



*Great Braxted  
Parish Council*

Clerk to the Council:  
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8<sup>th</sup> January 2026

**To: Members of Great Braxted Parish Council**

**You are hereby summoned to attend**

**THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD AT THE PAVILION  
ON THURSDAY 15<sup>th</sup> January 2026 AT 8.00 PM**

**for the purpose of transacting the following business:**

*LTownend*  
**Clerk to the Council**

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**A G E N D A**

**1. Apologies for Absence**

**2. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting**

Minutes of the Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2025 to be taken as read and signed as a correct record by the Chairman ([attached](#)).

**3. Declarations of Interest (existence and nature)**

Members are reminded that they are required to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Other Pecuniary Interests or Non-Pecuniary Interests which they know they might have in items of business on the agenda. They are reminded that they will need to repeat their declarations at the appropriate point in the meeting and leave the room if required under the Code of Conduct which took effect in July 2022.

Unforeseen interests must be declared similarly at the appropriate time.

**4. Maldon District Councillor Update**

To receive a written or verbal update from the District Councillor.

**5. Public Participation Session**

With respect to items on the Agenda and other matters that are of mutual interest.

## 6. Pavilion Management Committee Update

To receive an update from the Pavilion Management Committee on the Charity Commission's recognition of the Parish Council as the Sole Trustee of the Pavilion.

## 7. Planning

**7.1** To consider planning applications detailed below and any planning applications published on the MDC planning website between the circulation of this agenda and the meeting.

**7.2** To note the Parish Council's response to planning applications considered outside of a meeting and circulated via email, in accordance with Council resolution 20/15.2.

**7.2.1** 25/00952/FUL – construction of domestic outbuilding on land at Lea Lane Wood, Lea Lane Great Braxted. **No objection but requested the following conditions:**

- That the outbuilding is used solely for purposes ancillary to the agricultural management of the land and not for residential, commercial, or habitable use; and
- That no facilities (such as services, drainage, insulation, or layout changes) are installed that would enable the structure to be used as a dwelling or residential accommodation without further planning consent.

**7.3** To note planning decisions made by Maldon District Council.

**7.3.1** 24/00919/FUL Great Braxted - the erection of four new build dwellings (in lieu of Prior Approval for four dwellings, subject of application 24/00072/PACUAR) at Barn A a The Barn Braxted Park Road Great Braxted.

**APPROVED**

## 8. Environment

### 8.1 Village Sign

To receive an update.

### 8.2 Tree Risk Survey

To receive a report and quotations to conduct a tree risk survey. [Report attached.](#)

## 9. Subscription to CouncilWise

To consider subscribing to CouncilWise, who provide training and support to town and parish councils. [Report attached.](#)

## 10. Finance

### 10.1 Accounts for Payment

To agree the accounts for payment, made between meetings, for the period between the 7<sup>th</sup> November 2025 to the 5<sup>th</sup> January 2026. [Attached](#).

**10.2 Bank Reconciliation**

To receive and note the bank reconciliation to the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025. [Attached](#).

**10.3 Budget Comparison**

To receive and note to budget comparison report to the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025. [Attached](#).

**10.4 2026/27 Budget**

To agree the Council's budget for 2026/27. [Report attached](#).

**11. Annual Litter Pick**

To confirm the date of the annual village litter pick in 2026. The Great British Spring Clean will take place between the 17 March – 2 April 2026.

**12. Updates**

- BT Telephone Kiosk
- Wi Fi in the pavilion

**13. General Announcements**

**14. Items to be Included on the Next Agenda**

**15. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled to take place on the 12<sup>th</sup> March 2026. This is a change from the previously scheduled meeting.

**16. Chairman to Close the Meeting**

*THE PUBLIC AND PRESS ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO BE PRESENT  
All reports are available from the clerk*

## Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at The Pavilion on 11th November 2025 at 8:00 pm

**Present:** Councillors R Collins (Chairman), C Knapman (Vice-Chairman), L Holt, R Siddall (Maldon District Council) the Clerk and 3 members of the public.

### 25/67 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Miles.

### 25/68 Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

**Resolved:** that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting, held on the 9<sup>th</sup> September 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Vice Chairman.

### 25/69 Declarations of Interest

Members were reminded that they are required to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Other Pecuniary Interests or Non-Pecuniary Interests which they know they might have in terms of business on the agenda. They were also reminded that they will need to repeat their declarations at the appropriate point in the meeting and leave the room if required under the Code of Conduct which took effect in July 2022. They were further reminded that any unforeseen interests must also be declared at the appropriate time.

No declarations of interests were declared.

### 25/70 Maldon District Councillor Update

Cllr Siddall provided the following update from Maldon District Council:

- It was an honour to officially open the new Braxted Pavilion recently.
- The council has committed to invest £400,000 over the next two years in play equipment and recreational sites across the district.
- The council remains financially stable and is committed to using the funds to benefit the district. For example, car parking charges will remain unchanged in 2026.
- Work continues on the Hythe Quay upgrade project.
- A new café and visitors' centre is planned for the Promenade Park area near the museum.
- Investment is being made in leisure facilities at both Maldon and Burnham, in partnership with an external provider. Once completed, these will offer excellent facilities for residents.

- The council has completed phase 1 of a restructure programme: a new Chief Executive Officer has been appointed, and four senior posts have been removed, generating savings of £300,000. The lower tier management structure is being reduced from five to four tiers, with funds reinvested to strengthen staffing at operational levels. These changes aim to ensure the council is “Unitary Ready.”
- The combined Mayor of Greater Essex will be elected in May 2026.
- Work is underway on a document outlining Maldon’s priorities to present to the incoming Mayor.
- The proposed Combined Authority include Essex County Council, Thurrock, and Southend as the only authorities with voting powers. District and Borough Councils won’t have voting powers until the unitary authorities are formed.
- Maldon, in conjunction with 9 other councils in Essex have backed a five Unitary Authority model where Maldon would join with Brentwood and Chelmsford) with each serving approximately 350,000 people.
- There are three other proposals being considered by Government; two four Unitary Authorities models and one three Unitary Authorities models. If the three Unitary Authorities, each would serve approximately 700,000 people, creating some of the largest councils in the country.
- The decision will be made by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and is expected by the end of 2025 with an announcement expected by February 2026.
- Any proposal will go out for public consultation, though final decisions will rest with the MHCLG.
- Under the five-unitary option, representation would reduce from 31 to 17 councillors; under the three-unitary option, divisions would be larger with councillors reduced to 12.
- The NHS has established a working group to progress services at St Peter’s Hospital, Maldon. The District Council is willing to borrow funds, on behalf of the NHS, to support its continued use. In the first year, the focus will be on ensuring the building’s safety. In the second year, attention will turn to future service provision.
- The Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) are expected to reduce to just two in number.
- The Local Plan is being reviewed: The five-year housing supply target will be prioritised, with completion aimed for by year-end.
- The Government is expected to introduce a new planning methodology in 2026 and new planning rules will come into effect in 2027.
- It is anticipated that the existing plan will carry forward when the new unitary authority is formed.

Cllr Collins requested that Cllr Siddall seek an update on the continued expansion of the Rosedale traveller site on Lea Lane. Cllr Siddall reported that while MDC has the

authority to issue Stop Orders, the submission of a planning application caused the enforcement action to be halted.

Appleford Bridge remains a concern. The proposed A12 upgrade was cancelled, leaving the bridge unfit for purpose. Cllr Siddall has contacted Highways England again but has not yet received a response. He suggested that installing traffic lights, similar to those in Feering, could alleviate traffic congestion. Cllr Siddall will continue to follow this up in the coming weeks.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Siddall for the update.

Cllr Siddall left the meeting 20.31

## 25/71 Public Participation Session

No comments were raised.

## 25/72 To Consider Planning Applications submitted and published by Maldon District Council

25/72/1 25/00881/FUL – resurfacing of existing farmyard with concrete hardstanding at land at Old Farm House, Kelvedon Road, Great Braxted.

**Resolved:** that the council had no objections to this application.

## 25/72/2 To Note Planning Decisions Made by Maldon District Council

There were no decisions to report.

## 25/73 Environment

### 25/73/1 Fencing Repair

**Resolved:** That the Council will engage Roger Clake to remove all vegetation surrounding the existing fence and to carry out any necessary fence repairs. The work will be undertaken at a day rate of £200, for an initial period of four days.

### 25/73/2 Hedge Trimming

**Resolved:** That the Council accepted Skippers' quote of £600, but requested that Skippers be asked to omit the internal hedge trimming to reduce costs to keep the final cost as close as possible to last year's price of £400.

### 25/73/3 Bleed Kit

**Resolved:** the Council agreed this was not required in the village.

### 25/73/4 Village Sign

This matter was deferred while further enquires are made with local artists.

## 25/73/5 Appleford Bridge

This matter was discussed during the District Councillor's update, minute reference 25/70.

## 25/73/6 Tommy Statue

**Resolved:** That a budget of £50 be included in the 2025/26 budget for new decorations for the Tommy Statue, which is erected annually in the period leading up to Remembrance Sunday. The type and design of the decorations will be agreed by the Council at its July 2026 meeting.

## 25/73/7 Cricket Club Contract

The Council discussed the Memorandum of Agreement sent by the Secretary of the Pavilion Management Committee, in which the council is named as a co-signatory/interested party.

**Resolved:** That the Council agreed to sign the Memorandum of Agreement between Great Totham Cricket Club, Great Braxted Pavilion Management, and Great Braxted Parish Council, with one amendment to a clause.

Councillors noted the build-up of grass clippings behind the container and asked if the Secretary of the Pavilion Management Committee could liaise with the Cricket Club to implement a plan to prevent a large accumulation.

## 25/74 Finance

### 25/74/1 Accounts for Payment

The Council approved the following payments:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Supplier</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Net</i>	<i>VAT</i>	<i>Total</i>
11/09/2025	Wallace Arboriculture	August grounds maintenance	190.00	-	190.00
16/09/2025	Cllr Knapman	Phase 2 pavilion expenses	69.92	-	69.92
18/09/2025	Roger Clark Landscapes	Installation of new gate	480.00	-	480.00
18/09/2025	Very Nice Blinds	Replacement cuff links for shutters	16.67	3.33	20.00
23/09/2025	Cllr Knapman	Playground expense	10.47	-	10.47
24/09/2025	Sky Mobile	September phone bill	6.00	-	6.00
01/10/2025	L Townend	September salary	312.80	-	312.80
01/10/2025	HMRC	September PAYE costs	78.20	-	78.20
01/10/2025	L Townend	August/September expenses	69.98	-	69.98
30/09/2025	Unity Trust Bank	August bank charges	6.00	-	6.00
05/10/2025	Walton Tree Services	Hedge Work inside field	240.00	48.00	288.00
09/10/2025	Wallace Arboriculture	September grounds maintenance	570.00	0.00	570.00
10/10/2025	Maldon District Council	Q2 TruCam costs	518.88	103.78	622.66
20/10/2025	VCS Websites	Website build & 12 months hosting	325.00	0.00	325.00
20/10/2025	Cllr Knapman	Gate return spring	22.60	0.00	22.60

28/10/2025	L Townend	October salary	270.40	0.00	270.40
28/10/2025	HMRC	October PAYE costs	67.60	-	67.60
22/10/2025	Sky Mobile	September phone bill	6.00	-	6.00
31/10/2025	Unity Trust Bank	September bank charges	6.00	-	6.00
06/11/2025	Wallace Arboriculture	October grounds maintenance	380.00	-	380.00
<b>TOTAL:</b>					<b>£3,801.63</b>

## 25/74/2 Bank Reconciliation

Cllr Holt verified the bank statements and the bank reconciliation to the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025.

## 25/74/3 Budget Comparison

The council received and noted the budget comparison to the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025.

2 members of the public left the meeting at 21:15.

## 25/74/4 Classification of the CCLA Investment

The Council received a report which contained advice from the Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel that the CCLA investment needs to be treated as an asset and transferred to the fixed asset register, instead of accounting for this like a bank account.

**Resolved:** that the £15,000 initial investment to the CCLA PSDF would be transferred to the fixed asset register.

## 25/75 Council Website

The clerk advised the new website is now live.

Councillors discussed the content and agreed to remove the links to *Safety Tips for Dog Walkers* and *How to Keep Your Dog Happy During Fireworks*.

**Resolved:** that the links noted above will be removed from the website.

## 25/76 Annual Litter Pick

This matter was deferred and will be discussed in January 2026.

## 25/77 Updates

### 25/77/1 BT Telephone Kiosk

**Resolved:** That the Council will write to the owner of the property where the telephone kiosk is located, requesting that, if the property is sold, the buyer be informed that the kiosk belongs to the Parish Council and asked whether they have any objections to it being painted by the Council.



## 25/77/2 CCTV signs

The Clerk advised these has been received and passed these to Cllr Knapman for installation.

## 25/78 General Announcements

There were no general announcements.

## 25/79 Items to be Included on the Next Agenda

The Clerk advised that the 2026/27 budget will need to be agreed at the January meeting and if councillors have any suggestions to be included to email the clerk.

The following items will also be included on the next agenda:

- Great Braxted annual litter pick.
- Refurbishment of the village sign.

## 25/80 Date of Next Meeting

The next council meeting will take place at 8pm on Tuesday the 13<sup>th</sup> January 2026.

## 25/81 Chairman Closed the Meeting

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 21.33

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairman



## AGENDA REPORT ITEM 8.2

### Tree Risk Survey

#### Background Information

The Parish Council owns and manages the field which contains several mature oak trees and a number of grouped trees. These trees are a significant environmental asset but also represent a potential risk where there is public access.

In 2025 a tragic incident in Leigh-on-Sea resulted in the death of a child following tree failure. In response, and following professional arboricultural advice, it has been recommended that the frequency of its tree risk surveys increase from every four years to every two years.

This incident prompted consideration of whether any formal tree risk surveys have been undertaken on the trees owned and managed by the Parish Council and quotations have been obtained from three suitably qualified arboricultural consultants to carry out an initial tree risk survey of the field.

#### Summary

A tree risk survey is a professional assessment undertaken by a qualified arboricultural consultant to identify defects, structural weaknesses, disease, or other conditions that could increase the likelihood of tree failure.

The purpose of a tree risk survey is to:

- Assess the condition and structural integrity of trees
- Identify risks to people, property, and adjacent land
- Provide proportionate, evidence-based management advice
- Demonstrate that the Council is meeting its duty of care as a landowner

The survey report typically categorises trees by risk level and prioritises recommended works, enabling the Council to plan maintenance in a structured and cost-effective way. This approach supports informed decision-making and reduces the likelihood of reactive or emergency works.

Good practice guidance recommends that councils managing land with public access undertake regular, documented tree inspections, with frequency proportionate to tree

condition, usage levels, and risk profile. Establishing a formal inspection cycle would provide reassurance to residents, members, and insurers.

Three quotations have been received for undertaking the survey:

<b>Company</b>	<b>Quoted Cost (£)</b>
Essex Tree Brothers	£1,220
Tracy Clarke Consultancy	£820
Writtle Forest Consultancy	£850

Provision has been made within the 2026/27 budget for tree management and surveys. The final budget figure may need minor adjustment depending on the contractor appointed.

## Recommendation

That the Council:

1. Agrees in principle to commission a professional tree risk survey of the trees located on the Parish Council-owned field; and
2. Approves a quotation to undertake the tree risk survey.

The Clerk recommends Tracy Clarke Consultancy not only on the basis of submitting the most economical quotation, but also due to previous experience of their work, which has demonstrated a high standard of professional service and clear, thorough reporting.



## Essex tree brothers

01245955117 | info@essextreebrothers.com | www.essextreebrothers.co.uk

### RECIPIENT:

#### Great Braxted Parish Council

Great Braxted Pavilion  
Sextons Lane  
Great Braxted, England CM83EE

### Quote #4905

Sent on Dec 22, 2025

**Total £1,464.00**

Product/Service	Description	Qty.	Unit Price	Total
Arboricultural Condition Survey & Report	<p>- Great Braxted Parish Council £1100.00</p> <p>- Pavillion Management Committee £120.00</p> <p>Description of Services Provided</p> <p>Arboricultural Condition Survey &amp; Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To carry out a survey of trees located within and surrounding Great Braxted Pavillion (Figure 1).</li> <li>- To produce management recommendations with work priority, time frame and a suggested reinspection frequency, provided within a report with accompanying site plan.</li> </ul> <p>Consideration of Services Provided</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Within these reports, endeavour is made to understand and implement the needs of the client from an objective and impartial view. In certain scenarios it may be of the Local Planning Authority or Tree Officer to hold a different view, and this should be accepted.</li> <li>- Recommendations in relation to the survey will generally be given as measures necessary for the management of the vegetation in line with good Arboricultural practice.</li> <li>- Before carrying out works recommendations, it will be necessary to establish whether any of the trees included within the survey are subject to statutory constraints.</li> <li>- Projected timescales for the issue of report and plan is within 10 working days from date of the survey.</li> <li>- The quote is valid for 90 days from the date of issue.</li> </ul> <p>Please be aware that the fee provided for the trees under the management of the Pavillion Managment Committee is subject to being undertaken at the same time as the trees managed by Great Braxted Parish Council.</p>	1	£1,220.00	£1,220.00

<b>Subtotal</b>	£1,220.00
<b>VAT (20.0%)</b>	£244.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,464.00</b>

This quote is valid for the next 30 days, after which values may be subject to change.



## QUOTE

Great Braxted Parish Council  
Great Braxted

Date  
28 Nov 2025

Expiry  
26 Feb 2026

Quote Number  
TCFQ-19763

VAT Number  
269207877

Tracy Clarke Tree  
Consultancy Ltd  
Mulberry Barn  
Priory Green  
Edwardstone  
Sudbury  
CO10 5PP

### Great Braxted Parish

All trees are assessed, and all trees are recorded and mapped. Key trees and trees that require work to mitigate risk will be recorded as individuals. Woodland areas and groups of trees will be recorded as groups.

Trees that require work are also tagged to assist in their future identification to carry out the works.

Description	Amount GBP
Tree Risk Survey	820.00
Subtotal	820.00
TOTAL VAT	164.00
TOTAL GBP	984.00



## TERMS & PRICING

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For further information of the below works, please refer to the glossary of terms (below).

The signature of Great Braxted Parish Council is required before we can move forward with the works outlined above.

Name	Price	QTY	Subtotal
251233 - Arboricultural Condition Survey	£850.00	1	£850.00
			<b>£850.00</b>
Subtotal			<b>£850.00</b>
Tax			<b>20.00%</b>
<b>Total</b>			<b>£1,020.00</b>



## AGENDA REPORT ITEM 9

### CouncilWise

#### Background

CouncilWise Training & Support is a newly established organisation founded by experienced sector professionals, Ann Wood and Pearl Willcox, who together bring nearly 50 years' experience working with parish and town councils. The company will begin delivering training, support, and networking opportunities to councils and their officers from 1 January 2026, with an optional subscription service available from 1 April 2026.

CouncilWise's offer includes in-person and online training, governance support, sector-specific advice, and networking opportunities for Clerks, Chairs, and Councillors. Their aim is to support good governance, compliance, collaborative working, and the professional development of council members and staff.

For councils with a precept between £15,000 and £75,000, the annual subscription cost is £150 per year.

#### Summary

**Subscription to CouncilWise (£150 per year)** would provide:

- Free invitations to Clerks' and Councillors' networking events
- 20% discount on all training courses
- Email and telephone support (Mon–Thu) for Councillors and the Clerk, up to 30 minutes per call
- Out-of-hours urgent support (Mon–Thu, 5pm–7pm)
- Face-to-face support at their Great Dunmow office (by appointment)
- Regular newsletters and training bulletins

Additional services are also available on a paid basis including:

- Tailored training sessions
- One-to-one Clerk support at the workplace
- Audit health checks

**Comparison with EALC**

Area	EALC	CouncilWise
Access to NALC	✓ Essential access	✗ Not available
Training provision	✓ Established programme	✓ New but experienced trainers
Governance advice	✓ Available	✓ Available
Out-of-hours support	✗ Limited	✓ Included in subscription
Future certainty	✗ Unclear due to LGR	✓ New organisation with defined offer
Networking events	✓ Offered	✓ Offered

**Rationale for Considering an Additional Subscription**

- EALC's future support model is unclear due to LGR, meaning the Council may face reduced or changing service levels in the medium term.
- Access to experienced sector professionals may provide additional resilience to the Clerk and Councillors.
- The out-of-hours support offered by CouncilWise may be particularly beneficial given the increasing complexity and expectation placed on parish councils.
- A second source of governance and procedural advice could help the Council manage risk, especially during the period of reorganisation.

However, the Council must balance these benefits against cost and duplication of services already provided through EALC.

**Recommendation**

That the Council:

3. Notes the services offered by CouncilWise Training & Support and the potential benefits of enhanced resilience and support during Local Government Reorganisation.
4. Considers whether adding a CouncilWise subscription to the existing EALC membership would strengthen governance, support the Clerk role, and provide value for money.
5. Determines whether to approve an annual subscription to CouncilWise at a cost of £150 per year, effective from 1 April 2026.



## Agenda Item 10.1 - Accounts for Payment

<i>Date</i>	<i>Supplier</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Net</i>	<i>VAT</i>	<i>Total</i>
10/11/2025	Fairway Signs	CCTV signs	55.00	11.00	66.00
12/11/2025	Little Braxted Parish Council	War Memorial maintenance	95.23	-	95.23
24/11/2025	Sky mobile	November mobile phone costs	6.00	-	6.00
28/11/2025	L Townend	November salary	270.40	-	270.40
28/11/2025	L Townend	Oct and Nov expenses	126.97	-	126.97
22/01/2026	HMRC	November PAYE costs	67.60	-	67.60
03/12/2025	Skippers GM	Hedge trimming	450.00	90.00	540.00
22/12/2025	ICO	Data protection fee	47.00	-	47.00
24/12/2025	Sky mobile	December mobile phone costs	6.00	-	6.00
24/12/2025	L Townend	December salary	270.40	-	270.40
24/12/2026	HMRC	December PAYE costs	67.60	-	67.60
31/12/2025	Unity Trust Bank	November service fee	6.00	-	6.00
<b>TOTAL:</b>					<b>£1,569.20</b>

Agenda Item 10.1 – Bank Reconciliation

**Great Braxted Parish Council Bank Reconciliation  
Quarter 3**

<b>Unity Trust Bank Account Balance at</b>	<b>30/09/2025</b>	<b>£ 1,727.80</b>
Plus income		£ 4,414.03
Less expenditure		£ 4,530.64
<b>Balance carried forward</b>		<b>£ 1,611.19</b>
<b>Unity Trust Bank Balance at</b>	<b>31/12/2025</b>	<b>£ 1,611.19</b>
<b>CCLA PSDF Balance at</b>	<b>31/12/2025</b>	<b>£ 9,000.00</b>
<b>TOTAL CASH HOLDING at</b>	<b>31/12/2025</b>	<b>£ 10,611.19</b>

Reconciled to bank statement on 2nd January 2026

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Cllr Lesley Holt

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

## Agenda Item 10.3 – Budget Comparison

**Q3 Budget Comparison 2025-26****INCOME**

Budget Heading	Title	2025-26 Budget	Actual Income	Variance
1	Precept	3,997.24	13,997.24	0.00
2	Other	-	413.01	-413.01
3	Pavilion Management Committee	225.00	275.00	-50.00
	<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>14,222.24</b>	<b>14,685.25</b>	<b>-463.01</b>

**EXPENDITURE**

Code Administration (CC)	Title	2025-26 Budget	Actual Expenditure	Variance
1	Clerks Salary	330.00	2,466.53	863.47
2	HMRC Payments	92.00	413.60	378.40
3	Expenses/office costs	425.00	719.02	-294.02
4	Mobile Phone	66.00	52.25	13.75
5	Laptop Security	92.00	-	92.00
6	Training	175.00	25.00	150.00
7	Cloud Next Hosting & Domain Registration	107.98	57.98	50.00
8	Auditor Fees	615.00	670.00	-55.00
9	Bank Charges	72.00	54.00	18.00
	<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>5,674.98</b>	<b>4,458.38</b>	<b>1,216.60</b>

Code Insurance and Subscriptions	Title	2025-26 Budget	Actual Expenditure	Variance
1	EALC/NALC	136.00	133.80	2.20
2	SLCC Subscription	40.00	-	40.00
3	Insurance	497.00	579.45	-82.45
4	ICO - Data Protection Fee	42.00	47.00	-5.00
5	RCCE	48.00	51.50	-3.50
6	TruCam	1,080.00	1,033.14	46.86
7	Election Costs	225.00	-	225.00
	<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>2,068.00</b>	<b>1,844.89</b>	<b>223.11</b>

Code Grants and Donations	Title	2025-26 Budget	Actual Expenditure	Variance
1	Royal British Legion	30.00	30.00	0.00
2	War Memorial Upkeep	97.00	67.19	29.81
3	Remembrance Sunday Costs	189.00	28.04	160.96
4	80th Anniversary of D Day/Grants	500.00	752.13	-252.13
	<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>816.00</b>	<b>877.36</b>	<b>-61.36</b>

Code Field and Playground	Title	2025-26 Budget	Actual Expenditure	Variance
1	Grass Cutting	3,420.00	2,750.00	670.00

2	Tree and Hedges	500.00	1,160.00	-660.00
3	Fence/Field Maintenance	1,543.26	696.40	846.86
4	Defibrillator	200.00	212.99	-12.99
	<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>5,663.26</b>	<b>4,819.39</b>	<b>843.87</b>

		<b>2025-26 Budget</b>	<b>Actual Expenditure</b>	<b>Variance</b>
<b>Pavilion Project</b>				
1	2024 Pavilion Project	0.00	94.85	-94.85
	<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>94.85</b>	<b>-94.85</b>

	<b>2025-26 Budget</b>	<b>Actual Expenditure</b>	<b>Variance</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>14,222.24</b>	<b>12,000.02</b>	<b>2,222.22</b>



## AGENDA REPORT ITEM 10.4 BUDGET AND PRECEPT FOR 2026/27

### Background information

It has been confirmed there is, again, no cap on the amount that parish councils can raise via their precept for 2026-27.

Maldon District Council have advised the tax base to be used when calculating the Band D rate is 193.5, an increase from 186 in 2025-26.

It is recommended that councils hold between 6- and 12-months net operating costs in their general reserves which equates to £8,624. At the end of the 2025-26 financial year, it is projected the Council will only hold £8,005.00.

The draft budget is based on the assumption that all current activities will continue and that the Council will move its unspent reserves into Earmarked Reserves to build them for future projects. This equates to £225 for future election costs.

### Summary

Last year the Council's budget was set at £13,997 the Band D rate of £68.35

In the coming financial year, 2026-27, it is proposed the budget will need to be increased by 24.43% to £17,417 with the precept rising to £90.01. This represents a year-on-year increase of £21.66/resident.

The increase is due to:

- An anticipated 5% NALC pay award - £133
- Increase of Trucam patrols from 2 hours/month to 4 hours/month - £1,110
- Cost of new accessible website hosting - £173
- Increase in grass cutting costs from £190/cut to £200/cut from April 2026 - £170
- Additional funding for fence repairs and field clearance - £457
- Funding for future playground repair /maintenance - £500
- Funding for internal and external hedge trimming - £600
- Funding to complete a tree risk survey - £820

Additional income from the Pavilion Management Committee will see their contribution to the cost of grounds maintenance, paid at a rate of £25 for each home cricket game, increase to £450.

During 2025-26 the Parish Council has:-

- Funded the grounds maintenance of the field and cricket pitch.

- Contributed toward the costs of the Remembrance Day Service and war memorial maintenance.
- Financed TRUCAM speed monitoring, increasing this to 4 hours/month at a cost of £43.24/hour.
- Commissioned a ROSPA playground inspection
- Funded the maintenance on the hedges surrounding the field.

## **Draft Budget Calculations for 2026-27**

### **1. Income**

The council has two sources of income. The precept provides the majority of funding and the Pavilion Management Committee (PMC) contribute toward the grounds maintenance costs of the field and cricket pitch.

In 2025-26 from the precept was £10,997 and £275 was received from the PMC.

### **2. Expenditure**

**Clerk and Administration Costs** – a budget of £5,674 is proposed (an decrease of 0.1%). Although a 5% increase in the NALC pay award has been assumed for 2026-27, the cost of an auditor won't be necessary. Expenditure in this area includes the clerk's salary, training costs of £185, office expenses £1,047, HMRC costs £852 and auditor costs £180.

**Insurance and Subscriptions** – a budget of £3,348 is proposed (an increase of 61.9%). Expenditure in this area includes TRUCAM costs £2,180, insurance £609, memberships £387 and a budget of £225 toward the cost of future elections.

**Grants and Donations** – a budget of £536 is proposed (a decrease of 34.3%). Expenditure includes a £30 donation to the Royal British Legion, £301 for War Memorial maintenance and Remembrance Sunday costs and £200 for community grants.

**Field, Playground and Environment** – a budget of £7,690 is proposed (an increase of 35.8%). Expenditure includes grass cutting £3,400, £1,690 for hedge and tree maintenance, £2,000 for fence and field maintenance, £500 for playground maintenance and £100 for the defibrillator supplies.

**Reserves** – current reserves held include:-

- £712.21 - playground costs
- £475 – elections
- £900 - Field and tree maintenance
- £300 - Grants

## **Recommendation**

Councillors are asked to receive, consider, and approve the proposed budget and precept.