

Harrogate
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Working for you

Council Tax Information 2007/08

How to contact Revenues and Benefits

By email: ben_rev@harrogate.gov.uk

Website: www.harrogate.gov.uk/revenuesandbenefits

By telephone:
Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates
01423 556677

Housing and Council Tax Benefit:
01423 556455

Opening hours for telephone enquiries:
Monday to Thursday: 8.30am to 5.15pm
Friday 8.30am to 4.45pm

In person to:
Scottsdale House, Springfield Avenue, Harrogate HG1 2HR

Opening hours for enquiries in person:
Monday to Friday: 8.30am to 4.30pm

Writing to:
Revenues and Benefits Division, PO Box 13, Scottsdale House, Springfield Avenue, Harrogate HG1 2SD

How can you help us?
Please inform us straight away if you move home or if there is any change in your circumstances that will affect the amount shown on the demand notice or if you are unhappy with our service. When contacting us please quote your account number or benefit claim reference.

Data Protection
The Revenues & Benefits Division of Harrogate Borough Council hold personal information on file about our customers in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998. We may share some of this information with other divisions within Harrogate Borough Council to help improve our customer service to you. If you do not wish for this to happen please contact the above office.

Internet
Payments can be made via the Council's website www.harrogate.gov.uk

Bank Standing Order or BACS
Please send payments to sort code 30-00-00, account number 00200182 Harrogate Council Collection Account. You must quote your 11 digit account reference number.

Post
To Revenues and Benefits Division, PO Box 13, Scottsdale House, Springfield Avenue, Harrogate HG1 2SD.

Cross your cheques and postal orders and make payable to Harrogate Borough Council with your Account Number written on the back of your cheque.

At a Cash Office
These offices are open every week at the times shown:

- Scottsdale House, Springfield Avenue, Harrogate HG1 2HR
Monday to Friday: 8.30am to 4.30pm
- The Town Hall, Market Square, Ripon HG4 1BZ
Mondays, Thursdays & Fridays: 9.00am to 4.30pm
- Knaresborough House, High Street, Knaresborough HG5 0HL
Tuesdays & Wednesdays: 9.00am to 4.30pm

Please note that the above offices will be closed on the following dates:

- 2007 6th, 9th, 10th April, 7th, 28th May, 27th August, 24th, 25th, 26th December

2008 1st January, 21st, 24th, 25th March
The following offices are open once a month on the days and times shown:

- Pateley Bridge - second Tuesday of the month 9.30-13.30 except in April when it will be the third Tuesday of the month.**
- The Library, High Street, Pateley Bridge
2007 17 April, 8 May, 12 June, 10 July, 14 August, 11 September, 9 October, 13 November, 11 December
2008 8 January, 12 February, 11 March

Council Tax and What it Pays For

Harrogate Borough Council collects Council Tax on all domestic properties to help pay for the cost of local services. In the coming year Harrogate Borough Council will keep just 15% of your Council Tax to help provide the full range of its own services. The rest is paid over to the North Yorkshire County Council, North Yorkshire Police Authority, North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Authority and various Parish Councils. Each authority sets its own tax level and the Borough Council collects the total due for all the authorities.

The changes in the overall tax bill for 2007/08 for a Band D property are:

| Band D property are: | Band D Tax | Increase | % |
|------------------------|------------------|---------------|------------|
| North Yorkshire County | £943.54 | £44.07 | 4.9 |
| North Yorkshire Fire | £56.04 | £2.10 | 3.9 |
| North Yorkshire Police | £185.40 | £5.40 | 3.0 |
| Harrogate Borough | £202.72 | £8.36 | 4.3 |
| TOTAL | £1,387.70 | £59.93 | 4.5 |

Since 1993 when Council Tax was introduced the Harrogate Borough Council element of the bill at Band D has risen from £139.92 to £202.72 for 2007/08. This is a fourteen year rise of 45% (or £63) compared with a 123% increase in the national average of Council Tax bills.

Harrogate Borough Council's Spending Plans
Harrogate Borough Council's spending this year has risen by 4.8% to cover the cost of inflation, rising costs and a variety of new government and local initiatives (e.g. Recycling and Concessionary Travel). The Council has kept the increase in Council Tax to 4.3% by making savings through improving efficiency and increasing charges for services and because of an above average increase in its grant from central Government. The grant per head still remains well below the average for a District Council.

The average number of full-time equivalent staff Harrogate Borough Council expects to employ to provide local services is 1,282 for 2007/08, an increase of 15 from 2006/07. Additional staff are being taken on mainly for the expansion of recycling schemes. A small number of new posts for Environmental, Housing and eGovernment initiatives are being funded from external grants and reserves.

Boroughbridge - second Wednesday of the month 9.30-12.00

- Town Council Offices, 1 Hall Square, Boroughbridge
2007 11 April, 9 May, 13 June, 11 July, 8 August, 12 September, 10 October, 14 November, 12 December
2008 9 January, 13 February, 12 March
- Masham - second Thursday of the month 9.30-12.00**
- Community Office, Little Market Place, Masham
2007 12 April, 10 May, 14 June, 12 July, 9 August, 13 September, 11 October, 8 November, 13 December
2008 10 January, 14 February, 13 March

Further information can be obtained from the Revenues & Benefits Division or visit www.harrogate.gov.uk/revenuesandbenefits for dates and opening times of the offices

Are you paying too much Council Tax?

Council Tax Benefit
This benefit provides help towards the cost of your Council Tax. You may be entitled if you are on a low income - wages, benefits or pensions - and have savings/investments of less than £16,000.

Second Adult Rebate
If your income is not low but you share your home with another adult who is on a low income, you may be able to claim this benefit based on their income instead.

Discounts
A full Council Tax bill is based on two adults aged 18 or over living in a dwelling. If only one adult lives in a dwelling the Council Tax bill will be reduced by 25%.

People who meet certain conditions are not counted when looking at the number of adults resident in a dwelling and this can result in discounts of 25% if only one resident is counted, or 50% if none of the residents are counted.

Unoccupied Properties
Properties which are unoccupied and unfurnished will pay a full Council Tax bill, once they have been empty for 6 months.

Second Homes and Holiday Homes
If no-one lives in a property and it remains furnished the Council Tax bills will be reduced by 10%. This will apply to most second homes and holiday homes, though in some circumstances bills can be reduced by 50%.

What Do These Services Include?

Cultural and Related Services (£40 per head)

- Parks and Gardens, Swimming Pools, Sports and Leisure Centres, Museums and Galleries and the net surplus on Conferences and Exhibitions.

Environmental Services (£45 per head)

- Refuse Collection, Recycling, Public Toilets, Food Safety, Street Cleaning, Control of Dogs, Pests and Noise, Cemeteries and Crematorium, CCTV and Community Safety.

Planning & Development Services (£16 per head)

- Forward Planning, Development Control, Building Control, Economic Development, Regeneration Schemes and Community Development Partnerships.

Housing Services (£7 per head)

- Homelessness, Housing Advice, Housing Benefits, and Housing Improvement Grants. Council Housing is in a separate account.

Highways, Roads and Transport (£3 per head)

- Footpath and Highway Maintenance, Concessionary Travel, surplus on Car Parking, Traffic Management and Road Safety. North Yorkshire County Council largely refunds the cost of Highway Maintenance to the Council.

Central Services (£41 per head)

- Council Tax Collection, Payment of Benefits, Land Charges, Electoral Registration, Elections and Grants to Voluntary Organisations. Also included are capital financing charges.

Overall, the Council plans to spend £152 per resident on its services in 2007/08. Of this, £10 comes from Government Grant, £59 from redistributed business rates and £83 from Council Tax, which is about £1.60 per week per resident.

Financial Standing
Harrogate Borough Council had total external loans of £15.1m at 31 March 2006 compared with external investments of £26.6m and a total insurance value of its assets of £486m.

Parishes over £140,000
Harrogate has no parishes with gross spending of over £140,000 in 2007/08.

Your responsibilities
If you are receiving a discount you must advise the Revenues and Benefits Division if, for any reason, you think you no longer qualify for the discount or should be entitled to a lower amount. You are required to make this notification within 21 days of any change and if you fail to do so you can be liable to a penalty of £50.

Exempt Dwellings
Some properties may be exempt from Council Tax if they are unoccupied. Some occupied properties can also be exempt.

People with Disabilities
You may be entitled to a reduction if you, or someone who lives in your property, have a disability and your property has:

- A room that is not a bathroom, kitchen or toilet that is mainly used by the disabled person and is essential for their needs
- An extra bathroom and kitchen that is essential for their needs
- Extra space inside the property so that a wheelchair can be used.

Council Tax Appeals
You may appeal against various Council Tax matters e.g. because:

- You are not the resident or owner
- You think your property should be exempt
- You think you should get a discount you have not been allowed

If you wish to appeal you must notify the Council in writing so that your case can be considered. You must not withhold payment of Council Tax but if your appeal is successful you will receive a refund.

If you are not satisfied with the Council's determination of your case you may appeal to the Valuation Tribunal. Further information about the tribunal and its procedures can be obtained by visiting their website at: www.valuation-tribunals.gov.uk

Further information
More details about Benefits, Discounts, Exemptions and Reductions can be obtained by contacting the Revenues & Benefits Division as shown in this leaflet or by visiting our website at: www.harrogate.gov.uk/revenuesandbenefits where you will also be able to request an application form.

Budget 2007/2008

| 2006/07 (Restated) | | 2007/08 | | |
|--------------------|----------------|---|----------------|---------------|
| Gross Cost £'000 | Net Cost £'000 | Gross Cost £'000 | Net Cost £'000 | |
| 1,884 | 1,189 | Council Tax Collection | 1,839 | 1,128 |
| 10,469 | 937 | Other Central Services to the Public | 10,853 | 943 |
| 18,312 | 6,034 | Cultural & Related Services | 19,087 | 6,245 |
| 4,764 | 3,734 | Refuse Collection | 5,993 | 4,255 |
| 4,904 | 2,807 | Other Environmental Services | 5,390 | 2,783 |
| 6,341 | 2,948 | Planning & Development | 6,265 | 2,457 |
| 32,967 | 1,380 | Housing Services | 34,000 | 1,074 |
| 3,755 | 364 | Highways, Roads & Transport | 4,108 | 428 |
| 3,241 | 3,090 | Corporate Costs & Overheads | 3,171 | 2,993 |
| 86,637 | 22,483 | COST OF SERVICES | 90,706 | 22,306 |
| 2,245 | -459 | Capital & Financing Costs | 3,063 | 783 |
| 88,882 | 22,024 | BOROUGH COUNCIL SPENDING | 93,769 | 23,089 |
| 461 | 461 | PARISH PRECEPTS | 490 | 490 |
| 89,343 | 22,485 | BOROUGH AND PARISH SPENDING | 94,259 | 23,579 |
| Funded By: | | | | |
| 1,631 | | Government Grant | 1,524 | |
| 8,452 | | Redistributed Business Rates | 9,084 | |
| | | Council Fund Surplus | | 35 |
| 461 | | Council Taxpayers (Parish Element) | 490 | |
| 11,858 | | Council Taxpayers (Harrogate Borough Element) | 12,446 | |
| 22,485 | | | 23,579 | |

The Council Tax in your Parish Area

In areas where Parish Councils levy a precept, the basic Harrogate Borough Council Band D Council Tax of £202.72 has to be increased as follows:

| Parish Names | Parish Band D Council Tax £ | Parish Precept 2007/08 £ | Parish Precept 2006/07 £ |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Arkendale, Coneythorpe & Clareton | 13.75 | 2,600 | 2,600 |
| Asenby | 9.90 | 1,300 | 1,300 |
| Azeley and Winkley | 9.88 | 2,500 | 2,500 |
| Baldersby | 14.82 | 1,820 | 1,620 |
| Bewerley | 14.15 | 4,680 | 4,500 |
| Bilton-in-Ainsty with Bickerton | 23.32 | 4,810 | 3,360 |
| Birstwith | 10.91 | 4,000 | 4,000 |
| Bishop Monkton | 13.63 | 5,350 | 5,210 |
| Bishop Thornton and Warsill | 7.04 | 1,800 | 1,800 |
| Boroughbridge | 22.86 | 30,900 | 27,000 |
| Burton Leonard | 17.38 | 5,500 | 5,500 |
| Cattal, Hunsingore and Washforde | 11.44 | 1,880 | 1,850 |
| Clint-cum-Hamlets | 16.22 | 3,850 | 3,700 |
| Dacre | 15.86 | 5,100 | 4,500 |
| Dishforth | 15.87 | 4,250 | 3,600 |
| Dunstons | 6.89 | 770 | 650 |
| Gartham | 10.20 | 940 | 940 |
| Fearby, Healey and District | 9.68 | 1,800 | 1,950 |
| Fellicliffe | 17.46 | 2,750 | 2,750 |
| Ferrensby | 1.61 | 150 | 150 |
| Follifoot and Plumpton | 13.09 | 5,000 | 5,000 |
| Fountains Abbey | 9.35 | 1,100 | 1,050 |
| Goldborough and Flaxby | 7.83 | 2,300 | 2,200 |
| Grantham and Sawley | 16.06 | 3,700 | 3,500 |
| Great Ouseburn | 22.24 | 5,800 | 5,700 |
| Green Hammerton | 19.78 | 5,500 | 5,000 |
| Grewelthorpe | 15.19 | 3,215 | 0 |
| Hampthwaite | 16.04 | 7,500 | 7,245 |
| Harthwith-cum-Winkley | 13.02 | 5,500 | 4,500 |
| Haverah Park | 12.35 | 2,500 | 2,500 |
| and Beckwithshaw | | | |
| Hewick and Hutton | 5.38 | 990 | 790 |
| High and Low Bishopside | 11.87 | 11,100 | 10,890 |
| Kearby-with-Netherby | 4.73 | 500 | 500 |
| Killinghall | 5.69 | 8,500 | 12,510 |
| Kirby Hill and District | 16.43 | 4,400 | 4,400 |
| Kirby Malzeard, Laverton & Dalwigham | 14.85 | 7,225 | 6,400 |
| Kirby Overblow | 16.10 | 4,000 | 2,800 |
| Kirk Dighton | 7.33 | 1,697 | 1,673 |
| Kirk Hammeton | 26.26 | 5,700 | 4,770 |
| Knaresborough | 14.24 | 81,466 | 79,093 |
| Langthorpe | 14.88 | 5,000 | 0 |

How Your Council Tax Bill is Calculated

Your bill shows separately the amounts due for North Yorkshire County Council, North Yorkshire Police Authority, and North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Authority, which are explained in their separate leaflets.

The Harrogate Borough Council element of the Council Tax is calculated by dividing the total needed from local taxpayers (£12,446,000) by the equivalent number of Band D dwellings (61,396), to give a tax of £202.72 per Band D dwelling. The amounts due from dwellings in each Band are statutory ratios of this Band D tax (see below). The additional amounts needed from Band D dwellings to reflect any Parish spending plans (£490,000) are shown in the separate table.

Non-Domestic Rates
Although Harrogate Borough Council collects the non-domestic rates, the rate in the pound is set by Central Government. This is 44.4p for 2007/08 (44.1p for small businesses). The Council expects to collect over £48.1m from ratepayers in 2007/08.

The sums are paid into a national pool. The proceeds are redistributed as part of the grant from Central Government. There is no relationship between the amount of rates collected in the Harrogate area and the amount redistributed to this area, which in 2007/08 will be:

| | |
|---|--------|
| North Yorkshire County Council | £18.6m |
| North Yorkshire Police Authority | £5.6m |
| North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Authority | £2.3m |
| Harrogate Borough Council | £9.1m |

Council Tax Valuation Bands

Your property is placed in one of eight valuation bands to enable the Council to calculate your Council Tax

| Band | Value of Property at 1 April 1991 | Proportion of Band D | Borough Council Tax |
|------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| A | Not more than £40,000 | 6/9 | £135.15 |
| B | £40,001 to £52,000 | 7/9 | £157.67 |
| C | £52,001 to £68,000 | 8/9 | £180.20 |
| D | £68,001 to £88,000 | 9/9 | £202.72 |
| E | £88,001 to £120,000 | 11/9 | £247.77 |
| F | £120,001 to £160,000 | 13/9 | £292.82 |
| G | £160,001 to £320,000 | 15/9 | £337.87 |
| H | Over £320,000 | 18/9 | £405.44 |

The valuation is undertaken by the Valuation Office Agency, which is part of the HM Revenue and Customs. One bill is issued per property.

Appeals against banding

If you think the valuation of your property is wrong you can only appeal for one of the following reasons:

- Within six months of buying the property or having the band changed by the Listing Officer
- Demolition, conversion of houses to flats, physical changes in the locality etc that may affect value.

For more information please contact the District Valuer, Valuation Office Agency, Windsor House, Cornwall Road, Harrogate HG1 2PW. Tel: 01423 830800 or visit the VOA website at www.voa.gov.uk

Use of Information

To levy and collect Council Tax requires details of your name and address to be held on a computer. This information may be passed to the District Valuer to assist with the valuation of properties or with appeals against banding.

When to Pay Your Council Tax

Council Tax is payable by a maximum of ten monthly instalments due on or before the 1st of each month as shown on your bill. Please note amounts owing from previous years are not included in the instalment plan and must be paid immediately unless an alternative arrangement has been agreed.

You may pay other than monthly by paying multiple instalments in advance e.g. five to pay half yearly.

If payments are received late a reminder will be sent and on the 3rd occasion, your right to pay by instalments will be withdrawn. The whole sum outstanding then becomes due. Failure to pay any reminder notice will result in the issue of a summons for the full outstanding balance and substantial costs.

Payment Difficulties

If you have any difficulties regarding payment of your Council Tax, please contact the Revenues and Benefits Division as quickly as possible.

How to Pay Your Council Tax

Direct Debit
Telephone the Council on 01423 556677 with details of your bank account or complete the instruction on the front of your bill.

Telephone
Debit and credit card payments can be made for Council Tax and other Council services, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, by telephoning the Council's automated local rate telephone payment line on 0845 129 55 99.