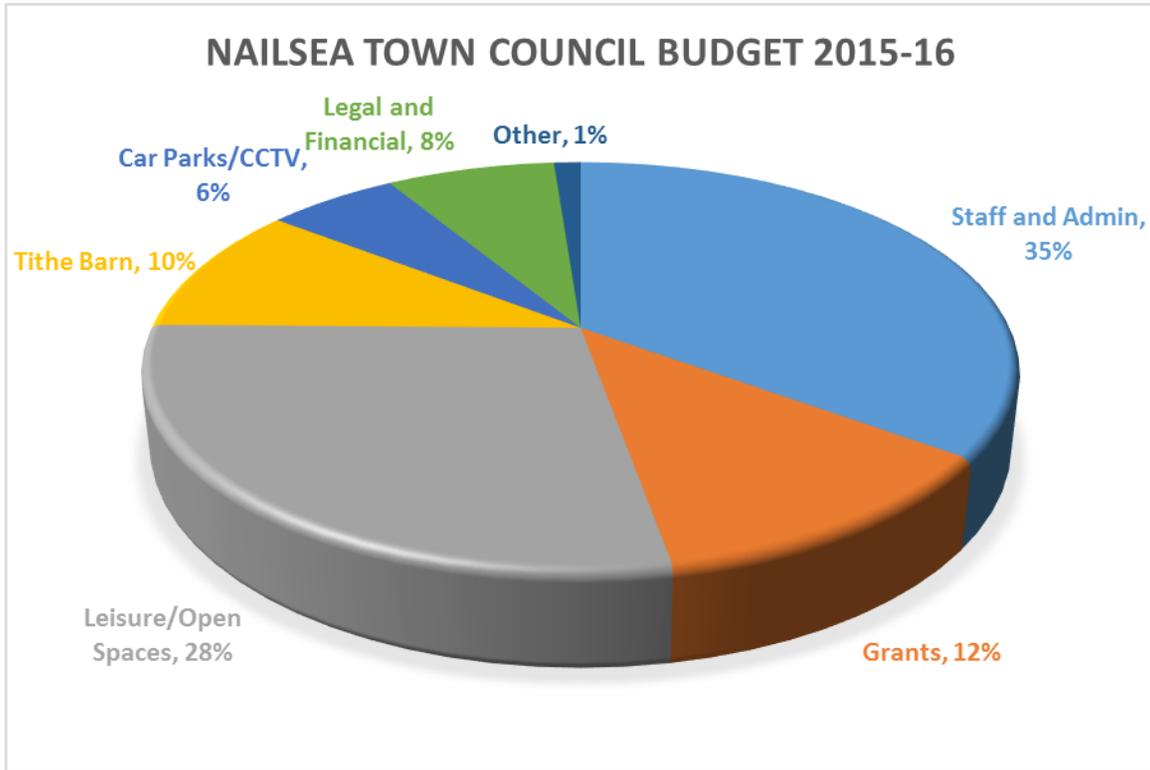


Nailsea Annual Town Report 2015-16

The summary of expenditure is shown below, and a more detailed breakdown is at the end of the report.



In 1999 I moved to Nailsea from Taunton to be closer to Bristol where I was working at the time. I soon found a town with friendly people and as I found over time a lot going on.

For the active there are three sports centres offering a wide range of activities, thriving rugby, cricket and football clubs, a nationally recognised table tennis club, bowls club, a croquet club – which hosted the world championship a few years ago - and there are walking groups for those who enjoy a social walk. Then we have a fantastic network of paths running throughout the town for exercise, for getting from A to B without using cars and connecting our many areas of open parkland where children enjoy the play equipment and adults can just relax.

In Millennium Park, after many years of hard use, the existing skatepark equipment has been removed and is now being replaced with a new concrete structure in time for the 14th annual skatepark festival to be held in July. This new skatepark design will cater for boards, bikes, scooters, skates and wheelchairs. It will have areas for those just starting out through intermediary up to the very skilled. The delivery of this new skatepark has been a fine example of how people within our town come together to achieve their vision of improving facilities for the use of all.

We are not short of indoor entertainment in Nailsea with the Nailsea Theatre Club producing three plays each year, Nailsea Musicals performing at the Scotch Horn Centre, the annual Festival of Music, Bedford Performers and choirs all providing an outlet for the many talented people we have in our town.

Our young people are fortunate to have excellent schools in Nailsea and there are activities for them outside school. There are two scout groups, air cadets and guides, gym, dance and martial arts as well as clubs using the sports fields and the all-weather pitch at Nailsea School.

We have amazing volunteers within our town who dedicate so much time to organisations that help others. The Leg Club, Nailsea Disability Initiative, Citizens Advice Bureau, Community Transport, Phoenix Friendship Club, Vision North Somerset, Parkinsons North West Somerset, Wellspring Counselling, Community Alcohol and Drug Use, MS Therapy Centre, Nailsea and District Prostate Support Group, WRVS Nailsea Daycare, Methodist Lunch Club, Mencap Cool Summer Club, Crossroads, Nailsea Summer Playscheme, Cruse Bereavement, Golden Oldies Charity, Nailsea Social Sheddors and many more, and I would like to thank all of them for working tirelessly to make life better for so many.

There are also volunteer groups who work hard to make the town look good. Nailsea in Bloom plant out the beds and planters you see around the town and have plans to extend their efforts. The Friends of Trendlewood Park look after Nowhere Wood and the adjacent park area. Recently there was an initiative to collect litter within the town under the banner of 'Better Nailsea'. Then there are larger events for all - the annual May Fair and Carnival organised by the Scouts, Nailsea Flower Show, the Trendlewood Festival and Skate Festival.

Nailsea has so much to offer and I know there will be more which I have not included above and apologies for the omissions. We have in my view a really active and creative town with enthusiastic, dedicated and fun people. And there is more to come. As well as the above events the Christmas Street Fair is to be restored this year. Again, a group of enthusiastic volunteers have decided this is an event that has been missing from the calendar for too long. Put it in your diaries – Friday 2nd December.

The Town Council does its best to facilitate what happens in the town. It leads where it can and supports the organisations and events mentioned above. Over the past year the Council completed the restoration of the Glassworks site. There is now a pleasant park area for use by all rather than the wasteland it was. Over the past few years, along with other parishes and councils in Somerset it challenged National Grid on their plan to erect pylons rather than putting new cables underground. Many thanks must go to Fiona Erleigh who worked tirelessly in the battle with National Grid. Sadly, despite some success our major cause was lost: however, importantly it showed how communities can work together for a cause and make large bodies justify themselves. Much has been learnt for the future.

Nailsea is a town that in 2001 had a population of 16,546 and by 2011 this had fallen to 15,630 - from a high in 1991 of 17,230 – according to the census figures. I would like to see Nailsea grow again. With a national shortage of properties I feel we have the space to provide new homes to welcome new people into our town: we certainly have the active community to make them feel welcome and to engage with them.

The Town Council is currently responding to a proposal from Barratt Homes to develop 18 acres of land along Engine Lane of which the Town Council owns 14 acres. This is an opportunity to provide much needed new homes that will comply with the Town Council's housing mix policy and will generate a capital receipt, which will then be reinvested in the town.

There are other sites that North Somerset have allocated for around a further 700 homes. New developments will always impact on some residents, given that they will be constructed adjacent to existing housing. New homes will bring a benefit to the town though, with greater use of the high street and town centre which in turn will attract new shops, provide more pupils for our schools, be a source of even more volunteers and contributors to the organisations I have mentioned above and bring new ideas into our community – even new Councillors!

This Town Council does not stand still and it looks to the future of Nailsea. A five year Strategy and Action Plan for Nailsea has been drawn up and this plan will be presented to the people of Nailsea in the coming year for their feedback. It revolves around three core issues – Recreation, the Town Centre and a Nailsea Network. Some of this plan is within the Town Council's control whilst some is dependent on North Somerset Council agreeing to and supporting our plans. There is much work still to be done and the outcome will be to improve Nailsea for everyone.

So I am pleased that I found Nailsea and moved here. It is so encouraging to see so much community activity and to see our town thriving.

Finally, I have some thank yous to give -

First, you will be aware of the Farmer's, Craft and Community Market held in the town centre once a month. Gina Provis took on the role as manager of the market seven years ago. The market has been a resounding success, and that is coming from the traders who say it is the best market in the area. Gina has decided to hand the baton over to someone new and I would like to thank her, on behalf of the town, for making our market such a success.

Secondly, I would like to thank our Clerk, Ian Morrell, and all of the Town Council staff for their unstinting support to the town over the last year. As some of you may know Liz Fey left during the year and we wish her well. Pennee Paige has stepped up to take over the finance role and is doing a great job. We also welcomed Emma Herriot to the administrative staff and Steve Willmott as caretaker.

Finally, a big thank you to all of the town councillors for their contribution to the Town Council throughout the year. The time you give freely is appreciated and your views and contribution to the debates we have on a wide range of matters help to make our town a better place to live in.

Cllr David Packham, Town Council Chair
April 2016

How has the Council spent your money?

The total expenditure budget of the Council in the year was £466,124 and the precept was £457,606: the 3rd year in a row when it has remained unchanged. The Council also generates income from some of its activities, such as hiring the Tithe Barn, allotments, grazing on its land at Gaulacre and market canopy hire. The total budgeted income was £533,173: the surplus funds created have been put into reserves in preparation for further budget cuts at North Somerset Council and the likelihood that some services will have to be taken over by the Town Council.

The major items of revenue expenditure are:

Staff, office and administration costs: £163,500 (35% of the total budget) - this includes: office staff, handyman, Town Orderly and Farmers' Market Manager, office costs and web-site.

Grants: £56,469 (12%)

Leisure and open spaces: £130,750 (28%) - this includes: youth services, maintenance and improvement of sports fields, public rights of way, woodlands, open spaces, Nailsea in Bloom, planting and watering, Garden of Rest, bus shelters, litter and dog bins, allotments, play equipment, Farmers and Craft markets, Christmas lights and street lighting.

Tithe Barn: £47,650 (10%) – Events' Coordinator, caretakers, maintenance and repairs.

Legal and banking: £34,996 (8%) - legal and professional fees, banking costs, loans, audit and insurance.

Car parks and CCTV: £27,239 (6%)

Other: £5,520 (1%) - includes contingency costs.

The diverse activities of the Town Council require many hours of councillors' time and it is worth noting that they do not receive any allowances for their work.