



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Cllr Campbell Ritchie
Malmesbury Town Council
Wiltshire
SN16 9BZ

Luke Hall MP
*Minister for Regional Growth and Local
Government*

**Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local
Government**
Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Tel: 0303 444 3440
Email: luke.hall@communities.gov.uk

www.gov.uk/mhclg

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Dear Councillor Ritchie,

Thank you for your email dated 26 November, to Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP, regarding Covid-19 and emergency funding for parish and town councils. I appreciate how important this matter is to you and I am grateful to you for contacting this department with your concerns. I am replying as this matter falls within my ministerial responsibilities.

I am immensely grateful for the way in which parish and town councils across the country have responded to the challenges of the pandemic.

Whilst the Government does not have the necessary powers to pay parish and town councils directly, the Secretary of State has written to principal authorities to urge them to discuss appropriate funding support for parish councils from within the support we have provided to them. The funding for lower tier councils you refer to in your letter is part of this funding for lower tier district councils. The Government has allocated over £8 billion directly to principal authorities since the start of the pandemic and has committed to provide a further £3 billion for 2021/22.

Therefore, I would encourage parish and town councils to continue to liaise with the relevant principal authorities on how this money is allocated in their area.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that parish and town councils are fully protected from the impact of any council tax losses arising from the pandemic in 2020/21. Legislation requires billing authorities to pay each town and parish council's full council tax requirement for 2020/21 regardless of collection rates, and to bear the cost of any associated collection fund deficit on their behalf at the end of the year.

However, the Government recognises that higher local council tax support caseloads next year may have an impact on the tax base of parish and town councils. The Government is providing authorities with £670 million of new funding for 2021/22, in recognition of the increased cost of providing local council tax support at a time of higher unemployment. As with the other Government funding support, the Government is clear that it expects billing authorities to discuss the distribution of this funding with their local precepting authorities (including parish and town councils). Parish councils will also be able to adjust their precepts for 2021/22. Unlike principal authorities, their precepts are not subject to referendum principles, although the Government expects restraint to be shown when setting increases.

Parish and town councils are also eligible for some direct support from government. Parish and town councils who operate a leisure facility that is outsourced to an external provider, and is not operated by council employed staff, were eligible to apply for the National Leisure Recovery Fund (NLRF). More details can be found on the Sport England [website](#).

Finally, parish and town councils should check their eligibility under the Covid-19 business grant programme where they operate hereditaments that meet the criteria set out in guidance: [here](#).

Once again, I appreciate how important this matter is to you and I am grateful to you for writing in with your concerns.



LUKE HALL MP