

WOOLSTON PARISH COUNCIL – 20 JANUARY 2026
REPORT OF THE CLERK
BUDGET AND PARISH PRECEPT 2026-27

The Council is requested to determine the budget and parish precept for 2026-27. A summary of the estimated net expenditure for 2026-27 is given below. A copy of the draft budget for each committee has been supplied. The Council have previously agreed that the budget should be prepared on a no growth basis.

Environment and Amenities

Environmental works and events	13100
Battery Lane Allotment Site	500
	13600

Finance and General Committee

Administration	16150
Civic and Members	3350
General and projects	7700
	26300
Total net expenditure	39900

Martinscroft Village Green

A periodic inspection of all trees on the Green will be carried out in 2025-26. Repairs were completed to the trip rails in the previous financial year.

The agreed scheme for traffic calming measures included recognition of maintenance work. Provision has been made for tree works and road maintenance.

Hillock Lane amenity area

The Borough Council consulted the Council on use of the amenity area as part of a scheme for Woolston Playing Fields. The Council received a presentation from a housing developer on works proposed to provide artificial grass pitches (AGP) on part of the playing fields through S106 funding related to a housing development at the former Padgate Campus. This will be implemented in liaison with Borough Council.

The Council has agreed in principle to the use of amenity land for a 50-space extension to the car park as part of the scheme. A planning application was submitted for this development in December 2025. No contact has been made by the Borough Council on the current scheme.

Provision has been made for unplanned works e.g.; tree works and participation in any scheme promoted by the Borough Council.

Woolston Playing Fields

Responsibility for the management of the playing fields has been with the Borough Council from 1 September 2012. No further discussions have been held with the Borough Council on the future use and management of the playing fields and the associated impact on the amenity area. Provision has been made for participation in any scheme promoted by the Borough Council.

Election costs provision

Provision has been made for the repayment of the costs of elections based on the policy agreed by the Borough Council to have the option of repayment by instalment.

Woolston Park

Provision of has been included in the draft budget for Community Events, as in previous years. Separate provision is made for works by the Friends of Woolston Park Group in the park. The Council on 6 December 2023 agreed to support repairs to the Ranger Cabin by allocating the budget provision for 2023-24 as a contribution to these works, and to carry over

this provision works were not completed. Payment of this funding was made to the Friends of Woolston Park group following the approval of repair works to the Ranger Cabin. The Council has received reports that the Borough Council is continuing the review on repair works.

Road safety scheme

Provision has been made for a road safety scheme to assist in speed control of vehicles. This has been delayed allowing a scheme to be developed in liaison with the Borough Council and the Police.

Facilities for young people

The Council has considered supporting facilities for young people subject to consultation with other agencies and young people in the parish. The Council has received reports of possible contributions from the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire. Provision was made in 2024-25 to allow a contribution to a scheme.

Old Billy scheme – New Cut Canal

The Council gave approval to a scheme along the New Cut Canal to celebrate the life of Old Billy, the World's oldest working horse. Culture Warrington led on the development of the scheme. The construction of the scheme was completed and maintenance is carried out by the Borough Council with the assistance of the New Cut Heritage and Ecology Trail Group volunteers. The Council has agreed to continue working with Culture Warrington on promoting the trail through their website.

Woolston Neighbourhood Hub – assistance to repairs

The Council on 9 December 2025 gave consideration to action to assist the reopening of the centre. This included agreement in principle to the application for a PWLB loan to help to secure the urgent reopening of the facility. Details have been obtained of the process for making application for a loan. Any response from the Borough Council to representations made will be reported to the meeting.

Earmarked reserves 2026-27

Provision has been made for the following earmarked reserves:

Martinscroft Village Green	5000
Tree works	6000
Woolston Playing Fields/Hillock Lane Amenity Area	4000
Road safety scheme – speed control	3000
Facilities for young people	1000
Election costs	2000
Total	£21000

Calculation of Precept for 2026-27

Closing balances 31/3/25

Council	46296
Charity	10700
Total balances at 31/3/25	56996
Precept 1/4/25	26221
Council balances	46296
Total	72517

Estimated net expenditure 2025-26
Committee budgets 38490

Estimated balances at 31/3/26
Council 34027

Budget provision 2026-27
Net estimated expenditure 39990
Earmarked reserves 21000
Total provision **£60900**

Estimated amount to be met from Precept £26873

Level of Precept

The precept for 2025-26 was £26221 giving an amount of £11.34 for a Band D property. The tax base notified by the Borough Council for 2026-27 is 2346 compared to 2312 for 2025-26. A precept of £26,607 using the notified tax base for 2026-27 would give an estimated amount of £11.34 for a Band D property. This would meet the criteria set by the Council for a no growth budget as applied in determining the precept for 2025-26.

Other examples of the estimated result of the precept figure for a Band D property for the year 2026-27 are:

£25000	£10.65
£26873	£11.41
£27000	£11.50

Recommendation

That the Council determine the Budget and Precept for 2026-27.