

Queen's costs touch 40 mn pounds, she says not enough

The royal family costs every Briton 66 pence a year. The other way of looking at it is it adds up to around 40 million pounds for regal life in the Buckingham Palace. While anti-monarchy groups say it is a waste of public money, the Queen finds the money inadequate.

This year's Royal accounts add up to 40 million pounds in all, up by around 2 million pounds over last year. This includes 275,000 pounds spent on a Caribbean cruise by the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall which helped the total bill on royal trips to cross the 6-million-pound mark.

Double-glazing and new sash windows at Windsor Castle cost 300,000 pounds. The Queen's garden parties swelled the expenses by 700,000 pounds. Maintaining the royal gardens does not come cheap. Last year the expenses were just a little over 900,000 pounds.

Anti-monarchy groups say the actual costs for royal upkeep would hover around the 150 million pounds if one takes into account the costs of police and army security are included.

Sir Alan Reid, keeper of the Privy Purse, counters that it is still not a bad deal for the British tax payers. The expenditure of the royal pensioner is 66 pence per person in the country. That is equal to the price of a loaf of bread or a pint of milk or an iPod download, he argues.

He himself takes home a salary of 187,000 pounds a year.

The Queen bemoans that her palaces are crumbling and need money for repairs. State rooms have leaky roofs and peeling wallpaper, the tiles are slipping and the wiring is 50 years old.

Palace officials say at least 32 million pounds is needed for the upkeep of the palaces over the next 10 years.

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