

Parish Council Update – April 2026

As April arrives, spring is now fully taking hold across the parish. The lighter days, fresh growth, and renewed activity in our shared spaces bring a welcome sense of energy and momentum. It's a month where many of our plans begin to move forward, and the parish feels noticeably more alive after the winter months.

This edition shares updates on ongoing work, early progress on new initiatives, and the priorities guiding us through the spring season. Whether or not you're able to attend parish meetings, we want everyone to feel connected to the decisions shaping our community.

Thank you to everyone who has already responded to confirm their interest in renewing their allotment agreement. Invoices will be issued in early April. If you do not wish to renew your plot this year, please get in touch so we can offer it to someone on the waiting list. For those continuing, April is an ideal time to start preparing beds and planning your planting as the growing season gets underway.

Planning Highlights

A parish council is a *statutory consultee*. This means Swindon Borough Council must notify the parish council about planning applications; the parish council does not have the power to make the final decision to approve or refuse them, that decision is made solely by Swindon Borough Council. The parish council's role is to provide local knowledge, raise concerns or objections, and represent the views of the community. Its comments are considered part of the decision-making process. Members of the public can view applications, read parish council comments, and submit their own feedback here:

https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20268/planning_applications/380/view_or_comment_on_a_planning_application

Applications Received

Application Ref: S/HOU/26/0268. Description: Proposed Rear Extension and raised ridge. Site Address: 95 Ermin Street, Blunsdon, Swindon SN26 8AA BPC Decision: The PC have no reason to object.

Decisions Made by SBC

Application number: S/HOU/25/1662/WOODCL. Proposal: Amendment to roof construction of previously approved single storey side/rear/ extension REF: S/HOU/25/0099/WOODCL. Site Address: 93 Ermin Street, Blunsdon Swindon SN26 8AA. SBC Decision: Approved

Application Number: S/25/0570/JP. Proposal: Erection of 2no detached self build dwellings (Class C3) and associated works. Site Address: Land At 26 Turnpike Road, Blunsdon Swindon SN26 7EA. SBC Decision: Approved

Application Number: S/HOU/26/0115/JOPL. Proposal: Erection of part two storey and part single storey rear extension, front porch and bay windows with canopy, new roof tiles, conversion of garage to habitable and associated Works. Site Address: 89 Ermin Street, Blunsdon Swindon SN26 8AA. SBC Decision : Approved

The Rivan application was granted planning permission for the proposed development, subject to a detailed list of conditions. The Parish Council held an Extraordinary Meeting in February to consider residents' views on whether we

should challenge the decision. Following that discussion, we commissioned professional legal advice to understand the strength of any potential claim, the likely costs, and the chances of achieving a successful outcome.

Although the legal advice so far indicates that our grounds for challenge are not strong and success is unlikely, the Parish Council has agreed to proceed to the next stage of investigation. While this update is disappointing, the advice clarified that Judicial Review is not a mechanism for re-evaluating the merits of a decision — it is solely concerned with identifying legal error. In this case, no such error seems to have been found, but we are nonetheless pursuing further legal exploration. You can view the full list of planning conditions on the Swindon Borough Council website .

Parish Council Annual Financial Information

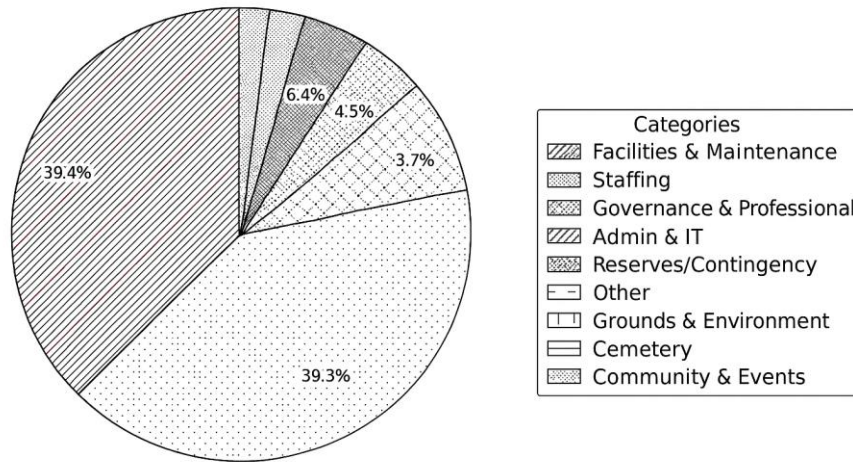
Each March, the Parish Council must publish a set of financial documents to show how public money is managed and to meet national audit requirements. These include:

- **Asset Register** — a list of everything the council owns, such as land, play equipment, benches, and other community assets. This ensures we keep track of what we are responsible for and that items are properly insured and maintained.
- **Approved Budget and Precept** — the budget sets out expected income and planned spending for the year ahead. From this, the council sets the *precept*, which is the portion of Council Tax that funds parish services. The pie chart shows how our 2026–27 budget is allocated across key areas.
- **Precept Request** — the formal notice sent to the borough council confirming the amount the parish needs to raise through Council Tax. This document shows how the precept figure is supported by the approved budget and forms part of the public audit trail.

Producing these documents is an important part of good governance. They show how decisions are made, how money is used, and how we plan for the future on behalf of residents. All of these documents are available to view on the Parish Council website.

Alongside these documents, the Parish Council also carries out regular internal control audits, overseen by one of our councillors. These checks ensure that our financial processes are robust, transparent, and compliant throughout the year. In addition, an independent accountant completes an annual external audit to provide further assurance that public funds are being managed correctly.

Spend by General Category (Budget 2026-27)



Speed watch Update

Speed Watch Data Table (Jan 2026 and early Feb 2026)

Date	Location	Vehicles	Exceeding limit	Maximum Speed	Speed	Start	Finish	Area
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		counted		mp	Limit				
09/02/2026	Broadbush	129	1	38	30	10:30	11:30	The Shrubbery	
16/02/2026	High St	160	3	29	20	16:00	17:00	Heart in Hand	
17/02/2026	Sams Lane	15	4	29	20	08:00	08:30	Junction with High St	
18/02/2026	Lady Lane	430	4	37	30	15:30	16:30	Cycle Track	
23/02/2026	Ermin St	173	16	49	30	16:00	17:00	Minerva Heights	
25/02/2026	Ermin St	207	2	46	30	15:50	16:50	Minerva Heights	
26/02/2026	Turnpike	26	2	41	30	14:20	15:05	Opp. No 16	
02/03/2026	Broadbush	398	5	42	30	10:00	11:00	The Shrubbery	
03/03/2026	High St	175	31	36	20	16:00	17:00	Heart in Hand	
04/03/2024	Ermin St	198	18	47	30	15:55	16:55	Minerva Heights	
05/03/2026	Turnpike	77	8	49	30	16:00	17:00	Opp. No 16	

The monitoring shows generally good compliance across most locations, with only 3.7% of vehicles exceeding the limit. However, several areas stand out as concerns. Ermin Street, High Street, and Turnpike show repeated high speeds, including maximums of 49 mph in 30 mph zones and significant non-compliance in 20 mph areas. Other locations such as Broadbush and Lady Lane show low levels of speeding despite high traffic volumes. Overall, the data highlights a few consistent hotspots where targeted enforcement or further measures may be needed. If you have a little time to spare and would like to support this work, please get in touch at ianjankinson@blunsdon-pc.gov.uk.

Challenges and areas of focus

This month's update offers a few brief glimpses into current projects. Whether it's resolving infrastructure issues, reviewing policies, or pushing for improvements, we're committed to making progress and being open about the challenges we face along the way.

We hope these snapshots give you a clearer sense of the effort and care that go into even the smallest decisions. As always, we welcome your questions, ideas, and feedback.

Car Charger: Several months ago, the electric car charger at the village shop was damaged. Since then, one of our councillors has worked persistently with Charge My Street to resolve the insurance claim and arrange a replacement. We're now a few steps further along in the process and hope to receive an installation completed in April.

Path repairs: Several path repairs have been reported around the village, not all of these are receiving the prompt attention that we would like, but we continue to report. If any residents would also like to report path issues then this can be done directly to Swindon Borough Council, the QR code provides a link. (www.swindon.gov.uk)



Garages: Last year we raised concerns about the condition of several council-owned garages around Blunsdon, many of which had fallen into disrepair. Swindon Borough Council has since carried out an assessment and is now working through the list to contact tenants and arrange the necessary repairs. If you currently rent a council garage that needs attention, or if you no longer require it, please get in touch with SBC at garages@swindon.gov.uk so they can update their records and plan any required work.

MUGA: We are currently reviewing options for a new access-control system for the MUGA. The aim is to allow people who have booked the facility to unlock it themselves, without needing a caretaker on site. We hope to have this in place over the next few months. With the warmer weather on the way, it would also be great to see more summer sports making use of the space. The tennis courts, in particular, would be ideal for a regular group or team to use.

Back Lane: Concerns have been raised on the road damage in Back Lane due to heavy lorries turning into Blunsdon Sewage Farm, we have reported this to SBC.

Grounds maintenance: With April marking the start of the growing season, our grounds maintenance schedule will be underway. Regular grass cutting, strimming, and general upkeep will begin across the village, including play areas, open spaces, and verges, all in line with the agreed areas of our maintenance contract. As the weather warms, this routine work helps keep shared areas tidy, safe, and enjoyable for everyone.

Meet Your Councilor / Staff Member

Each month, we'll be introducing you to the people working behind the scenes at Blunsdon Parish Council.

Role on the Parish Council:

Russell joined the Parish Council in December 2025 in a part time caretaker role. This job can be wide ranging and one day is never the same as the next. His focus is on keeping the village facilities in a safe and well maintained condition.

What Russell gets involved with:

Russell spent over 30 years in Facilities Management and is familiar with the management of buildings and grounds from both a practical and documentation perspective. Having spent many years in the "office", on retirement, he sought something more practical and outdoors, to keep him active and connected to people.

His role is varied and some degree of flexibility is required. He is often involved with the following.

- Opening and Closing Village facilities
- Minor repairs and poster replacement

- Compliance inspections of our sites
- General sweeping and tidying
- Advising on health and safety matters, where his previous experience is welcomed

His connection and what he enjoys about the village:

Russell has lived in Stratton St Margaret for many years and so, is only a stone's throw away from the village. Having worked here now for three months, he is enjoying the beauty and tranquility of the surroundings and the spirit and friendly nature of the team he is working with. As time goes by, he looks forward to meeting and chatting to village residents for just general conversation or any improvements or ideas they might suggest.

A few words about Russell:

Aside from his work career, Russell has always had a keen interest in sporting activity. He is heartened by the different and extra pastimes and activities that are booked out in the Village hall and will probably take a keener interest in the football and cricket teams, now that he has some duties around Sutton Park pavilion. He also thinks the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) is a great recent addition and is impressed with how well used and popular it has become.

Parish Council Elections – Could You Be Our Next Councillor?

Parish elections are just around the corner, and this year Blunsdon has three vacancies on the Parish Council. It's a fantastic opportunity for residents who care about our village to get involved, bring fresh ideas, and help shape the future of our community. If you're considering standing for election, the deadline for new applications is 9 April. No previous council experience is needed — just enthusiasm, a willingness to learn, and a desire to make a positive difference. We'd love to welcome some **new faces** onto the team. If you have any questions please contact ianjankinson@blunsdon-pc.gov.uk

Thank You to the Rapid Relief Team for Supporting Blunsdon

Many residents will have seen the Rapid Relief Team (RRT) out and about recently, helping to keep our village looking its best. We'd like to extend a warm thank you to their volunteers for the fantastic litter-picking effort from Blunsdon Hill to Turnpike. Their hard work has made a real difference to the appearance of our local area.

Dates for Your Diary

Parish Council Meetings – The next two meetings for the Parish Council will be on:

April's Full Council meeting to be held Tuesday 7th April at 7.30pm

Aprils's Finance meeting to be held on Monday 20th April at 7.30pm

If you want to come along, please let us know. Details are on the Parish Council notice boards, Website and FB page.

Contact: Ian Jankinson – ianjankinson@blunsdon-pc.gov.uk – 07702 684281

April 4th: Ward Surgery Meeting at The Village Shop (11:30am) If you haven't been before and would like an informal update on what's happening locally, you're welcome to drop in to the ward councillor meeting at the shop. It's an easy way to catch up on current issues and speak to councillors face-to-face.

Easter this year falls on Sunday 5 April 2026, with Good Friday on 3 April and Easter Monday on 6 April.

Easter has become a broad seasonal celebration of spring, lighter days, and community time, marked by school holidays, family gatherings, and local events. Many traditions—like egg hunts, spring crafts, and shared meals—reflect themes of renewal and new beginnings, rather than religious observance alone. Easter shifts annually because it's set according to the first full moon after the spring equinox, which means it can fall anywhere from late March to late April. This is why some years feel early and others much later. St Leonard's Church usually hosts a range of seasonal community activities during this period—family-friendly events, reflective moments, and spring gatherings—so it's worth keeping an eye on their notices and updates as the holiday approaches.

Did You Know?

A striking “lost Blunsdon” fact is the story of Blunsdon Abbey, once one of the area's most prominent country houses. The grand building was destroyed by fire in the early 1900s, leaving only fragments of its structure behind. Today its surviving ruins sit quietly off Tadpole Lane, a ghost of a much larger estate that shaped the landscape long before modern housing developments grew around it.