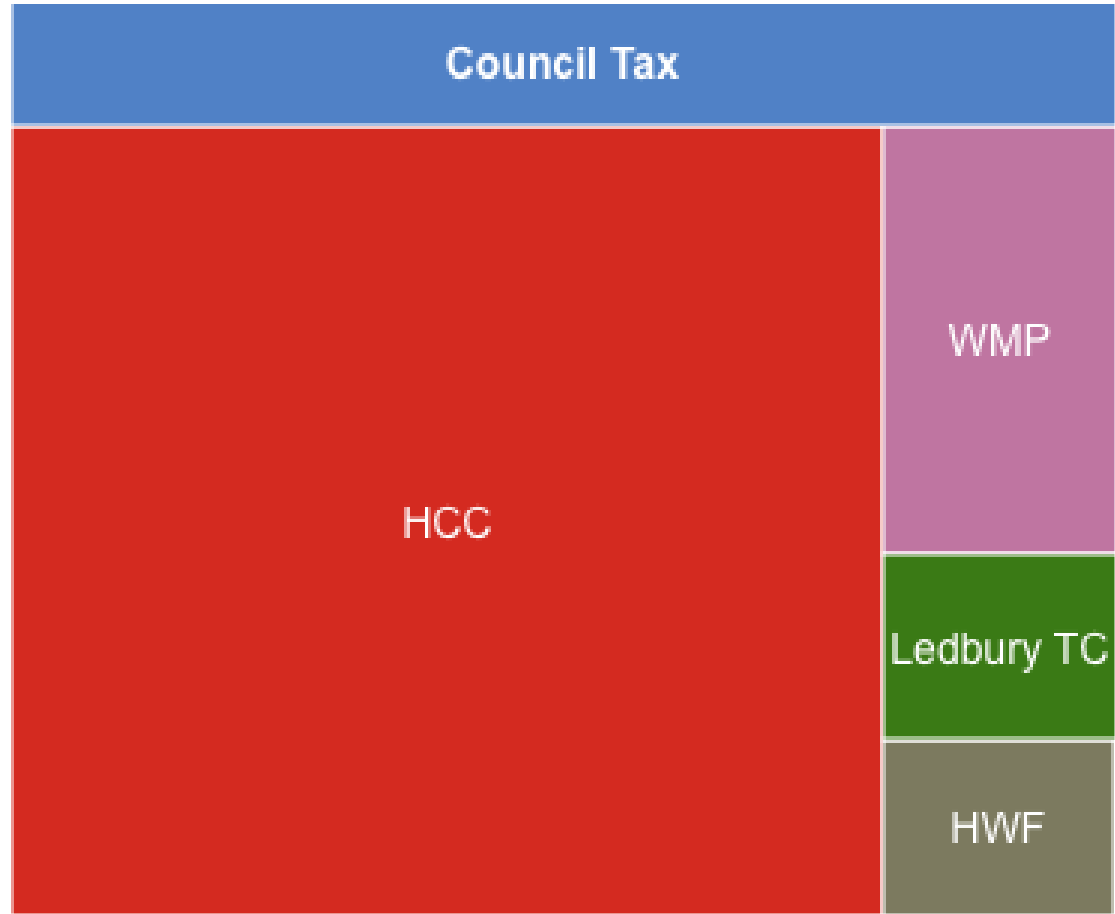


What tonight will cover

- How your council tax is spent
- How much council tax comes to the Town Council
- How the Town Council spends your money
- What choices you can help to decide



Who gets you Council Tax money?



For ten months of every year you make council tax payments to Herefordshire Council.

These payments actually collect money for four different service providers:

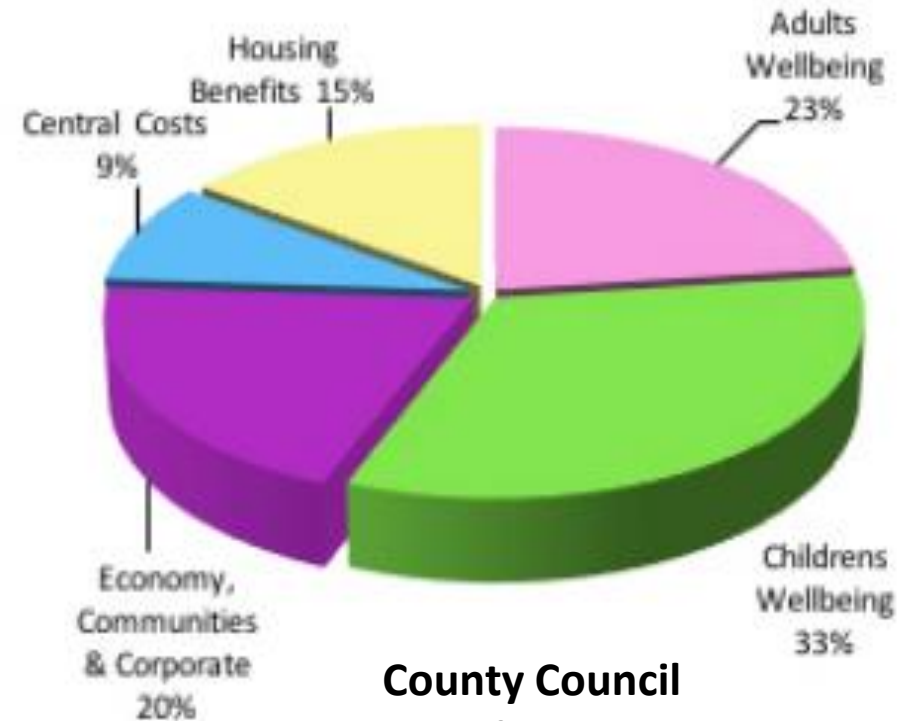
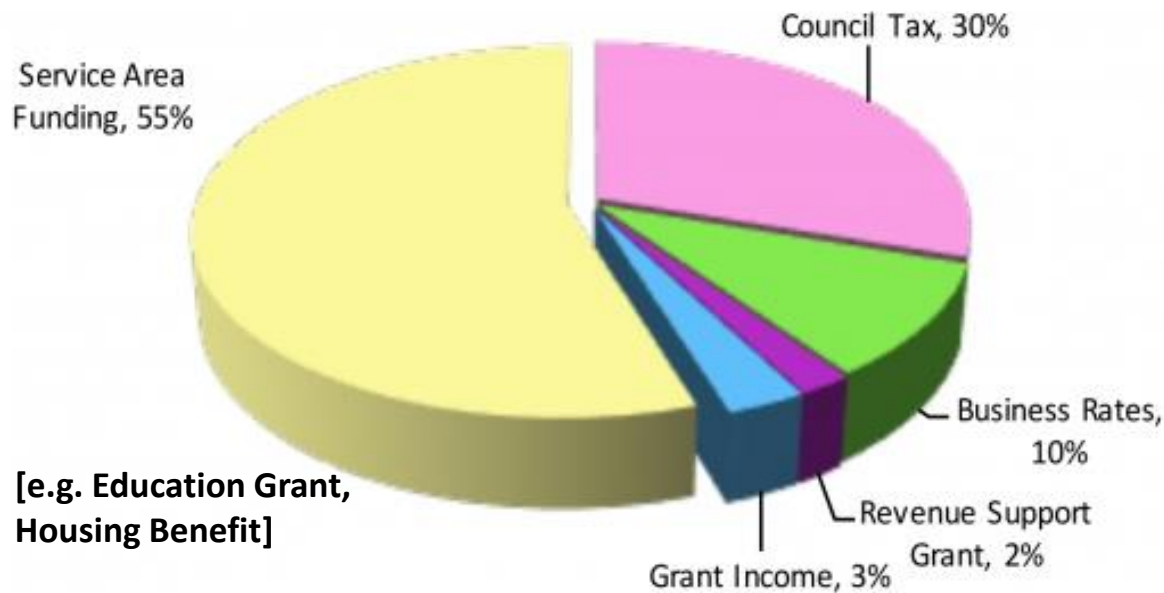
- Herefordshire Council (HCC),
- West Midlands Police (WMP),
- Hereford & Worcester Fire Service (HWF) &
- Ledbury Town Council (LTC).



How your council tax is spent

In 2018/19 the gross budget for Herefordshire Council is £325m

**County Council
Income Sources**



**County Council
Spending Areas**



How Ledbury Town Council spends your money

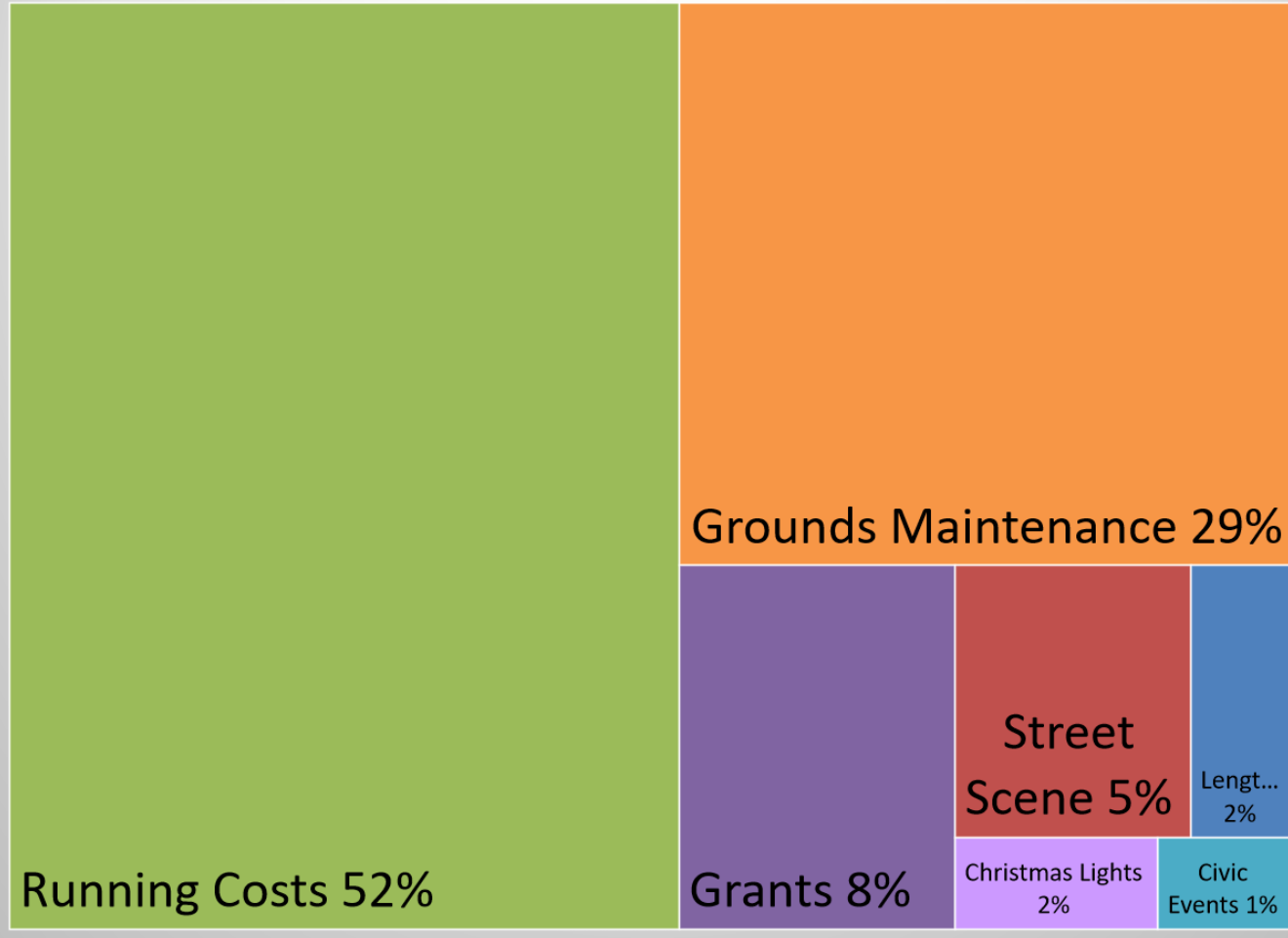
Ledbury Town Council	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	% of Total Expenditure	Increase over 2017-18 £	% increase over 2017-18
Amenity and recreation areas	46,728	54,367	13%	7,639	16%
Burial grounds	49,248	69,165	16%	19,917	40%
Recreation and environment	18,428	18,573	4%	145	1%
Town and tourism	26,939	25,413	6%	- 1,526	-6%
Administration	177,109	202,641	48%	25,532	14%
Listed buildings	33,526	26,907	6%	- 6,619	-20%
Grants and charities	29,150	30,750	7%	1,600	5%
Town promotion/charter market	-9,000	4,000	1%	13,000	-144%
Jobs fair/business forum	175	0			
Traffic management	2,000	0			
Economic dev't & planning	0	-7,825			
Total expenditure	374,303	423,991			
Estimated working balance	-44,420	-48,220			
Net requirement	329,883	375,771			
Precept	329,883	375,771			
Band D equivalent properties	3,394	3,411			
Council Tax charge	£97.20	£110.16			

In 2018-19 a family in an average (Band D rated) property pays Ledbury Town Council ~£110 – i.e. £11 a month for 10 months - towards the running of the Town Council



How the town council uses your money

Council Spending 2018-19 - Total ~£424,000



Most councils have to spend a significant proportion of their income running themselves. Presently more than half the parish precept is spent on the council's own running costs.

Comparing ourselves with other larger councils in the county: Hereford City has running costs of 31%; Leominster 43%; Ross 27%; Bromyard 43%. We are determined to bring our own running costs into line with those of other similar councils.

Most of the rest of the precept is spent on the town's graveyards and green spaces and in providing community grants.



Issues

- Over the last 3 years Government cuts have meant Herefordshire Council has lost more than £65m in income
- Within two years, Herefordshire Council estimate that all remaining government grants will drop to zero. So there will be even less funding available for the local services most of us notice, use and value.
- Ledbury Town Council has spent £220,000 on legal costs. This expense was not included in our planned spending. Currently it represents a 'hole' in our finances and needs to be recovered.



Options for the future

- There are options for the Town Council to start delivering locally some of the services that Herefordshire Council can't afford any more.
- Taking on additional responsibilities will mean a rise in the Parish Precept.
 - However, unlike a pound raised on the county's council tax, every pound raised in the parish precept stays local to Ledbury and is certain to be spent here in Ledbury on the services that you value.
- We have choices about how we recover the unbudgeted legal costs, but they all have an impact on how the Town Council operates.



Measuring the 'hole'

2018-19 year start position

Earmarked Reserves	£236,062
General Reserves	£105,688
Total Reserves	£344,778
In-year (over)/underspend	(£67,008)
Total Equity (Assets-Liabilities)	£274,742

Estimated Carry-In (at 01-02-18)	£48,220
Actual Balance (at 31-03-18)	(£67,008)
Difference (Estimate – Actual)	(115,228)

This is the shortfall in funds available at the start of the 2018-19 year compared to what was expected

Additional Legal Fees	(£20,557)
Costs awarded against council	(£96,262)
Total 'hole' in 2018-19 finances	(£232,047)

Reserves 2018-19		
E & L	Memorial Testing	8,550
	Christmas Lights	13,215
	Cemetery new area	969
	Cemetery repairs/trees/improvements	75
	Tree safety works	3,910
	Grounds Equipment	1,143
	Cemetery Perimeter wall repairs	4,553
	Churchyard wall repairs	2,000
	Play Equipment new /repairs	5,913
	Skate Park	6,819
Hanging baskets	352	
War Memorial Refurbishment	5,925	
F & GP	Listed Building Reserve	101,528
	Election Costs	12,521
	Internal Improvements Market House	9,241
	October Fair	2,040
	Participatory Grants	3,084
	Office furniture	415
	Town Mayors Expenses	870
	Councillors Training	1,526
	Portas Pilot	3,600
	Ledbury Area Drugs Forum	3,223
Unspecified Projects	12,396	
PI & ED	Parish Plan	1,700
	Emergency Planning	1,000
	Traffic Management	3,000
	Promotional materials	6,588
	Allotments/Tourism/Centenary	7,470
Council	Neighbourhood Plan	12,436
	Total Earmarked Reserves	236,062



Filling the 'hole'

- We can try to recover the legal costs from third parties who acted or advised badly. This may be successful, but we won't know for some time.
- There are some savings to our operating costs we can make in-year
- There are some projects we had budgeted to do this year which we can cancel or delay
- In Feb-18 councillors voted to use the listed building reserve (£101k) to pay for the council's legal costs.
- If we use this, we will still have a cash 'hole' of at least £80k that will need to be filled in-year by taking further funds from our reserves
- **RIGHT NOW** we need to budget to pay back these reserves ...



Implications for the 2019-20 Budget

- We cannot assume we shall be successful in recovering the legal costs
- We are required to be 'prudent' in our financial planning
- We could repay the reserves all in one go – but that would raise the precept by quite a lot all in one go
- We could look to use budgeted project funds to pay all or part of the costs – but this would impact in other ways on the town
- **Recommendation:**
 1. We begin to make provision in the budget for 2019-20 to rebuild some of the reserves.
 2. We revise this repayment figure up or down for 2020-21 and beyond when we know whether or not we have been successful in reclaiming our costs from third parties



Being Positive: What more COULD we do?

- Parish Councils have the legal power to do a range of things
- See the handout for a detailed list.
- We are already doing some of these things (Cemetery, Town Clock, Footpaths, Recreation Ground, Seating, Tourism, Signage, War Memorial, Grants) ...
 - ... but is there more you would like to see us do?
- Award winning parish councils around the country are making real and positive improvements in their communities
- What would you like to see?



What more SHOULD we do?

- We use the Town Plan to help us to prioritise the council's activities. It was published 18 months ago and contains ideas and priorities put forward by nearly 4,000 of the town's residents.
- These ideas include things like:
 - Improving the economic strength and success of the town
 - Investing further in our environment and green spaces
 - Supporting initiatives to improve community health and wellbeing
 - Addressing issues of traffic, transport, parking and our roads/paths/cycleways
 - Partnering with local groups to improve joint working and shared outcomes
 - Doing more to engage with and support our young people



How Do I Have My Say?

- You probably want to ask questions now and to go away and have a think
- We will make a questionnaire available online and in a hard copy at the Town Council Offices for you to comment
- Contact one of your Town Councillors or Chair of Finance Committee by email or telephone
- Write directly with your ideas to the Town Clerk by email or post
- Get directly involved in what we do by asking questions at a council and committee meetings; or joining any of our Working Party - all of which are open to members of the public.
- Council contact details are available in the handout and online
- **Please respond to us before 7 December 2018**



Thank You ...
and now over to you for
Questions?

