

Voluntary Ground Rent:

Information for Councils

Contributors (www.voluntarygroundrent.net) may choose to make a regular monthly payment to local government – a local council (Parish or Town) where this is in place or to a billing authority (District Council, Borough Council or Unitary Authority).

Benefits to the council and local community

Local provision for the common good.

We anticipate that the council will have many ideas for how to improve wellbeing and services, either directly or by supporting community groups and charities.

Invigoration of local democracy

As the revenue received by local councils increases, their ability to improve their local area increases. Decisions about how to use the revenue are likely to be of interest to local people, and draw them in to council meetings. More people may be encouraged to stand for election, thereby invigorating local democracy.

Use of the contributions

The contributions should be used to improve community wellbeing and provide better services at local level, not to reduce the rates or the parish council precept. The donations are not otherwise restricted in their use nor designated for any particular purpose. But we do expect to be able to see a record in a council's annual accounts of the total contributions received and how they have been used.

Contributors or local councils may consider donating some of the revenue to other purposes. This might be a higher tier of government (County Councils or even national government), more local bodies (street assemblies) or to fund an Unconditional (Basic) Income (on whatever scale seems appropriate).

Our objectives as contributors

We are keen to see the improvement of local areas and to promote greater participation at parish / town council-level as well as that of the billing authority. Our primary aims are to:

- encourage transition from a system of national revenue-gathering that provides disincentives for activities that we should be encouraging (such as work, enterprise, adding value, production), to a system of local revenue-gathering in which owners of land pay a ground rent to their local communities, and these communities submit a proportion to higher levels of government;
- grow popular and political support for the gradual reform of National Non-Domestic (Business) Rates and Council Tax so that they become equal to the value of the ground rent (the market rent of the land ignoring any buildings or other improvements) – a Land Value Tax.

Gift Aid

Some councils have set up a charity as a separate entity. If you are one of these, you can ask contributors to Gift Aid their contribution, increasing its value by 25 per cent. Even if you do not have a registered charity, the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) advises that contributions can be Gift Aided if you have an Inland Revenue exemption number, or in specific causes that may be deemed charitable, subject to individual validation. CAF are willing to give advice. Email charityvalidation@cafonline.org, keeping the following reference within the subject bar: 16575-496156452.