



ANNUAL PARISH MEETING, FINANCE REPORT

Clerks Report

**Monday
27th April 2026**

This report outlines the Parish Council's financial position and activity during the 2025/2026 financial year, a period of increasing responsibility alongside continued careful management of public funds.

Over the past year, the Council has taken on a broader and more complex financial role, reflecting both community growth and a commitment to supporting local services, facilities, and initiatives. Despite these increased responsibilities, financial decisions have remained prudent, transparent, and focused on residents' needs.

A key element of this year's framework is the Parish Council's precept. While there has been a slight increase, this has been managed proportionately and offset by the continued expansion of the parish's tax base. Ongoing development at Wichelstowe, along with smaller developments, has enabled costs to be spread more widely while maintaining service levels and investment in community priorities.

For the 2026/27 financial year, the council tax base has increased by a 3.5% rise – this is an increase of homes in the parish. The budget has been set with a total precept demand of £729,448 which reflects a 4.92% increase from the previous year.

The Council also continues to benefit from strong relationships with local businesses, securing increasing sponsorship contributions year on year. This support helps fund community enhancements such as seasonal planting, Christmas trees, benches, play equipment, and defibrillators, reducing pressure on public funds while improving quality of assets in the community.

A significant development of last year has been the Council becoming the sole trustee of the Ellendune Community Centre CIO. This strengthens its ability to safeguard the centre's future, support its operations and staff, and expand activities. It also enables access to external funding to further enhance the facility for residents.

Overall, 2025/2026 has been a year of steady growth, increased responsibility, and positive progress.

Looking ahead to 2026/2027, the Parish Council has introduced a new Section 137 (S137) grant scheme, providing a clear and transparent way to support local groups and organisations. We look forward to welcoming applications to be reviewed by our Finance & General Purposes Committee.

While the Council holds healthy reserves, most funds are restricted. A large proportion consists of Section 106 (S106) and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions, which must be used for specific infrastructure projects. A range of projects is already underway, with further schemes planned to ensure these funds are used effectively for the benefit of the parish.

The Parish Council's work is delivered by a dedicated team who keep services running smoothly and support ongoing improvements for the community. I am grateful for their hard work, professionalism, and commitment, and it is encouraging to receive positive feedback from residents that reflects their efforts.

Thank you.

Emma Freemantle, Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer.