

THE CHARLTONS PARISH COUNCIL

NOTES ON PRECEPT 2025/2026

1. Employment Costs

Pay scales are based on the local government pay scales negotiated by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services. The current contracted Clerk's hours are 26 hours a month. I have included an additional 2 months salary in anticipation of a handover due to Clerk's 'retirement' and anticipated Employers' NI.

2. Clerk's Expenses

The mileage rate has been budgeted at **45p per mile** in line with SLCC and NALC Car Allowance for Local Council Clerks. In line with common practice, the Clerk will continue to receive £10 monthly Work from Home Allowance.

3. Parish Resilience Fund (PRF)

Due to the uncertainty of Somerset Council (SC) issuing a Section 114 notice, I propose that the Parish Council continues to budget for providing services in such circumstances, such as additional highways costs and clearing gulleys/verges. This fund would only be used if all parish and town councils were asked to contribute towards providing services, such as additional highways costs and clearing gulleys/verges, on a fair and equal basis pro rata to their tax base. The PRF currently stands at £8,358 and can also be used to fund additional grass cutting, ROW repairs, dog waste/grit bins and de-icing materials. I have included an additional £2,000 to bring the total to £10,358.

4. Other Parochial Activities

Speed Mitigation/Speed Indicator Devices. Following the recent purchase of an additional solar panel and fixing kit for the SID, there is £1,572 left in the reserve. I have included an additional £1,000 if it was agreed to purchase a second SID so that there is one in each parish. CIL funds from the Fox and Hounds Development could also be used to make up any deficit if required.

Village Gateways Broadway I have included an additional £300 to bring the total in the reserve to £1,500 to cover the anticipated costs.

The Defibrillator There are no funds left in the reserve following the purchase and installation of the Cary Fitzpaine CPAD and additional pads for Charlton Adam. I have included £500 for the purchase of replacement batteries/pads. CIL funds due can also be used towards defibrillator consumables.

Village Car Park. There is £1,147 left the reserve following the urgent drainage work/repairs to the village car park, therefore, I have included an additional £1,000 in the event that further engineering works are required. CIL can also be used to pay any additional costs once received.

Mill Pond Dredging reserve stands at £1,030. Work to the Mill Pond was last carried out in November 2020 and the bi-annual dredging is now overdue. The reserve is sufficient to fund the work and I will hasten Mr Attwell.

Christmas Trees. I have maintained the PC contribution towards the Charlton Adam/Mackrell Christmas Trees at £200. The reserve currently stands at £636. This will bring the reserve total to £836 (+VAT refund £74.) Community fundraising is also anticipated.

Parish Council Website/Laptop. Currently stands at £68 with renewal of Microsoft Office (MO) due at approx. £60. I have included £150 to cover the hosting and domain renewals for the PC website and MO.

The War Memorial/Fingerpost Reserve Fund. There are no funds remaining in the reserve following the recent grounds maintenance work at the War Memorial. I have included £2,500 in anticipation of funds required for continuing restoration work and maintenance at the War Memorial.

Flood Mitigation Reserve Fund. I have left the reserve at £3,150 until costs are known, or a scheme is implemented through development.

Training. I have included £300 for clerk/councillor training to bring the fund back to £530.

Charltons Village News (CVN). I have included £315 for the annual contribution towards the PC's insert in the CVN.

Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal/Wreath - £60 to purchase the PC wreath. Also included is £740 to purchase a wooden Tommy memorial bench for the War Memorial.

St Peter and St Paul Church Clock, Charlton Adam. As agreed at agenda item 24/13/c.ii, I have included £250 for payment towards the maintenance of one of the clocks under section 2 of the Parish Councils Act 1957. (It was suggested that the PCC could raise funds locally towards maintenance of the second clock.)

5. Welham Field and Legal Advice

Following the rent review last year, the PC is currently receiving £550 pa in rent. I have increased the reserve by an additional £2,000 to £4,330 to cover any Land Agent fees and maintenance. The reserve can also be used for legal advice for any PC/planning issue.

6. Grants and Charitable Donations

The Charltons Memorial Community Trust (CMCT) - The CMCT requires the support of the PC for its projects in order for other granting bodies to release funds. Therefore, I propose the PC continues to hold in reserve an annual grant of £3,000 to which the CMCT can apply as required. This can be used towards grounds maintenance and/or the CMCT improvements program.

The Charltons Youth Club – Maintained at £1,575.

Section 137 Grants - I have maintained the section 137 grants at £250 (expenditure which the PC believes is in the interests of, and will bring direct benefit to, their area or any part of it or all or some of its inhabitants).

Somerton Town Library – Maintained at £300 towards the running of the Somerton Town Library.

Citizens Advice Bureau South Somerset – Maintained at £200 due to the lack of grant funding from SC towards such invaluable services.

The Reading Room routine maintenance grant – maintained at £300 to cover the cost of hosting the defibrillator and Christmas lights.

7. Precept and General Reserve (GR)

The Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance Practitioners Guide (JPAG) (March 2020 edition) advises: "The generally accepted recommendation with regard to the appropriate minimum level of a Smaller Authority's GR is that this should be maintained at between three (3) and twelve (12) months Net Revenue Expenditure (NRE)."

"The smaller the authority, the closer the figure should be to 12 months NRE."

The estimated GR at 31/03/25 is £20,362 which is now at a more acceptable level of 10 months NRE. I recommend that the PC continues to build this up and the PC should be able to hold 11 mos NRE next FY.

Due to the increase in precept last year in order to provide a PRF and to provide a more acceptable level of GR, the PC is improving its recommended level of NRE in accordance with JPAG. Therefore, I propose that the PC should consider increasing

the precept from £28,330 to £32,000 for FY 25/26 (an increase of approx. £7.68 per household per annum, the equivalent of 11.78% for a Band D property). I anticipate that the PC should be able to achieve 12 months NRE in FY 26/27.

RCarter

Becky Carter
Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

15th January 2025