



Town Council decides 2026-27 budgets

You will soon be receiving your annual Council Tax letter from Dorset Council, setting out the new payments to be made for 2026-2027. You'll see that a proportion of the Council Tax is raised by Lytchett Minster and Upton Town Council. The Town Council places this request on Dorset Council annually, as do the Police and Fire Service. The Council Precept is the smallest portion of the total Council Tax bill.

The Precept is the total amount budgeted to provide Council services in the coming year. Setting that precept means striking the right balance between funding services and projects to make our town the best it can be – while making any increases as affordable as possible. Your Council is well aware that these are challenging times for residents and for the town. As a result, it has agreed the following:

- For a Band D property in 2026-27, Lytchett Minster and Upton Town Council's precept will be **£175.56**
- For a Band D property in 2025-26, Lytchett Minster and Upton Town Council's precept was **£159.38**
- This works out to an increase for the coming year of **10.15%**
- In cash terms for a Band D property, this works out to an extra **£1.35** a month, or **31p** a week.
- The total amount to be raised in 2026-27 by this precept is £536,830.
The total amount raised in 2025-26 by the precept was £481,125.

This budget has been prepared with the current cost-of-living crisis at the forefront of our minds and Councillors have been very reluctant to make things more difficult for residents.

We know that the improvements that we delivered for the Town in 2025/26 have been much appreciated by residents and there have been many favourable comments on them. People have particularly welcomed the improvements to Warbler Park (previously where the skatepark resided), and the refurbishment to the Clocktower – a key feature in our town. Once again many of you took part in a well-attended and much enjoyed Community Picnic to commemorate the 80th anniversary of VE Day and VJ Day, and the Christmas Celebration was popular with parents and children. These two events were free to attend.

At the same time, many of the Council's running costs – ranging from insurance to electricity – are increasing at rates well above inflation. The budget has also been impacted by the need for equipment replacement in certain areas, such as IT and central heating. Unlike many other parish and town councils, we have very limited opportunities to generate income outside of the Precept. We don't have income generators such as car parks, beach huts or community buildings.

The Council is a strong supporter of local schools and understand the financial pressures they face. In response to this we have agreed to waive the fees to Upton Junior School for use of the recreation ground for PE lessons.

In addition to these services, the Council ensures that the views of Lytchett Minster and Upton residents are represented to our principal authority, Dorset Council, whether that is supporting, objecting to, or commenting on planning applications or pushing for improvements in roads, transport and infrastructure and other council services.

Building on the improvements made in 2025/26, we have set aside funds from the Precept for 2026/27 for:

- Continued improvements to The Grove at the Recreation Ground.
- A new memorial area at the Cemetery.
- Developing a Neighbourhood Plan - the Plan would give Lytchett Minster and Upton's residents a major voice in the development of the Town – whether there should be any significant house building, the sites that would be appropriate and how many homes could be built over the next 5-15 years. This is particularly relevant with the development of the Dorset Local Plan – the recent options consultation suggests a significant amount of Greenbelt land in Lytchett Minster will be made available for development.
- Improving access to Lytchett Bay View.
- Hosting community events with free entry including:
 - The 4th Community Picnic at the Recreation Ground in June 2026;
 - Christmas Party
 - Supporting Upton Together's Easter Egg Quiz Hunt.
- Provision of funds to support young people in the Town.
- Future proofing for any potential services to be devolved from Dorset Council.

Lytchett Minster and Upton Town Council Mayor, Councillor Ray Griffin commented, 'The money raised from the precept is vital for enabling the Council's teams to continue their work. We are confident that this small weekly increase represents value for money in terms of the projects and community benefits we will deliver to our community and where appropriate we will utilise our Reserves to deliver planned and additional ad-hoc projects to continue to improve and enhance the Town for our residents'.

Further information about the Council's budget can be found at https://www.lytchettminsterandupton-tc.gov.uk/Council_Budgets_47394.aspx