

**WOOLSTON PARISH COUNCIL – 21 JANUARY 2025
REPORT OF THE CLERK
BUDGET AND PARISH PRECEPT 2025-26**

The Council is requested to determine the budget and parish precept for 2025-26. A summary of the estimated net expenditure for 2025-26 is given below. A copy of the draft budget for each committee has been supplied. The Council agreed on 3 December 2024 that the budget should be prepared on a no growth basis.

Environment and Amenities

Environmental works and events	12800	
Battery Lane Allotment Site	500	
		13300

Finance and General Committee

Administration	16250	
Civic and Members	5850	
General and projects	7550	
		27260

Total net expenditure **40560**

Martinscroft Village Green

The Council a periodic inspection of all trees on the Green will be carried out in 2025-26. Repairs have been completed to the trip rails. 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

Liaison is continuing with the Borough Council on use of the amenity area as part of a scheme for Woolston Playing Fields. Until this information is received consideration of environmental improvement works to the amenity area was halted. 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 to 2024-25 if works are not completed in the current financial year. 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. Draft artwork was provided by Culture Warrington based on the Old Billy book published in 2023 and now in use in primary schools across the Borough. Physical works to instal signs along the length of the canal towpath have been completed in this financial year. The Council is worked in partnership with the Borough Council in implementing the scheme. Poulton with Fearnhead parish council agreed to support to the scheme and the New Cut Heritage and Ecology Trail Group volunteers installed the signs along the towpath working with officers of the Borough Council. The construction of the scheme has been completed and maintenance will be carried out by the Borough Council will the assistance of the NCH&E Trail Group volunteers. The Council has agreed to continue working with Culture Warrington on promoting the trail through their website.

Earmarked reserves 2025-26

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	4000
Total	£23000

Calculation of Precept for 2025-26

Closing balances 31/3/24		
Council	41414	
Charity	10460	
Total balances at 31/3/24		51874
Precept 1/4/24	26300	
Council balances	41414	
Total		67714

Estimated net expenditure 2024-25

Committee budgets	30545
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Estimated balances at 31/3/25

Council	37169
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Budget provision 2025-26

Net estimated expenditure	40560
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Earmarked reserves	23000
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Total provision	£63560
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Estimated amount to be met from Precept £26391

Level of Precept

The precept for 2024-25 was £26300 giving an amount of £11.34 for a Band D property. The tax base notified by the Borough Council for 2025-26 is a reduced figure of 2312 compared to 2319 for 2024-25.

A precept of £26221 using the notified tax base for 2025-26 would give an estimated amount of £11.34 for a Band D property. This would meet 2025 the criteria set by the Council for a no growth budget as applied in determining the precept for 2024-25.

Other examples of the estimated result of the precept figure for a Band D property for the year 2025-26 are:

£25000	£10.81
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£26391	£11.41
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£27000	£11.67
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Recommendation

That the Council determine the Budget and Precept for 2025-26.