

SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL

Swindon Parish Council 2024/2025 Budget

A question that I know you've all be asking lately: how does the Parish Council get its money? Seriously, if you have been, drop me an email; you should be a parish councillor! Well, like every level of government, you, the taxpayers provide most of the Council's funding. For Parish Councils this is done via a mechanism called the precept. The precept is the amount of money that Cheltenham Borough Council pays the Parish Council each year to fund our activities and is paid for through Council Tax. For the current tax year, a Band D property in Swindon Parish paid a total of £2,066.85 in council tax, of which £17.21 went to the Parish Council. The total precept for 2023/24 is £12,175.58.

Over the past several years we have all been impacted by uncertain economic times, first with the pandemic and more recently high inflation. As such, for several years the Parish Council has made a conscious decision to freeze the precept. We believe this has been the right thing to do. We are fortunate that we have had sufficient reserves, along with underspend on several projects to do this. We hope this has provided you with some small relief.

With the new year now upon us the Parish Council has set its budget for 2024/2025. In doing so we always look at what projects we'd like to deliver and what liabilities we need to cover. This year the Parish Council has agreed to raise the precept by 5% to £12,784.36. As we have a few extra people living in the Parish this year, this equates to you seeing a 4.75% rise. While you probably wouldn't even notice the change (82p for a band D property!), as the kind people who will paying a little extra, we feel it's important you know why.

This year we will (hopefully!) see the purchase of the Village Hall Car Park finalised. We are buying the car park from Cheltenham Borough Council to secure its long-term future, ensuring it remains free to use by all users of the park and village hall. We believe this is important, especially given the congestion and safety issues during school drop-off and pick-up along Church Road.

While we have secured a grant that will fund the actual purchase, the car park will need maintaining and improving. This could include things like new automatic gates, crossings, re-painting, resurfacing, and maintaining vegetation and trees. We have been provided professional advice that over the next decade this could cost up to £80,000. This is what is behind the rise: we need to ensure the Parish Council remains in a sufficiently robust financial footing to be able to maintain and improve the car park.

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For our 2024/25 budget we have allocated funding for lots of exciting projects including: a big summer celebration, redevelopment of sundial in the park, and improvement of the park & play area. You can dig into all the details of the budget here: <https://swindonparish.org.uk/> under quick links, financial information. Of course, if you think we should be spending money on different things, or not increasing our budget at all, come and talk to us! Our next meeting is on Monday 12th February 2024, 7:30PM at Swindon Village Hall. We would love to hear from you.

James Cornish

Swindon Parish Council Chair

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