A GUIDE TO YOUR COUNCIL TAX

2019 2020
VOTER ID

BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL HAS BEEN SELECTED BY THE CABINET OFFICE TO TAKE PART IN THE 2019 ELECTORAL INTEGRITY TRIALS FOR THE LOCAL ELECTIONS ON 2 MAY.

The trial will provide insight into how best to ensure the security of the voting process and reduce the risk of voter fraud.

Electoral fraud undermines democracy and takes away a person’s right to vote as they would like. The Voter ID trial will focus specifically on voter fraud at polling stations, where an individual pretends to be someone else known as “personation”.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ME?

This means that when you go to vote at a polling station in the Braintree District, before you are given your ballot paper you will be asked to show either:

- one piece of photo ID or
- two pieces of non-photo ID, one of which must show your current address.

There’ll be no change to postal voting.

The most common photo ID types are likely to be passport, driving licence or bus pass, and common non-photo ID types are things like your poll card, Council Tax bill or bank card. **We’ve listed the current accepted ID types on the separate VOTER ID leaflet.** The lists may be subject to change, however final details of the ID types required will be on your poll card letter which all registered electors should receive by the end of March 2019.

For more information keep an eye on our website: braintree.gov.uk/VoterID
How your Council Tax is shared

Braintree District Council collects the Council Tax on behalf of the District Council, Essex County Council, Essex Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner (Responsible for Policing and Community Safety and Essex Fire & Rescue Authority) and the Parish and Town Councils in the district.

Here’s how your Council Tax is allocated:

- **72.3% Essex County Council**
- **4.1% Essex Fire & Rescue Authority**
- **2.4% Parish or Town Councils**
- **10.2% Braintree District Council**
- **11% Essex Police**

Our part of the council tax bill explained...

Did you know that just 10p in every pound of council tax you pay goes to fund the services Braintree District Council provides? Although you pay it all to Braintree District Council, most of it goes to fund other services – emergency services like police and fire, Essex County Council and even your local town or parish council.

So what does that 10p in every pound pay for?

It pays for things such as waste collection and recycling, street cleaning, planning, leisure centres, economic development, running elections, housing, environmental health, emergency planning, parks and open spaces, cemeteries, car parking, markets and more.

Braintree District Council spending plan

Comparison of figures for 2019/20 with 2018/19

Braintree District Council income

Comparison of figures for 2019/20 with 2018/19

How the net service expenditure is funded.

The net spending plan above includes income from fees and charges £5.4m, rental income £3.4m, interest and dividends £1m.
The £100 million-plus investment plan is part of our strategy to become financially independent by 2019 when Central Government stops its grant funding to the Council.

These investments have a double benefit for residents – once by the investment in the community itself and then again by the return on investment which will be spent on providing the council’s frontline services.

It also means that we are playing our part in preparing for our growing district making sure that we have the right foundations in place to support that growth.

The investments are careful, planned and considered and it is an approach which has already paid dividends.

Like most local authorities we’re affected by Central Government funding reducing to nothing by 2019 – that’s a reduction of £4.58 million since 2013.

Since 2010 we’ve found £8.6 million through savings, but we quickly recognised that the traditional “salami slicing” approach to reducing budgets, efficiency savings and staffing restructures would not meet the challenges of having to become financially independent by April 2019 when Central Government funding stops.

We’ve also been affected by increasing costs, increased demand and new responsibilities as well as inflation. Our planning service has had to respond to an increase in planning applications and appeals and our housing service has new additional responsibilities under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018.

Recycling costs are also increasing, whereby councils used to receive income for their materials, local authorities are now paying to have the material reprocessed. This costs Braintree District Council around £456,000 each year.

To help meet these challenges we launched our £100 million investment plan in November 2018, which sees us investing in the things that matter to you: health, homes, journeys and jobs.

£100 MILLION INVESTMENT PLAN

The projects making up the investment plan include:

Manor Street regeneration (Braintree):
If planning permission is granted, the council will deliver a new Live Well Hub, 35 new homes, an improved bus interchange, a 70-bed hotel, and a high-quality public open space.

Horizon 120:
We’ve purchased a 65-acre site in Great Notley, which will be the location for a new business and innovation park called Horizon 120. The site could create up to 2,000 jobs.

Growth units at Springwood Drive:
Four up-and-coming businesses have expanded after a £1 million investment in new “grow-on” units at Braintree Enterprise Centre, which were completed in September 2018. The units will bring in income, which will be ploughed back into the council’s frontline services.

Improvements to Galleys Corner in Braintree via Millennium Way Slip Roads:
Our investment opened the door to further investment from Essex County Council, Highways England and the National Productivity Investment Fund to make this project happen.

Other plans include:
A new and improved healthcare facility in Sible Hedingham; a project to build 200 homes on council-owned land; an Enterprise Centre in Witham; a rural business hub in Sible Hedingham; and the creation of a Construction Research and Innovation Centre (I-CONSTRUCT), which will showcase excellence in the construction industry.

E: capitalprojects@braintree.gov.uk  T: 01376 552525 ext 2581
What is Council Tax?

Council Tax is a tax on homes collected by your local council to pay for local services.

Who pays Council Tax?

At least one person in each household is responsible for paying Council Tax, whether they own the home or rent it. In most cases the person (or people) aged 18 or over who will be responsible for paying Council Tax are:

- owner-occupiers
- leaseholders
- people who pay rent
- people who have a licence to occupy, such as people who live in tied cottages (housing relating to their work)
- people such as squatters, who live in the property but have no legal interest in it (that is, they don’t own or rent it)
- people who own the property but don’t live in it.

What is Local Council Tax Support?

If you are struggling to pay your Council Tax bill due to a low income, you may be entitled to help through the Local Council Tax Support. Call the Benefits Team on 01376 557852 or visit www.braintree.gov.uk for more details.

If you would like to apply and are of state pension age, you can also contact the Pension Service on 0845 6060265 and they will assist you. Apply for Council Tax Support online.

**Your guide to your Council Tax**

**What is Council Tax?**

Council Tax is a tax on homes collected by your local council to pay for local services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valuation band</th>
<th>Value of property on 1 April 1991</th>
<th>Braintree District tax rate</th>
<th>Essex County tax rate</th>
<th>Essex Police tax rate</th>
<th>Essex Fire &amp; Rescue tax rate</th>
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<td>Up to £40,000</td>
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<td>£846.96</td>
<td>£128.64</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>£40,001 to £52,000</td>
<td>£139.79</td>
<td>£986.12</td>
<td>£150.08</td>
<td>£56.35</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>£52,001 to £68,000</td>
<td>£159.76</td>
<td>£1129.28</td>
<td>£171.52</td>
<td>£64.40</td>
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<td>£68,001 to £88,000</td>
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<td>£192.96</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>£120,001 to £160,000</td>
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<td>£1835.08</td>
<td>£278.72</td>
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<td>G</td>
<td>£160,001 to £320,000</td>
<td>£239.55</td>
<td>£2117.40</td>
<td>£321.60</td>
<td>£120.75</td>
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<td>H</td>
<td>Over £320,000</td>
<td>£259.46</td>
<td>£2540.88</td>
<td>£385.92</td>
<td>£144.90</td>
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* Includes an amount for Adult Social Care. Find out more at www.essex.gov.uk

To find your nearest glass or textile bank, visit recyclenow.com/local-recycling

**Don’t let your efforts go to waste**

Please do not put the following items in your clear sacks. Here’s what you can do with them…

- **Glass bottle and jars** can be taken to bottle banks around the district. You can leave the tops on!
- **Food waste** is collected weekly in your food bin.
- Unwanted clothes can be donated to charity, swapped or taken to a textile recycling bank.
- **Nappies** must go in the grey bin, why not switch to cloth nappies instead? Visit loveessex.org/nappies to claim your £30 refund.

For more details on what can be recycled, visit braintree.gov.uk/recycling or loveessex.org or email csc@braintree.gov.uk or call 01376 552525

To find your nearest glass or textile bank, visit recyclenow.com/local-recycling

**WHAT’S ON**

**AT BRAINTREE TOWN HALL**

**ESCAPE ROOMS**
Saturday 13 April
2pm and 4pm
Tuesday 16 April
6pm

**MOTHER’S DAY AFTERNOON TEA**
Saturday 30 March
from 1pm

**DEMENTIA FRIENDLY CREAM TEA**
Friday 5 April

**60+ ONBOARD GAMES CLUB**
Every Monday
10am – 12noon (all welcome)

**BRAINTREE TEXTILE FAIR**
Sunday 12 May
10am - 4pm

Talks
Exhibitions
Stall Holders
Demonstrations
Archive Collection Visits

**Thank you for your efforts**

Most people in the Braintree District use their clear sacks to recycle these items: paper; cardboard; cans; tins; aerosols; foil; plastic bottles; and household plastic packaging, such as food tubs and trays.

For more details on what can be recycled, visit braintree.gov.uk/recycling or loveessex.org or email csc@braintree.gov.uk or call 01376 552525

To find your nearest glass or textile bank, visit recyclenow.com/local-recycling

**People living together such as tenants, married people or civil partners can be jointly or separately responsible for the whole Council Tax for their property.**

People living together such as tenants, married people or civil partners can be jointly or separately responsible for the whole Council Tax for their property.
Challenging Local Council Tax Support decisions

If you have applied for Local Council Tax Support and you disagree with the decision, write to us stating the grounds on which you are aggrieved. If we cannot resolve your grievance within 2 months, you may appeal to the Valuation Office Tribunal. You cannot withhold payment of your Council Tax while the matter is investigated/under appeal.

I am having difficulty paying, what can I do?

We are here to help you.
Contact us as soon as possible on 01376 557722 or email payadvice@braintree.gov.uk.

We only send two reminders in the year. Following that, should the bill remain unpaid, a summons and possibly a liability order will be issued which will incur additional costs being added to your account.

I think my property should be exempt

If you think your property should be exempt from Council Tax or you should pay a reduced rate, please contact us.

I receive a discount but my situation has now changed

You must tell us within 21 days about anything that could affect an exemption or discount you receive. If you fail to tell us in this timescale you may be subject to a £70 penalty.

What is empty homes premium?
The Government is keen to ensure that dwellings do not remain unoccupied or unused for extensive periods. Unfortunately, it remains the case that nationally, a distressing number of dwellings are being left empty at a time when there is an overall housing shortage.

Empty properties are exempt if they:
• are owned by a charity (exempt for up to six months)
• are left empty by someone who is in prison
• are left empty by someone who has moved to give someone else personal care, or has moved to receive personal care
• are waiting for probate or letters of administration to be granted (after someone has died) and for up to six months after the probate or letters are granted
• have been repossessed
• are the responsibility of a trustee on behalf of someone who is bankrupt
• are owned or leased by foreign diplomats
• have no-one allowed to live in them by law, or
• are waiting to be lived in by a minister of religion.

Forces barracks and married quarters are also exempt. People living there contribute to the cost of local services through a special arrangement with us.

Mine is a second home, am I exempt?
If your property is furnished and no-one lives there as their main home, a full charge is applied.

Exempt properties
Council Tax is not payable on ‘exempt properties’. These include properties lived in only by students, people who have a severe mental difficulty or people aged under 18.

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• are owned by a charity (exempt for up to six months)
• are left empty by someone who is in prison
• are left empty by someone who has moved to give someone else personal care, or has moved to receive personal care
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I live on my own, am I entitled to a discount?
Your Council Tax bill assumes two adults are living in your household.
If you are the only adult living there (as your main home) we will reduce your bill by 25%.
When we look at the number of adults living in a property, we need to know about:
• full-time students, student nurses, apprentices and youth trainees
• people who live in hospital
• people who are being looked after in care homes
• people who are severely mentally disabled
• people staying in some hostels or night shelters
• 18 and 19-year-olds who are at or have just left school
• care workers working for low pay (usually for a charity)
• people caring for someone with a disability who is not their partner, or their child (a child is someone under 18)
• members of visiting forces and some international institutions
• diplomats and their husbands or wives (who are not British)
• monks and nuns, and
• people in prison (except people who are in prison for not paying their Council Tax or a fine relating to their Council Tax).

There are currently 201 properties across our district which have been unoccupied for 2 years or more. Therefore, to encourage home owners to bring these properties back into use, there is a Council Tax premium charged on long term empty homes. From 1st April 2019 the premium will be 100%. From 1st April 2020 the premium will be 100% for properties left empty between 2 and 5 years and 200% for properties left empty for 5+ years. From 1st April 2021 the premium for properties empty for 10+ years will be 300%.
For more details, please visit www.braintree.gov.uk/emptyhomes

I don’t think my bill is correct
You can appeal to us if you think you should pay less Council Tax, or none at all, for example, because:
• you do not live in or own the property
• you feel the property should be exempt
• you believe we have made a mistake working out your bill.
If you appeal, you must continue to pay your Council Tax until your appeal is decided. If your appeal is successful, we will give you back any Council Tax you have overpaid.

How do I pay my bill?
See all the different ways to pay on page 13.

Can I pay in instalments?
Yes, see page 13.
What your Parish or Town Council receives

The table below shows each Parish Council’s Council Tax requirement (how much they need), based on a band D charge. Parish and Town Councils need extra money to pay for things like community centres, footpaths and extra street lighting. If the Parish or Town Council raises more than £140,000 from its local taxpayers, it must publish information about its spending plans. The spending plans for Coggeshall Parish, Halstead and Witham Town Councils can be found on our website www.braintree.gov.uk

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town Or Parish</th>
<th>Band D</th>
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<td>Alphamstone</td>
<td>20.24</td>
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<td>Ashen</td>
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<td>Belchamp Otten</td>
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<td>Belchamp St Paul</td>
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<td>Birdbrook</td>
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<td>Black Notley</td>
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<td>Borely Parish meeting</td>
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<td>Bradwell</td>
<td>35.97</td>
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<td>Braintree</td>
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<td>Bulmer</td>
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<td>Bures Hamlet</td>
<td>88.47</td>
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<td>Castle Hedingham</td>
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<td>Coggeshall</td>
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<td>Colne Engaine</td>
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<td>Earls Colne</td>
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<td>Fairstead</td>
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<td>Faulkbourne</td>
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<td>Great Bardfield</td>
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<td>Great Henly</td>
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<td>Great Maplestead</td>
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<td>Great Notley</td>
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<td>Greenstead Green</td>
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<td>Rayne</td>
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<td>Ridgewell</td>
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<td>Rivenhall</td>
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<td>Shalford</td>
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<td>Sible Hedingham</td>
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<td>Silver End</td>
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<td>Stambourne</td>
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<td>Steeple Bumpstead</td>
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<td>Stisted</td>
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<td>Sturmer</td>
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<td>Terling</td>
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<td>The Salings</td>
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<td>Tilbury Juxta Clare</td>
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<td>Toppsfield</td>
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<td>Twinstead</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wickham St Paul</td>
<td>84.82</td>
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<tr>
<td>Witham</td>
<td>67.70</td>
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</table>

Paying your Council Tax

The easiest way to pay is online. Visit www.braintree.gov.uk/counciltax

Direct Debit
Over 40,000 Council Tax payers in the Braintree District use Direct Debit to pay their bill each month. It is so easy to arrange, simply call 01376 557755 and provide your bank account number, sort code and Council Tax reference number which you will find on your latest bill, and we will do the rest.

Debit/Credit Card payments
You can use the Council’s website to make a payment with your debit/credit card. Alternatively, you can also call our automated card line on 01376 557894 which is available 24 hours a day.

Online banking
If you are making a payment using your bank’s website, please ensure you quote our bank details: Sort Code 30-00-02, Account Number 00825110. You will also need to quote your Council Tax account number which you will find on your latest bill, in the reference box.

Payment at Post Offices or PayPoint outlets
If you are unable to pay your Council Tax bill by any of the other options, and you have a barcode displayed on your bill, you may make payments at any Post Office or Paypoint outlet.

Payment by Standing Order/Bank Transfer
Please ensure you quote our bank details: Sort Code 30-00-02, Account Number 00825110. You will also need to quote your Council Tax account number which you will find on your latest bill, in the reference box. Due date remains the first of each month.

Paying by instalments?
By default, Council Tax is payable in ten monthly instalments starting on 1st April and ending on 1st January. However, did you know that you can request to spread your payments over twelve monthly instalments? These would be 1st April to 1st March. Just remember that you would lose the instalment free period during February and March if you choose the twelve monthly option. If you would like to take up this option please call 01376 557755.

PLEASE REMEMBER
If you do not make payments by the due dates, we will issue a reminder notice. The maximum number of reminders you may receive in any financial year is two, the minimum is one. If the second reminder remains unpaid, a summons will be issued and cost incurred.

Problems paying?
Remember, we are here to help you. Please contact us if you cannot pay your Council Tax. Do not wait until you are in debt as this makes it more difficult to sort the problem out.
Braintree’s bustling street market will take over the town centre on the last Saturday of every month for 2019 (except for the Christmas specials). It’s a great social experience, so next time you’re looking for a day out, you know where to head.

Keep our district clean

Our customer satisfaction surveys tell us that keeping the district clean and tidy is important to our residents.

Did you know...

Town centre Barrow Beats

A total of 202 litter bins are emptied 7 days a week in Braintree, Halstead, & Witham. We also hand sweep doorways and other areas the mechanical sweeper cannot reach.

Play area bins

In Braintree, Halstead & Witham towns, bins are emptied once/twice a week. That’s 180 bins.

Dog & litter bins

Outside the town centres, 1,119 dog bins and 764 litter bins are emptied at least once a week.

A120, A12, By-Pass

Bins emptied Monday/Wednesday/Friday

70 bins per day

Main A-Roads

A131, A130, B1018 & A12 verges

Litter picked every 6-8 weeks

Town centres & surrounding areas

Swept everyday

Parish roads with kerbs are swept 4 times a year

TOO GOOD TO THROW AWAY?

It’s quick, easy and free to give your unwanted items a new home on Freecycle.

Prepare for EU Exit

Visit www.gov.uk/euexit

Join your local group at ilovefreecycle.org

A guide to your Council Tax 2019/20
Useful contacts

Our Council Tax team:
Write to or visit us at:
Braintree District Council,
Causeway House, Bocking End,
Braintree CM7 9HB

Billing enquiries
01376 557755
or counciltax@braintree.gov.uk

Late-payment enquiries
01376 557722
or payadvice@braintree.gov.uk

Council Tax Support enquiries
01376 557852
or benefits@braintree.gov.uk

Our 24/7 automated payment line
01376 557894

Soon, as well as paying your bill online, you will be able to:
• view your bill
• request a copy bill
• check your balance
• see payments you’ve made
• check your next payment due

It also…
• allows access to information about Benefits
• is a useful tool for landlords to see when payments are due and received

For more information, visit:
braintree.gov.uk/openportal

REPORT FRAUD NOW
08000 740405
fraud@braintree.gov.uk

If you require this leaflet in an alternative format, please call 01376 557755

Data Protection Statement:
The Council may share information internally and with other agencies to carry out its statutory functions efficiently.

Braintree District Council has a duty to protect the public funds it administers, so we may use information you provide for the prevention and detection of fraud.

Information may also be shared with other bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds for these purposes.

More information can be found on www.braintree.gov.uk/privacy

Information correct at time of print, February 2019.