

## Frequently Asked Questions

ANNEXE 21

### **How can I avoid the Court Proceedings ?**

Simply, by paying in full (including the Summons costs) OR by setting up a Direct Debit before the Hearing. Phone us on (01273) 291291 to set up a Direct Debit.

Details of how to pay are printed on the reverse of the enclosed Summons.

### **I have recently applied for council tax benefit ?**

You should contact the Council's Benefit section on (01273) 292000 and tell them you have been Summoned to Court. The Court can not resolve any benefit queries. Outstanding benefit claims do not stop your legal obligation to pay Council Tax.

### **What can I do if I cannot afford to pay ?**

The Court do not consider your ability to pay. Payment arrangements cannot be made at the Hearing. Phone us to see if an arrangement is possible.

### **Why have we been sent more than one Summons ?**

The named people on the bill are jointly responsible for paying the Council Tax and are each sent a Summons. The amount shown on the Summons is the total amount payable by the household and not by each person.

### **Do I have to pay Council Tax, if I'm a Student ?**

If you are a full-time Student you will normally be exempt from paying Council Tax (there are exceptions to this rule), but only if you have provided a valid Student Exemption Certificate from your College/University.

Brighton or Sussex University students should only need to provide their Student Registration number.

### **Will this affect my Credit Rating ?**

No, because these proceedings are conducted in the Magistrates' Court and not the County Court.

### **What happens at the Court Hearing ?**

We will obtain a Liability Order for any balance that remains outstanding. This will incur additional Court costs. After Court you will be sent a letter telling you a Liability Order has been obtained and enclosing an information Request Form. You MUST fill in this form and return it to us within 14 days. Details of what a Liability Order is are given on the back of the Summons.

### **Why must I complete the Information Request Form ?**

You are legally obligated to supply the Council with details of your income, if requested to do so. There is space on the reverse of the Information Request Form for you to make an offer to us. A payment for or greater than the amount you are offering must be enclosed with your completed form.

### **Contacting the Council**

A written response to a letter, fax or e-mail may not always be possible, if sent too close to the Hearing date, so please include a daytime contact phone number.

**You should ring (01273) 291291 if you have not heard back from us by the Monday before the Hearing date.**

