

Increased council charges – what does it mean for you?



The Council has set out its plans as to how it will spend just under £1 billion of revenue next year. But it has deemed it necessary to put some charges up too from 1 April 2016, and while most of these have risen by around 4% there are a couple of exceptions.

Here are a selection of the charges which have been reviewed (upwards!). In light of reduced funding from central government the council is not only increasing its charges, but it is shedding 2000 jobs in its transformation programme to create a leaner, more agile corporation. Band D council tax will be set at £1,169 and the council expects to raise £238 million from that source in the next year.

The council put its draft budget out to consultation last September and received over 4,000 suggestions and comments from the public, some of which they listened to and reacted to by making changes in their budget calculations. For example school crossing patrols have been retained and there will be no reductions in community centre staffing. Increasing charges for council services seems inevitable each year, but the list itself shows how wide and varied the council's services are.

These are just some examples of what the council charges, but the full list of amended charges will be published on the council [website](#) within the next month.

The cost of one session for a pre-school child at Cowgate Under 5s Centre on the Royal Mile goes up by 4% from £24.30 to £25.30 and the cost of having school meals at primary school rises to £2.05 from £1.95.

The entrance fee to the Nelson Monument and Scott Monument has been increased by 25% to £5.00.

Half day hire of Assembly Rooms Music Hall has gone up from £955 to £985.

Getting rid of your wasp infestation will now cost £59.00 increased from £56.46, while dealing with rats and mice will now cost you £80.00 not £76.32. Bed bugs however are a more costly exercise at £109.00 (£104.55), presumably as they are harder to see?

The burial fee which the council charge has increased to £1051.00 from £1010.65, although if you need to dig the grave up again the cost is much higher at £3364.00 (£3234.90) and, for some reason known to HMRC, an exhumation fee has VAT added to it.

The cost of cremation at the city's crematoria has been increased from £679.58 to £708.00.

At the Central Library the cost of attending an Edinburgh Reads Event will increase from £4.30 to £4.50 for non-Library members, and if you want to hire a room at the Reference Library the cost is £162.00 rather than £155.00.

The cost of obtaining a licence for various activities has risen; for animal boarding the fee is now £309 (£297) but the cost of obtaining a public entertainment licence for an audience of more than 15,000 is now increased by 4% to £12,480 (£12,000).

If you own a flat or house let out to 3 people or more then you need to have a certificate of Housing in Multiple Occupation (HMO) and this has risen in the highest category to £627 from £602.

If you plan to be married in a Registrar's office then the cost goes up to £225 (£215) which is cheaper than the £330

charged on Saturdays (currently £315).

The cost of renting an allotment has increased to £104.00 strictly in line with the 4% rise although if you need the council to come and cut your grass for you the cost is yet to be confirmed. Currently it costs £80 per year to have your lawn up to 100 square metres tended by the council's gardens department.

If you are having a spring clean then it will cost you £1 more to have your bulky items uplifted by the council after April and if you have to pay for trade waste then the cost goes up to £152 per tonne from £146.50.

The cost of renting a guest room at a sheltered housing complex is increased to £11.30 (£10.87).

Parking charges are usually contentious. There are some who feel that the city centre should be free of cars to eliminate as much pollution from our streets as possible, while others consider it their right.

For those who have to come into the city with their own four wheels the parking charges on George Street, St Andrew Square, Charlotte Square, Queen Street, Market Street and Cockburn Street will increase from £3.50 per hour to £3.60 but the charges in Stafford Street, Melville Street, Morrison Street, Shandwick Place and the Old Town rise by 15% to £3.00 per hour from £2.60.

In Bruntsfield, Sciennes, St Leonard's, Dumbiedykes, Stockbridge and Dean the parking charges are rising from £1.60 per hour to £2.00. If you park within the Extended Controlled Zone then the charge rises by 50% from £1.20 to £1.80 per hour. This measure appears sure to ingather some more cash, but would also appear to have an environmental edge to it.

If you have a resident's permit then the charge increases more if you only buy a three month permit. For example if you live

in the Central Zone 1-4 and buy a three month permit then it will cost you 20% more at £92.00 (£77) but if you buy a 12 month permit then the cost increases to £235.00 from £224.40.

The reason is simple. The council want you to more online and they want to have fewer interactions with you about your parking permit or anything else that you can pay on a computer.

If you need to use the public loo in the bus station then you will need a further 10p when the charge increases from 30p to 40p. The council considered earlier in the year closing some public toilets in the city to save £300,000, and as a result conveniences were closed at

- Ardmillan;
- Canaan Lane;
- Canonmills;
- Currie;
- Granton Square;
- Joppa;
- Juniper Green;
- London Road;
- St John's Road
- Tollcross

The council is still considering the closure of facilities at Middle Meadow Walk and Hawes Pier. There is a list of publicly available toilets [here](#).