Stilton Parish Council

Budget FY2026 - 2027

The Budgeting Process

The Finance, General Purpose and Communication Committee reviews spending on a quarterly basis along with financial commitments for the remainder of the financial year.

From these reviews and any specific spending requirements, as detailed in the Parish Council's Action Plan, a draft budget proposal for the coming year is drawn up. To meet spending requirements the Parish Council then adjusts its precept request accordingly.

The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) is key to this process, being responsible for the Council's financial administration. This position is currently held by the Parish Clerk, as is the case in many parishes. Precept decisions are made by councillors at a formal Parish Council meeting.

Sources of Income

Income from Facilities

The Parish Council receives income from Stilton Pavilion and Community Field hire, primarily to Stilton's football clubs. There is considerable expenditure in maintaining and operating he facility.

Additional income comes from burial grounds (Cemetery, New Churchyard and Garden of Remembrance). This is also managed by the Parish Clerk/RFO. Cambridgeshire County Council pays a contribution to the Parish Council annually for cutting the grass on their land in the village.

There are currently 4 part-time staff employed by the Parish Council, along with their line manager, the Parish Clerk/RFO.

All forms of income are identified in the accounts.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Community Infrastructure Levy is a charge on development that the District Council collects to fund local infrastructure, and its spending is strictly restricted by legislation. The Parish Council currently holds 'meaningful' CIL which is distributed after development has taken place in the Parish (15% goes to Parishes without a Neighbourhood Plan and 25% for those with a plan). CIL is identified in the Parish Council's accounts. It is recorded in the accounts as income but cannot be spent generally. This money is held by the Parish Council in a savings account so earns interest until allocated for spending. CIL must be spent within 5 years of receipt otherwise it is returned to the District Council.

'Strategic' CIL funds are generated from development but are distributed more widely throughout the district and can be applied for in the form of a grant from Huntingdonshire District Council.

Section 106 Contributions (S106)

Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 enables local planning authorities to enter into legal agreements with developers to mitigate the specific impacts of a development. It can fund infrastructure, facilities, or services that are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms. There are currently no S106 funds held by Stilton Parish Council.

Precept

This is the total amount to be raised through Council Tax from dwellings within the Parish, although some households are exempt or pay a reduced amount. The 'Precept' is converted into an amount per Council Tax band and forms part of the Council Tax bill issued Huntingdonshire District Council.

Parish Priorities for 2026-2027

The Council's 2026-27 budget has been developed to ensure the continued delivery of quality services, responsible financial management, and investment in the Parish's infrastructure.

While recognising the increasing cost pressures facing local authorities, the Council remains committed to maintaining core services and advancing community priorities identified through the Parish Action Plan 2026-27 and ongoing resident engagement.

Green Spaces, Amenities and environment

The council continues to prioritise the care and enhancement of public open spaces and the wider environment through working groups.

Ground Maintenance & Tree Management
In addition to the Community Field the Parish has responsibility for a number of pockets of land throughout the village, with recent additions around Mill Road, from land purchased from Jelson Homes Ltd.

Cemetery and New Churchyard Maintenance
The long-term upkeep of public burial space in the Cemetery, New Churchyard and the Garden of Remembrance, ensure dignity and accessibility.

Environmental Improvements
Supporting local biodiversity projects such as the recent project in Apreece Way and bulb planting in Churchyard.

Play Area Inspections and Renewals
Weekly inspections are carried out to maintain a safe and welcoming play environment. Barn Close, Under-6's play equipment has recently been removed. The council are seeking ideas from residents to ensure appropriate equipment is provided.

Parking & Traffic
Road and pedestrian safety is a key focus with work alongside Cambridgeshire County Council, Huntingdonshire District Council & the Police Force.
Speed awareness continues to be a priority as we look to increase our MVAS equipment, moving to solar powered devices.

Governance, Staffing and Administration

Good governance underpins all aspects of the Council's operation and the 2026-27 budget looks to support this.

Local Council Award Scheme
We are soon to receive a Bronze award. This scheme allows councils to demonstrate adherence to sector standards, be evaluated by their peers, and establish conditions conducive to ongoing improvement.

Audit and Compliance
We have robust internal and external audit provision to maintain transparency and accountability.

Insurance and Risk Management
We ensure adequate insurance cover is in place and are proactive in the management of assets and liabilities.

Reserves and Forward Planning

The Council's financial strategy remains focused on sustainability and future proofing.

General and Earmarked Reserves

Section 50 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 provides guidance on appropriate levels of contingency funding to ensure resilience against unforeseen costs. The Parish Council Reserves Policy directs to hold 5/12ths of the annually precepted figure in its General Reserves. We will increase our holding of General Reserves in FY26-27 to move into line with this.

Precept 2026-27

Year	Precept	Tax Base	Band D	% Increase
2025/26	£123,194	822.3	£149.82	
2026/27	£147,143	840.9	£174.98	16.8%

The base rate (number of Band D equivalents) is calculated annually by Huntingdonshire District Council but does not automatically increase because more homes are being built. There is a lag between development and occupation, and the council tax base is adjusted for discounts and support.

The precept for 2026-27 is £147,143.

This represents an increase of £25.16 per year or £2.10 per month for a Band D household, equivalent to approximately £0.48 per week, ensuring the Council can maintain services and continue planned projects.

While a 16.8% precept increase may appear high as a percentage, the precept remains modest in cash terms per household.

It is better to plan steadily than face crisis increases later.

Outlook

We wish to provide stability by maintaining our general reserves, and working with a balanced, well considered budget.