



February 2026

Dear Residents,

Blunsdon Parish Council would like to be clear in sharing information about the parish precept for the 2026/27 financial year. We feel it is important to explain how the precept works, how it relates to the services provided in and around Blunsdon, and why it plays such a vital role in supporting our parish.

What the Precept Is

The precept is the parish council's share of your Council Tax. Swindon Borough Council collects the full amount, and a small portion is passed directly to Blunsdon Parish Council to fund certain local services, facilities, and improvements within the area.

While Swindon Borough Council provides major statutory services such as highways (along with Highways England), household waste collection, education, and social care, the parish precept funds some of the things that directly shape daily life in Blunsdon Parish.

How Blunsdon Compares

We want to be clear in sharing information, and for several years we have kept our Band D precept as low as possible. In 2025/26, our Band D charge was £99.96, placing us significantly below many comparable parishes in Swindon Borough.

For example:

- Wanborough: £134.76
- Covingham: £114.60
- Chiseldon: £159.96
- South Marston: £167.71

Even smaller parishes such as Castle Eaton (£174.72) currently sit higher, or broadly in line with, where Blunsdon would typically be expected.

Larger parishes within Swindon Borough also sit considerably higher:

- Haydon Wick: £153.44
- West Swindon: £147.66
- Highworth: £228.50



This comparison shows that Blunsdon has remained below the level of similar and neighbouring parishes for several years.

Over the last few financial years, the Parish Council has deliberately kept the precept artificially low to support residents during a period of significant financial pressure following the Covid pandemic. During this time, however, the Council's current running costs have continued to rise, creating a growing gap between income and expenditure.

As a result, the current year's precept of £133,700 for 25/26 (Band D £99.96) against a budget spend of £171,701, no longer reflects the true cost of delivering services and maintaining parish facilities. In addition, due to the financial pressures of undertaking additional essential works in recent years, the Council's general reserves have been steadily depleting. As a Parish Council, we are required to maintain a prudent level of reserves to ensure resilience, security, and the ability to respond to unforeseen events.

To continue delivering the services we are responsible for, and to remain financially sustainable, we need to increase our precept which will bring it more into line with similar parishes.

For 2026/27, the Council's budget requirement is £213,756. The increase in the precept is therefore required to realign income with actual running costs, ensure services remain sustainable, and protect the condition of parish assets.

Importantly, by making this adjustment now, the Council aims to avoid repeated sharp increases in future years. Bringing the precept back in line with expenditure will help create a more stable financial position and allow for more predictable and modest changes going forward.

Investing in Village Facilities

Alongside these responsibilities, the parish council has also invested in facilities that directly benefit residents:

- The Community Building, supported by the parish council and now operating as a café and village shop. The council provides this building on a peppercorn rent of £1 PA, ensuring it remains a sustainable community asset, but we retain some of the maintenance costs for the building shell.
- The new Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA), which provides sports facilities for the school, local teams, and residents of all ages, and incorporates a parish office and extra parking.
- Adding a community allotment area to unused ground that is used by the local preschool children and reinstating a seating area for all to enjoy.
- An extension to the Blunsdon Cemetery area is in development.

- Ongoing improvements to public play areas and community spaces.

These projects have strengthened our identity and sense of community cohesion and local pride.

Over recent years, the Parish Council has delivered a significant amount of work to improve local facilities and fully enhanced their administrative technology and systems for the delivery of a more efficient and modern council.

Why the Increase Is Needed

Over the past few years, Blunsdon Parish Council has taken on a number of responsibilities that were previously delivered by Swindon Borough Council. These include:

- Emptying over 30 waste bins throughout the parish
- Maintaining certain designated public grass verges and public green spaces such as the REC field, the MUGA area, Ermin Street verge, Hyde Road / Penhill link path etc.
- Cutting back hedgerows around the Recreation field and some other publicly owned hedges next to paths
- Maintaining the grounds for Blunsdon cemetery and churchyard
- Tree maintenance to public areas at ground level
- Autumn leaf clearance to core Blunsdon High Street areas
- Maintaining the ageing village hall, community building, the REC and the pavilion building of which we need to improve accessibility
- Cold weather gritting of public car parks
- Increasing responsibility for local environmental standards, legislation and village presentation
- Managing bookings and caretaking for the village hall, MUGA and REC pavilion (discounted rates available for parishioners' events)

These services are essential for keeping the public areas of the parish clean, safe, and attractive.

Population Growth & Increased Demand

Blunsdon parish has experienced significant growth in recent years, with significant growth to come; resulting in more households, greater use of public spaces, and more buildings and facilities to maintain.

Rising Operational Costs

Like all organisations, the parish council has faced rising costs for essential services. Contractor fees, staff costs, insurance, utilities for parish-owned buildings, servicing costs and materials for

maintenance have all increased. These inflationary pressures mean that maintaining the same level of service now costs more than in previous years.

Legal Responsibilities

The parish council must also meet a range of statutory obligations, including cemetery administration and management, financial auditing, health and safety compliance for public spaces, and governance requirements. These duties carry unavoidable costs that must be met to ensure the parish operates legally and safely.

These combined factors mean that we must adjust the precept to ensure Blunsdon Parish remains as clean, safe, and well-maintained as possible, and that we can continue to meet our legal and community responsibilities.

Our Commitment to You

We remain committed to:

- Careful and responsible budgeting
- Keeping the precept as low as possible while still meeting the Parish needs
- Investing only in projects that we feel benefit residents
- Being transparent about how your money is spent

A full breakdown of the 2026/27 budget will be available on our website from the end of March, and can be requested from us.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the precept or parish services further, please feel free to get in touch.

Thank you for your continued support and for helping us keep Blunsdon a thriving and well-cared-for parish.

Debbie Braiden
Responsible Finance Officer
Blunsdon Parish Council

