Responsible Financial Officer's Report

20 August 2026

Introduction

Having been in post for almost three weeks, I am continuing to familiarise myself with the Parish Council's financial arrangements, systems and current financial position.

The **Scribe accounting system** appears to be working well and provides a useful overview of the Council's finances. There may, however, be some transactions that still need to be entered or reconciled. I will be able to review this in greater detail once I have access to the Council's bank accounts.

Bank Accounts and Cash Position

From the information currently available within Scribe, the Council appears to have two main Parish Council bank accounts. At present, the purpose and use of the two accounts appears somewhat unclear, and I would like to review the actual bank statements and transactions before making any recommendations regarding their use.

The combined balance of the two accounts appears to be approximately **£66,000**. I understand that a proportion of this balance is allocated towards specific projects and expenditure, together with various earmarked reserves.

Once I have access to the bank accounts and have completed a full reconciliation of the balances against Scribe, I will be in a better position to provide a more detailed report on the Council's overall financial position, including the level and purpose of earmarked funds.

Precept

The next instalment of the Parish Council's precept, amounting to **£32,294**, is due to be received in early October.

This will provide an important addition to the Council's available cash position and will be taken into account when reviewing cash flow and reserves.

Budget Position

Based on the information currently available, expenditure appears to be broadly **on track against the approved budget**.

I will continue to monitor income and expenditure and aim to provide a full **six-month budget monitoring report at the October meeting**, which will give Members a clearer picture of the Council's financial performance during the first half of the financial year.

General and Earmarked Reserves

The Council's current **general reserve is approximately £6,000**. This is relatively low and, in my view, should be reviewed as a matter of priority.

As a general guide, a Parish Council would normally be expected to maintain an appropriate level of general reserves to provide protection against unforeseen expenditure, unexpected reductions in income and other financial risks. A figure in the region of the Council's annual precept, approximately **£60,000**, may provide a useful long-term target, although the appropriate level should ultimately be based on the Council's own financial risks, commitments and circumstances.

I will bring forward recommendations to a future meeting setting out how the Council could gradually strengthen its general reserve without placing unnecessary pressure on the annual budget.

There are currently approximately **£9,000 of earmarked reserves**. I need to undertake further work to establish the purpose of each reserve, confirm whether the amounts remain appropriate and determine whether any should be adjusted or released.

WI Hall Bookings and Income

I also need to bring the Council's records relating to **WI Hall bookings and payments** fully up to date.

I will review the booking records against payments received once I have access to the Council's bank accounts. This should allow me to ensure that the Scribe records accurately reflect the income received and that any outstanding payments can be identified.

Finance Committee

I would recommend that the Council considers holding a **Finance Committee meeting in October**.

This would provide an opportunity to present a more comprehensive review of the Council's financial position, including:

- Income and expenditure for the first six months of the financial year.
- Bank balances and reconciliations.
- General and earmarked reserves.
- Budget performance and any potential variances.
- The Council's longer-term reserve position.
- Initial considerations for the **2027/28 budget and precept**.

Holding a Finance Committee meeting at this stage would also allow Members sufficient time to consider the financial position and any recommendations before the budget and precept are brought forward for formal consideration and approval by Full Council.

Conclusion

As this is my first report following my appointment, I consider it important that I do not make firm recommendations until I have had the opportunity to obtain full access to the Council's bank accounts and complete the necessary checks and reconciliations.

The initial position appears manageable, with budgets broadly on track and approximately £66,000 held across the two main bank accounts. However, the **low level of general reserves** is an area that I believe the Council should address as part of its longer-term financial planning.

I will continue to work through the Council's financial records and aim to provide Members with a more comprehensive financial report in October.