



Oundle Town Council

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Oundle Town Council finances and plans for 2022-3

As Oundle Town Council starts to finalise our budget for 2022-23 it seems a good time to reflect on some the things we hope to push forward with next year. The budget sets our **precept**, a small part of the overall Council tax we're all charged as residents by North Northants Council.

1. **Cemetery** – the cemetery is an important space for many, and a valuable open space for all. We seem to have lost our community payback team so are looking at ways of reallocating our teams and contractors to ensure it gets the best care – and pondering ways in which we might start up a *Cemetery Wardens*, or *Friends of Oundle Cemetery* scheme, to help keep the cemetery in good order, especially with **Remembrance Sunday** so fresh in our minds (and on that note, **a MASSIVE thanks to all those involved, especially the Royal British Legion, the backbone** of such an important “community” event, and such a tremendous occasion).



2. **Skatepark upgrade** – a long term ambition, funded through grants, with lots of user consultation creating a successful design.
3. **Snipe Meadow** – better information and grazing with cattle, in partnership with Wildlife Trust – and a small climate change fund for us to support our declaration of a climate emergency (see our letter to Tom Pursglove MP at <https://tinyurl.com/climateemergency24sept2021>)
4. Some refurbishment of **public toilets** in Coop car park.
5. Development of more accessible play equipment at **Pocket Park**.
6. Continued repairs and maintenance of the listed walls around St Peters **Churchyard**, such an important part of our town’s landscape.
7. Helping fund the **Jubilee celebrations** in June 2022.
8. Room usage at Fletton House including some rekindling of the Hub space.
9. Markets rejuvenation.
10. Grants (as our recent one to CHAT to help with its valuable counselling work based at the Courthouse – www.chatyouthcounselling.org.uk).

Clearly, there will be some inflationary pressure on the budget (especially changes to the National Living Wage, and increases in gas/electricity costs) – and a 5% increase in some of the areas we have no control over (rates to North Northants Council, nationally approved wage increases and power) could easily add c.£25,000 or more to our costs for next year.

Despite their value to the town, any new projects will bring extra expenses. To lighten the load we will manage this year’s budget prudently; will aim to work keenly in partnerships in 2022-3, including with North Northants Council; will gather grant funding wherever we can; and use any “Section 106 funds” available to help with some capital expenditure. However, after a 0% precept increase in 2020-21, some increase in precept is inevitable. Clearly it’s been a tough couple of years economically, and with utility bills and inflation set to keep rising for all, we are mindful of the pressures on households so rest assured we will do all we can to make sure the impact is as low as possible.

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Planning news

An update on the large developments planned for around Oundle – All 3 planning applications are to be heard at the “regional (East)” Development Management Committee at Thrapston in the upcoming months.

Cotterstock/St Peters Road – redrafted “reserved matters” plans out for consultation up to November 16th – OTC reiterated its long standing concerns.

St Christopher’s Drive – “reserved matters” application lodged – OTC reiterated its long standing concerns.

Stoke Doyle Road – NNC planners have asked for redrafted plans and an extension has been agreed to the end of December. When new plans are forthcoming, a new consultation period will occur. OTC Planning Committee have discussed the first set of plans, and will confirm their view once the new set is forthcoming.

Don’t forget – if there is nothing on the telly, you can watch videos of all our meetings on our **Youtube channel** – <https://tinyurl.com/OundleTCyoutube> including Planning.

In July we wrote to North Northants (via our unitary councillor and NNC leader Jason Smithers) and Tom Pursglove MP with an “entreaty”. Our letter can be seen on the OTC website at <https://tinyurl.com/otcletter21july2021> and the replies at <https://tinyurl.com/letter25august2021>, but in essence –

So, a plea from OTC to you all, as individuals, and as representatives of the residents of Oundle, to urgently help Oundle with the needs of our near future. In particular, we need -

- *Engagement from the NNC planning authority directly with us and Oundle’s residents to consider as soon as possible the overall impact of the huge proposed changes for our town;;*
- *Engagement from NNC to ensure Oundle is better able to cope with the growing and changing demands, especially Highways, ideally with our planned Transport Study;*

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- *Engagement with utility and health providers to work together to better provide effective services for residents, of all ages.*

We continue to hope that NNC officers will keep working in partnership with Oundle Town Council to make sure that the impact of the new housing on existing residents is mitigated, and the services the new housing will demand are in place before building starts.

Community Hub@Fletton House

The aim is to open Fletton House (without of course the Hub café which has sadly closed) as much as is safe to, in early December. Keep an eye on our social media channels and electronic noticeboards for final details – and don't forget the Council office will be closed as normal for Christmas - from Christmas Eve 12 noon and to 9am January 4th 2022.

Basketball court at The Rec

Sometime soon (maybe December, maybe January, weather dependent) a new backboard, remarked lines, maintained tarmac and back fencing should arrive at the basketball court in the Rec.



Don't forget diary dates for 2022

- **Annual Town Meeting April 28th**
- **Queen's Platinum Jubilee June 4th**

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