



Toni Critchlow, RFO; Barnton Parish Council Budget 2026 - 2027

Introduction:

I am pleased to present the budget for the upcoming fiscal year, a proposal that reflects the councils dedication to the growth and well-being of the community

Over the past year, in addition to essential services, burials and normal business, our parish has made significant strides in various areas;-

- We completed the renovation of the War Memorial including the Roll of Honour at Jubilee Corner as a fitting tribute to those from Barnton who gave their lives in service to their country
- We delivered an opening event in October 2025 where the War Memorial was blessed and well received by residents and dignitaries
- We relocated the original War Memorial to Barnton Cemetery, in collaboration with other organisations.
- We delivered the act of Remembrance at the new War Memorial in November 2025
- We re-surfaced the main pathway in the Cemetery to ensure safe access to the Council building.
- We have continued to work with other groups in the village in creating social and well-being opportunities for residents
- We continue to provide a year round free welcoming space at the councils administrative office in the shape of a community café on a weekly basis
- Due to the success of the Seniors Christmas meal held at the Cricket Club last year, We have used funds raised during Council social events to provide a subsidised Christmas Meal and entertainment for Older people in the village.
- We have pledged to install another bench in on the highways in response to residents requests for somewhere to sit whilst walking in the village

- We are continuing to modernise management of the cemetery using specialist cemetery software linked to the cemetery map, which will allow for easier public access to cemetery records and will eventually produce all legal documents and funeral administration.
- We have continued to monitor CCTV cameras across council facilities. CCTV has assisted Cheshire Police to take action against vandalism. CCTV continues to help prevent anti-social behaviour and vandalism in the village reducing costs and promoting security and safety for the village.

Financial Strategy:

Barnton Parish Council remains committed to prudent financial practices, ensuring that every penny is used effectively and transparently for the benefit of our community.

During the pandemic many households faced loss of income, furloughs, rising living costs and general economic insecurity

By setting annual precept increases below the rate of inflation, particularly during and immediately following the COVID-19 period, the council prioritised affordability for residents at a time of economic uncertainty.

	Amount (£)	
Year		
2017/18	99,350	+2.46%
2018/19	99,040	+0.9%
2019/20	96,400	-0.5%
2020/21	96,700	-1.8%
2021/22	94,993	0%
2022/23	101,000	+3.7%
2023/24	104,589	+3.6%
2024/25	110,475	+5.4%
2025/26	123,750	+12%

A low or frozen precept meant smaller increases in council tax bills, helping residents cope with these pressures. By limiting the amount added to council tax bills, families had more of their money available for essentials like food, energy and bills during lockdowns.

Over the past two financial years, Barnton Parish Council has delivered a programme of significant investment in new and improved community facilities, providing lasting benefits for the community. These projects were completed in response to identified local priorities and rising service expectations.

To ensure these improvements could be delivered without placing financial pressure on residents, the Council made planned and responsible decisions to utilise its accumulated reserves, which had been built up through prudent financial management and historically low precepts, particularly during the COVID-19 period. This approach enabled the Council to maintain affordability while still delivering essential improvements.

As a direct result of this investment, the Council has now substantially reduced its reserves.

Barnton Parish Council is required to set a precept for the **2026/27 financial year** that enables it to meet its statutory duties, maintain services, and ensure financial sustainability.

An increase of 25% in the parish precept is therefore necessary in order to:

- Fund the ongoing maintenance and operation of parish facilities
- Meet rising operational and contractual costs
- Begin the rebuilding of an appropriate level of reserves, in line with good governance and financial resilience guidance
- Ensure the Council can continue to deliver services safely, sustainably and without reliance on one-off funding (loans)

For the financial year 2026–27, Barnton Parish Council has set a precept of £155,713.00. This figure is based on a parish tax base of 1,762.30 Band D equivalent properties.

The precept will result in a Band D parish council charge of £88.36 per year, which is an increase of £18.04 per year compared with the 2025–26 Band D charge of £70.32. This equates to approximately £7.36 per month or £1.70 per week for a Band D household.

The precept provides the funding required to maintain and deliver parish services, meet rising operational costs, and support planned projects and community priorities within Barnton.

Households in other council tax bands will pay proportionately more or less in line with standard council tax banding.

The Council recognises that any increase impacts residents; however, this increase reflects a balanced and proportionate response to the Council's current financial position. It ensures that the cost of maintaining improved facilities is met transparently and fairly, while safeguarding the Council's ability to deliver services and remain financially resilient for the future.

Signed *T. Critchlow* 13/01/26

TONI CRITCHLOW, CLERK/RFO

