



Council Report  
15 January 2025

1. In 2024/25 an 8% precept increase was approved by Council, which followed a 5% increase in 2023/24, and a 0% increase the preceding two years.
2. This proposed budget continues the strategy of planning for the future, by continuing to build up the existing building maintenance, streetlighting, play equipment and grounds vehicle earmarked reserve (EMR). A new building maintenance fund has been established for The Jubilee Centre. Income received from the rent of the pavilion carpark is also being moved into a newly created EMR for carpark maintenance.
3. A significant amount of CIL money and S106 monies have been received in the last three years, with more to come. A plan for using these funds has been put into place by the CIL and Commuted Sum Working Group, and is included with the budget for information. The majority of existing CIL money was spent on The Jubilee Centre, but a large amount is expected for future projects.
4. There are minimal new projects planned for this forthcoming year from the precept, other than continuing the update to the Neighbourhood Development Plan, notice boards for new developments, and promotion costs for The Jubilee Centre. Long-term spending plans have been drafted by the CIL & Commuted Sum group for CIL and S106 funds, including items such as the pavilion carpark resurface and a potential committee room at The Willow Centre. More immediate plans are for the MUGA and pump track and Parish Partnership Scheme costs.
5. The tax base is the number of properties in Cringleford who pay precept. Due to the increase in houses, the Cringleford tax base has increased from 2349 in 24/25 to 2439 in 25/26. This brings about a natural increase to the precept amount to be received by the Council.
6. In order to keep the increase to a minimum the last few years, the budget has included using Council reserves. This cannot carry on indefinitely as a certain amount of general reserves (50% of precept) have to be held as part of sound financial management. Therefore FAG have worked this year to produce a balanced budget which does not involve using reserves.
7. The level of precept has to be recalculated each year in line with current projects and expenditure, to cover the difference between income and expenditure. The Finance Advisory Group considered many options this year and, due to increases in



all running costs, plus additional pressures from new developments, agreed that an increase would be required. Work has also been undertaken to ensure that a robust budget is in place for the first full operational year of The Jubilee Centre. A draft budget was presented to Council at their December 2024 meeting, where they asked that FAG looked for additional savings to reduce the proposed 6% increase. This has been undertaken, with the budget presented to Council today recommending a 2.8% increase. This would involve using approximately £350 of Council reserves.

8. Taking the above into account, Members of the Finance Advisory Group (FAG) are recommending to Council a precept of £452,456 for 2025/26, which is an increase of £33596 on the precept. The Band D rate will increase from £179, to £184 per household per year, or 10p per week.
9. At 31 March 2024 the Council had funds totalling £2,989,241. Councils are recommended to hold a general reserve equivalent to 50-100% of precept, for emergencies. Some of this money is held in earmarked reserves, ring fenced funds (CIL /S106) and long-term maintenance funds.
10. The general budget has been calculated excluding ringfenced funds as these should be spent in specific areas.
11. Assuming a precept of £452,456 is agreed, the projected income is £1,125,681 compared with outgoings of £1,126,010 (see appendix) – a deficit of £328, which would be taken from general reserves. This would leave the reserves at an estimated £922,270 on 31 March 2026 (including all EMRs). Deducting all reserves leaves a balance of £226,729. Although this is at the lower end of the required reserves, we have an additional £461,517 put aside in maintenance funds, which could be used if required. That brings our actual reserves (excluding CIL & S106) to £688,246.
12. In Summary, if this budget is agreed the March 2026 year end position should be:

Total in bank account 31 March 2026	£ 922,270
<i>Minus current earmarked funds:</i>	
<i>CIL money</i>	<i>£72,957</i>
<i>Bus stop maintenance fund</i>	<i>£10476</i>



<i>Commuted S106 sums</i>	<i>£150,591</i>
<i>Maintenance Funds</i>	<i>£461,517</i>
<b>Total in general spend 31 March 2026</b>	<b>£226,729</b>

Maintenance funds could be used in an emergency situation if required as these have been earmarked by the parish council, rather than legal CIL and S106 agreements.

13. Council has previously acknowledged that precept increases are likely in the future when S106 funds expire, which are currently used for open-space routine payments.
14. This budget allows Cringleford Parish Council to adequately manage all expenses, leaving an adequate reserve to cover any emergencies or unexpected costs.

Sonya Blythe  
Responsible Financial Officer  
January 2025

