



PRESENT: Cllrs. Canham (Chair), Alexander (left 8.42pm), Hardman, Heatley (arrived 7.08pm; left at 7.21pm), Leith, O'Reilly, Serna, Spencer, and Williams. In attendance: Lara Jacob (Parish Clerk); PCSO Flanagan (arrived 7.30pm; left 7.45pm)

#### **25.95 Apologies**

All councillors were present.

#### **25.96 Register of Interests and Declarations of Interest**

Cllr. Leith mentioned a personal interest when discussing the tree report.

#### **25.97 Items for discussion in closed session**

No items were identified as necessary for discussion in closed session.

#### **25.98 Public Participation**

##### **98.1 PCSO Report**

PCSO Flanagan had circulated a report prior to the meeting. Four incidents were detailed – theft of food, two incidents of criminal damage and suspicious activity. The SID had been deployed on School Lane and Orchard Park Road in the previous month and training had been delivered to reinstate the Speedwatch Teams. Next scheduled police surgeries are due to take place on Saturday 20 December at hard Park Homes, Orchard Park Lane 5pm – 6pm and on Wednesday 7th January at Elton Community Café 9:30am – 10:30am.

PCSO Flanagan also provided information on the recent statement by the Chief Constable that the force intends to reduce the number of PCSOs from 87 to 27 by March 2026.

##### **98.2 Members of the Public**

No members of the public were in attendance.

##### **98.3 CWaC Ward Councillors Report.**

Cllr. Heatley reported that a by-election would take place for the seat in Willaston and Thornton ward. A motion to CWaC full council was to be put to discuss the information from the Cheshire Chief Constable regarding the proposed reduction in the PCSO Team.

##### **98.4 Elton Allotments**

No representative from the Allotments attended.

#### **25.99 Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2025 were a true record and were signed by the Chair.

#### **25.100 Councillor Vacancy**

100.1 It was noted that Cllr. Highcock had sent a note of resignation, resulting in a vacancy. The vacancy had been notified to CWaC and the fourteen working day period for electors to call for an election began on 3 December 2025. If no election is called by 23 December 2025, then the parish council may co-opt a member.

100.2 The proposal from Cllr. Heatley that the parish council apply for a

Community Governance Review to Cheshire West and Chester Council to reduce the number of councillors that is required for Elton was discussed.

**Resolved** that the parish council will not request a review.

## 25.101 Planning

101.1 Applications received for comment:

(Details of the applications were circulated on receipt)

None received

101.2 The following applications decided by the Cheshire West and Chester were noted:

25/02718/CAT

2 Laurel Farm Court Elton Chester CH2 4RY

Proposal Remove Tree due to damage being caused on driveway and wanting to prevent damage growing closer towards the property

Status Decided

Decision Issued Date Mon 13 Oct 2025

25/02874/FUL

8 Dairy Bank Elton Chester CH2 4PF

Proposal Single storey front extension and replacement first floor front elevation window.

Decision Refusal

Decision Issued Date Mon 10 Nov 2025

## 25.102 Finance

102.1 It was noted that £500 had been received from Elton Scouts, the return of grant funding for the Fireworks event that was cancelled. Also noted that £1845.10 had been received from making VAT reclaim to HMRC.

There were no other receipts of money.

102.2 The payments made since the last meeting, details appended were noted. A payment of £210.00 for purchase of grit had been authorised, the purchase previously agreed. The payments made in November were authorised by Cllrs. Serna and Canham.

102.3 **Resolved** the payments to be made following the meeting, details appended. In addition, the bill received from Northwich Town Council for the Christmas Lighting Scheme install had been received. Cllrs. Canham and Serna agreed to authorise the payments around 12 December 2025.

[PCSO Flanagan arrived and the PCSO Report item was taken here]

102.4 The following information was noted:

Bank Reconciliation:	Carry Forward	31/10/25	66,165.40
	<b>Add:</b> Income		2,345.10
	<b>Less:</b> Expenditure (Nov 25)		4,437.04
	Closing Balance	30/11/25	64,073.46

Cllr. Hardman, who is not a signatory to the bank account, verified these figures by signature on the statements presented.

102.5 The Budget Monitoring document up to end November 2025 was received.

This showed that total receipts for the year to date were £102,195.55, total payments were £38,122.09 with the closing balance at the bank showing £64,073.46. There is a projected spend of £40,327.91 for the rest of the financial

year which would result in a carry forward figure of £23,745.55.

102.6 It was noted that following the querying of the substantially larger than expected bill of £277.34 (compared to £27.82 the previous year) received from npower for unmetered electricity supply of last year's Christmas lighting, SP Energy Networks had confirmed that the company had not reset to zero and the bill related therefore to the whole year. The error was corrected by SP Energy Networks and the correct information sent to npower who issued a new bill of £137.43. This bill has also been queried as the wrong dates of supply are shown on the invoice detail page. Npower have now responded several times to the customer complaint logged but have yet to provide an updated bill.

102.7.1 The budget proposal for Financial Year 2026 – 2027 was reviewed.

102.7.2 This item, to consider the level of precept that should be requested to be billed to residents by Cheshire West and Chester was deferred to the January meeting as CWaC had not yet provided the tax base figures for 26.27.

## **25.103 Reports from councillors**

The following reports were received from councillors:

### **103.1 Working Groups/Outside Bodies/Portfolio Holders**

103.1.1 The result of the public transport survey was discussed. It was agreed that headlines from the survey would be shared on social media and following on, pertinent information shared with the local bus operators and with CWaC.

103.1.2 A site visit to EET had taken place on 4 December 2025, attended by Cllrs. Hardman, Leith and Williams. A tour of the site by minibus had been arranged and various processes that take place on the site were explained.

103.2 Cllr. Canham reported on attendance at the Protos Community Forum. The Energy from Waste plant is on schedule to operate from January 2026; some construction remains to complete; forty-seven jobs have been created and recruitment continues for plant operators. Construction work continues on the Carbon Capture site; a second Carbon Capture facility is at the planning stages; Enviroo are a new tenant on the site who recycle plastics; demolition of the old CF Fertilisers building is due to commence in summer 2026; maintenance drainage has taken place at Goldfinch Meadows and benches will be installed; the bridge at Grinsome Road will be painted in the summer.

## **25.104 Parish Council Land and Assets**

### **104.1 Jubilee Field**

Work to the back part of the field had been started and will be completed in the coming week. A path will be reinstated, with the intention of sowing grass seed and then maintaining by cutting.

### **104.2 Play Areas**

104.2.1 Play area inspections will be carried out later in the month. A second metal bench had been painted.

[Cllr. Alexander left the meeting at 8.42pm]

104.2.2 The contractor had yet to remove the springer from Sorbus Close but had indicated this would take place within the week.

104.2.3 A meeting with Sovereign Play had taken place and the location of the outdoor gym equipment had been agreed that accommodated the requirements of the football field. The provisional install date is week beginning 9 February 2026 but this is subject to confirmation nearer the time. A contractor will be asked to clear the growth near the proposed site and to clear the perimeter around the school fence line.

104.2.4 It was noted that Protos had acknowledged receipt of the application form for funding of play equipment at Sorbus Close. The next round of applications to the Marshes Community Benefit fund opens early in 2026.

104.2.5 There were no other updates on the parish play areas.

Other land areas

104.3. Cllr. Heatley reported that the Dog Parks were muddy but still functional. It was agreed that a quotation for a suitable tree to plant in memory of Cllr. Lockhart would be brought to the next meeting.

A quotation of £520 plus VAT to fabricate a gate and £150 to install posts had been received.

**Resolved** to accept the quotation.

104.4. The contractor had sent a message just prior to the meeting to say that he had not yet attended the site but would do so in the coming days. Cllr. Canham agreed to meet the contractor.

**Resolved** that up to £500 could be spent on carrying out the necessary repairs, including removal of the bollard that had been damaged in the last week.

104.5 The report produced following the health and safety inspection of trees on parish council land was considered. On the parish field and community centre land the following was advised: one Rowan tree on the parish field had been identified for removal in the next three months due to decay; two cherry trees were highlighted for monitoring of damage and decay but with no immediate action and one ash tree growing inside the community centre space was advised for removal due to proximity to the building; on Greenbank advice was to consider low priority works to trees and shrubs adjacent to a boundary fence; at the Jubilee field, advice was to install guards to the fruit trees to protect from strimmer damage which was already evident. Some trees were earmarked to be surveyed in 24 months' time with the majority advised to be surveyed in 36 months' time.

A local volunteer would be asked if they could remove the Rowan tree and quotations for the other works, including trimming of shrubbery on the parish field perimeter, would be sought and presented at a future meeting.

104.6 It was noted that the "No parking, access for emergency vehicles required" signs had been ordered, delivered and installation was being scheduled..

104.7 It was noted that Ward Councillor Parker had endorsed the request for additional wildflower areas to be prepared by CWaC, one at the entrance to Elton village from the A5117 and another on the mini roundabout opposite the Jubilee Field. However, the roundabout location was unsuitable. Cllr. Williams will liaise with Cllr. Heatley on alternative sites.

104.8 The updates on enquiries following the request from the Community Centre to site a parcel pick up locker outside the Community Centre were discussed.

CWaC Planning department had advised that planning permission was necessary; the insurance company had advised that liability for the physical item lies with the owner and the parish council's liability relates only to the land; the terms and conditions for the installation had also been circulated.

**Resolved** that the community centre will be asked to contribute towards the cost of applying for planning permission and on agreement an application will be progressed.

104.9 There were no other updates on matters relating to parish council assets.

## **25.105 Events**

The Winter Wonderland event and the Christmas Lights Switch on had taken place on Sunday 30 November 2025. There was a huge turnout of residents, and a very wonderful time was had by all. An evaluation meeting will take place in February.

## **25.106 Future Agenda Items**

The following matters were requested for consideration at the next meeting:

To discuss obtaining the services of a contractor who can undertake tasks that require a quick response; to consider tree work quotations; to consider the appropriate tree and memorial to Cllr. Lockhart; to agree the 26.27 budget and precept request;

## **25.107 Date and Time of meetings**

The next monthly meeting will take place on Monday 12 January 2026.

## Payment Schedule

<b>PAYMENTS MADE IN NOVEMBER</b>					
15.11.2025	Staff salaries	November 2025	1643.81	0.00	1643.81
15.11.2025	Lara Jacob	Reimburse for Poppy Wreaths and monthly O365 subscription	68.46	0.00	68.46
15.11.2025	Clays Gardening Services	October monthly payment	618.77	0.00	618.77
15.11.2025	AJE Landscaping and Groundworks	Grounds Maintenance on Jubilee Field	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00
15.11.2025	Then Media	Email and web hosting services to parish and community centre	568.00	113.60	681.60
15.11.2025	P O'Reilly	Reimburse selection boxes	208.40	0.00	208.40
20.11.2025	National Rocksalt	Delivery of 42 bags of grit	175.00	35.00	210.00
30.11.2025	Unity Trust Bank	Monthly bank charges	6.00	0.00	6.00
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4288.44</b>	<b>148.60</b>	<b>4437.04</b>
<b>PAYMENTS TO BE AUTHORISED</b>					
15.12.2025	Staff salaries	December 2025	1643.81	0.00	1643.81
	Lara Jacob	Reimburse for monthly O365 subscription	8.49	0.00	8.49
	Your Parking Sign Ltd	2 x Parking Signs for Scout Hut Lane	104.20	20.84	124.04
	Lally Tree Management	Tree health and safety survey	750.00	150.00	900.00
	AEJ Landscaping and Groundworks Ltd	Supply and install/uninstall Christmas Tree	825.00	0.00	825.00
	Northwich Town Council	Install of Christmas lighting scheme including repair to three motifs	3110.00	622.00	3732.00
31.12.2025	Unity Trust Bank	Monthly bank charges	6.00	0.00	6.00

Budget Proposal 26.27				
Income				
			Projected Income	Notes
	FY 25.26		26.27	
carried forward from 25.26	2730.76	carried forward 26.26	£26,880.00	The carry forward figure is estimated and may be more or less than predicted when the accounts close on 31 March 2026. It is the difference between income received and expected expenditure by the end of the year (£104,820.45 less £77,940 = £26,880)
Precept	66466			
Other income received	30623.69			
Other possible income to come	5000		£5,000.00	This is any other income that may come our way but is not guaranteed and therefore cannot be relied upon
<b>Total projected income for 25.26</b>	<b>104820.45</b>			All income is estimated; the only certainty is the precept
<b>Payments</b>				
	Budget Set	Spent to date	Projected spend by end FY	Projected Expenditure
	25.26	Sep-25	25.26	26.27
<b>People Costs</b>				
Staff Costs	£20,000.00	10303.59	20000	£21,000.00
Clerk's Monthly allowance	£350.00	156.00	312	£350.00
Training (included in Admin before)	£500.00	25.00	100	£500.00
Travel	£50.00	0.00	0	£0.00
				<b>Total People costs - £21,850 FY 26.27 compared to £20,900 FY 25.26 (increase £950 = 4.5%)</b>
<b>Office Costs</b>				
Postage & Stationery	£50.00	0.00	0	£0.00
Insurance	£2,000.00	0.00	1800	£2,000.00
Audit	£800.00	757.00	757	£900.00
Fees & Subscriptions	£1,200.00	1,262.53	1262.53	£1,400.00
Information Commissioner - Annual Fee	£40.00	0.00	47	£60.00
Peninsula Business Services	£0.00	0.00	0	£0.00
Haines Watts - Payroll Services	£360.00	182.50	360	£400.00
Bank Charges	£100.00	36.00	72	£100.00
Website / IT	£700.00	0.00	650	£1,000.00
Contested Election	£0.00	0.00	0	£700.00
Miscellaneous	£200.00	320.26	400	£400.00
Community Centre	£200.00	0.00	0	£200.00
VAT				Not put figure in here cos VAT is reclaimed
				<b>Total Office costs - £7160 FY 26.27 compared to £5650 FY 25.26 (increase £1510 = 26.7%) Increase accounted for by starting an elections savings pot for future elections and increase to allow for reworked website and purchase of new laptop</b>

Asset Maintenance				
Grounds Maintenance	£10,000.00	6,289.01	7000	£10,000.00
Play Area/Pump Track	£5,000.00	7,408.70	30000	£5,000.00
Dog Park	£500.00	0.00	0	£500.00
Planters	£500.00	0.00		£500.00
Jubilee Field	£2,500.00	0.00	1000	£2,000.00
EMR for Jubilee (Grant from ESSAR)	£1,000.00	0.00	1000	£0.00
	£19,500.00			Total Asset Maintenance - £18,000 FY 26.27 compared to £19, 500 FY 25.26 (decrease of £1500 = 7.8%) accounted for because the Earmarked reserve for Jubilee Field has been spent and JF annual maintenance reduced by £500 because the costs of cutting etc are rolled into the annual maintenance budget line
Events				
Christmas Tree (and power)	£1,000.00	0.00	875	£1,000.00
Christmas Lights (Northwich Town Council)	£4,000.00	0.00	4000	£5,000.00
Christmas Event (selection boxes)	£300.00	0.00	300	£400.00
	£5,300.00			Total Events - £6,400 FY 26.27 compared to £5300 FY 25.26 (increase of £1100 = 20%) accounted for because of potential increases in costs of electricity, new charges from CWaC and replacement costs of motifs)
Grants	£7,000.00	1,300.00	2000	£2,000.00
Poppy Wreaths	£100.00	0.00	100	£150.00
				Total grants - £2150 FY 26.27 compared to £7100 FY 25.26 (decrease of £4950 = 70%) reduced as not likley to need £5k for community centre roof improvements
Community Projects	£10,000.00	905.00	5905	£10,000.00
General Reserve (6 months net expenditure)	£10,000.00			£12,000.00
	£103,250.00	28,945.59	77940.53	£77,560.00
		25.26	26.27	To cover our most basic stuff would therefore cost £83, 920 and if we project a carry forward of £23,000 (slightly lower than the forecast above to be on the safe side) then we need a minimum precept ask of £60, 920, compared to last year's of £66, 466, so that would represent a decrease of £5546 = -8.3%) BUT we need to consider the Hopes and Dreams and Ear Marked Funds below that we might want to incorporate into this budget

Other projects highlighted for potential delivery		Estimated costs		Notes
[This represents capital expenditure]				
New cast iron planters	per planter	1000	supply only (Glasdon)	
Village boundary gate	per gate	500	supply only	
Management plan for Jubilee Field	one off	300-500	2000	<b>OPTION 1</b> Hopes and Dreams If we moved forward with the first three of these projects in FY 26.27 that would add another £2k to the proposed precept = £62,920
Possible grant for establishing football field	one off	1500	3500	<b>OPTION 2</b> Hopes and Dreams If we moved forward with the first four of these projects in FY 26.27 that would add another £3.5k to the proposed precept = £64,420
Petanque pitch	one off	7000-11000		
Running track	one off	6000-12000	based on mile track installed in schools	
<b>EAR MARKED RESERVES PROPOSAL</b>				<b>OPTION 1</b> EMR
[this is saving up for pots of money either to buy an asset (capital expenditure) or to offset some future expenditure that will arise and EMR allows for spreading the cost across a number of years of precept, easing the burden on the householder)				If we agreed to start EMR for several of these areas and set ourselves a £5k limit across the pots then that would bring the precept total ask (including the hopes and dreams projects for FY 26.27) to £67,920
<b>Suggestions</b>				
Election costs (once every four years so save up over four years)	500			
Tree maintenance and survey work (every three years so save up each year)	500			
Replacing Christmas motifs (replace two per year forever)	800			
Play area equipment replacement (a full refit would probably be £30-40k for the parish field so if full replacement in 8 years then)	5000			<b>OPTION 2</b> EMR
	6800			If we agreed to start EMR for several of these areas and commit to all the proposals here then that would add £6.8k to the precept total ask (including the FOUR hopes and dreams projects for FY 26.27) to £74,720

<b>OPTION 1</b>				
Total budget for ordinary things (Cell E59)	£77,560.00			
Total budget for hopes and dreams (Cell D69)	£2,000.00	3 projects		
Total budget for Ear Marked Reserves (Cell F75)	£5,000.00			
			<b>OPTION 1</b>	
Total needed	£84,560.00		Precept calculation is total projected income (£23,000) compared to total projected spend (£84560) = <b>£61560</b>	
LESS conservative carry forward figure	£23,000.00		25.26 Band D = 1074.1 so if we request £61560 this will mean each Band D pays	
Total precept required	<b>£61,560.00</b>	<b>OPTION 1</b>	£57.31 compared to last year £61.63 (down £4.31 ) 7% decrease	
<b>OPTION 2</b>				
Total budget for ordinary things (Cell E59)	£77,560.00			
Total budget for hopes and dreams (Cell D70)	£3,500.00			
Total budget for Ear Marked Reserves (Cell B86)	£6,800.00			
			<b>OPTION 2</b>	
Total needed	£87,860.00		Precept calculation is total projected income (£23,000) compared to total projected spend (£87860) = <b>£64860</b>	
LESS conservative carry forward figure	£23,000.00		25.26 Band D = 1074.1 so if we request £64860 this will mean each Band D pays	
Total precept required	<b>£64,860.00</b>	<b>OPTION 2</b>	£60.38 compared to last year £61.63 (down £1.24) 2% decrease	

## Proposed Budget Narrative for FY 2026–27

### 1. Overview

The 2026–27 budget aims to maintain stability in the council's finances while ensuring essential services are fully funded. Income for the coming year is projected at approximately £26,880, although only about £23,000 of this can be regarded as fairly certain at this stage. The 2026–27 plan focuses on prudent spending, ensuring that fixed commitments are met before any discretionary items are considered.

### 2. Income

The council's income for 2026–27 is projected to come primarily from:

An estimated carry-forward from 2025–26 of £26,880

A core precept (fixed once set) providing the council's main reliable income

A small allowance for potential additional income (up to £5,000) that may arise from grants or other sources

Of this, councillors should note that only around £23,000 of the projected carry forward figure is going to be treated as secure. The remainder depends on final year-end balances and possible in-year opportunities. This distinction is important in understanding which commitments are guaranteed versus dependent on favourable circumstances.

### 3. Expenditure

#### **People Costs – £21,850 (Fixed)**

Staff costs remain the largest single fixed expenditure. These ensure continuity of service and compliance with statutory responsibilities. Training (£500) and travel (£50) budgets are modest but help maintain professional standards and capacity. The proposed increase from £20,000 to £21,850 reflects inflation and cost-of-living pressures.

#### **Administration and Governance – £7160 (Mostly Fixed)**

Administrative expenses such as insurance, subscriptions, and audit fees are necessary and therefore largely non-discretionary. There is money built in to enhance the website and purchase a new laptop.

#### **Asset Maintenance – £18,000 (Largely Fixed)**

Regular maintenance contracts and inspections fall within fixed costs. These are essential for the upkeep of community spaces and facilities. Opportunities for

enhancement or new installations are treated as optional, subject to available funds later in the year.

### **Events - £6400 (Variable)**

This budget is mostly to cover Christmas and costs are set to increase due to rises in electricity because of a switch to half-hourly traded supply. Additionally, CWaC have introduced licensing costs which have not been charged before. Research before the expenses hit will focus on comparing rental vs ownership of Christmas lighting motifs to avoid expensive repair bills.

### **Grants - £2150 (Discretionary)**

This budget allows us to make grants available to community-led projects.

### **Community Projects – £10,000 (Discretionary)**

This budget line is to meet the projected input costs to deliver the Sorbus Close project. There is some flexibility in that other funding streams are being sought, but meantime, in order to move the project forward, it is prudent to allow for the full spend of £10,000 to deliver the project in FY 26.27.

### **General Reserve - £12,000 (Best Practice)**

This amount represents an average six months net revenue expenditure and follows best practice to hold money for unforeseen and unexpected circumstances. Placing this money into a higher earning interest bearing account would be prudent at the beginning of the new financial year.

### **Ear Marked Reserves – £6,000 (Good practice)**

The proposal for setting aside £6,000 for earmarked reserves is a new one this year but follows on from discussion around the necessity to plan for and spread large future capital and revenue costs. The play equipment on the parish field is now twenty years old and whilst ongoing maintenance is paramount and budgeted for in the Maintenance budget, it is also prudent to start setting aside monies for the longer term with a view to replacing all equipment within a ten year span. Elections will take place in 2027 and whilst these have been uncontested in the past and therefore not subject to ballot box proceedings and the expense this entails, the current political climate indicates it would be prudent to plan for a contested election. This is part of a longer-term strategy to build resilience and cover future commitments such as elections or significant repairs.

## **Proposed Precept**

The calculation of the precept required is laid down in the Local Government Finance Act 1992, s. 49A. The precept should be a balancing figure when the following amounts are taken into consideration:

### **OPTION 1 – modest Earmarked reserve and capital projects**

Expenditure that will be incurred in the year for the council to perform its functions and will charge to the revenue account - £65560

Contingencies (General Reserves) - £12,000

Reserves to meet future expenditure (Ear Marked Reserves) - £5000

Capital expenditure - £2000 (hopes and dreams projects)

LESS any projected Income - £23,000

Balancing sum (PRECEPT) - £61560

### **Effect of requesting the balancing sum of £61, 560 on the average Elton Household:**

Sum required - £61,560

Band D equivalent households 26.27 – **1074.1**

(a decrease of 4.3 from 25.26)

( $61560/1074.1 = 57.31$ )

A Band D household would pay £57.31 as the precept part of their total council tax bill. **This is a decrease of £4.31 from last year.**

### **OPTION 2 – higher Earmarked reserve and higher capital projects**

Expenditure that will be incurred in the year for the council to perform its functions and will charge to the revenue account - £65560

Contingencies (General Reserves) - £12,000

Reserves to meet future expenditure (Ear Marked Reserves) - £6800

Capital expenditure - £3500 (hopes and dreams projects)

LESS any projected Income - £23,000

Balancing sum (PRECEPT) - £64860

### **Effect of requesting the balancing sum of £64,860 on the average Elton Household:**

Sum required - £64,860

Band D equivalent households 26.27 – **1074.1**

(a decrease of 4.3 from 25.26)

( $64860/1074.1 = 60.38$ )

A Band D household would pay £60.38 as the precept part of their total council tax bill. **This is a decrease of £1.24 from last year.**

### **OPTION 3**

Option 3A - To set the precept at the same monetary value as last year, using the additional funding to add to the General Reserve.

Monetary value - £66,466

Each Band D equivalent household would pay  $(66466/1074.1) - £61.87$ , an increase of 0.24p (because the number of households contributing has fallen)

Option 3B – To set the precept at the same Band D equivalent charge as last year, using the additional funding to add to the General Reserve.

Each Band D equivalent household would pay £61.63, raising a precept of  $(61.63 \times 1074.1) £66,196.78$ , a reduction in overall monetary value of the precept by c. £270.

### **Summary**

For 2026–27, the budget proposed is tight but stable, delivering on essential services, prudently building reserves for future projects and offering a slight reduction to the precept payer. While maintaining service levels for existing assets, it also offers several small enhancements to the village in the form of additional planters, a village gateway, a sustainable management plan for the Jubilee Field (a key open space asset) and the option to make a contribution to the ambitions of the community to host a thriving football league team. There are also project ideas waiting in the wings to take full advantage of any new funding streams that become available in the financial year. The proposed Earmarked Reserve builds funding for known future purchases, spreading the high costs of these across several years to reduce large shocks on the precept payer. A good practice General Reserve is also proposed.



**BY EMAIL**

18th December 2025

Dear Parish Council,

I am writing to inform you of an important decision regarding the future of neighbourhood policing in Cheshire.

Following conclusion of consultation and careful consideration of a counter-proposal as well as our current understanding of the difficult financial forecast, the proposal to reduce the number of PCSO posts from 87 to 27 will now be progressed.

This decision has not been taken lightly and all those affected by the changes are being supported throughout the process.

We fully recognise the valuable contribution that PCSOs make to our communities, and we are grateful for the support and partnership of parish councils in helping to keep Cheshire safe. However, the ongoing financial pressures facing the force, combined with the changing nature of crime and public expectations, mean that we must adapt our workforce model to ensure we remain fit for the future.

We have had a cumulative reduction in our budget of £115m since 2008/09 and currently need to make a further £13m in savings by 2029.

Reducing the number of PCSOs is essential to future-proofing the force, enabling us to balance our budget while maintaining our commitment to neighbourhood policing. These changes will also allow us to redeploy warranted police officers into local policing teams, ensuring we have the right resources and powers in place to tackle the issues that matter most to our communities. The sentencing review for example, will increase our demand to manage offenders in the community which requires more warranted police officers.

We understand that this news will be of significant interest to you and your residents. To ensure you are fully informed and have the opportunity to discuss the new neighbourhood



**Cheshire  
Constabulary**

policing model, your Local Policing Unit Chief Inspector Paul Fegan will be in contact with you in the new year to provide further details and answer any questions you may have.

In the meantime, should you have any specific questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alison Ross'.

Alison Ross

**Assistant Chief Constable  
Neighbourhood Policing  
Cheshire Constabulary**

# Cheshire West & Chester Council

Public Rights of Way  
Highways Depot, Guilden Sutton Lane,  
Guilden Sutton, CH3 7EX  
Tel: 0300 123 8 123

Rachel Newam  
3A Eagle Wing  
Temple Quay House  
2 The Square  
Bristol  
BS1 6PN

Web: [www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)

---

our reference	your reference:	please ask for:	date:
CH/6/32	ROW/3374931	Michael Goan 0300 123 8 123 <a href="mailto:@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk">@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk</a>	11 <sup>th</sup> December 2025

Dear Ms Newman,

**Application for Definitive Map and Statement Modification Order  
Section53(2) of and Schedule 14 to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981  
Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council  
Site: Land at Pogos Wood to Orchard Park Lane**

Further to your letter dated 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2025 relating to the above direction and your request for the following:

- (i) a copy of Cheshire West and Chester Councils (CWAC) Statement of Priorities
- (ii) if one is produced a copy of the list of the outstanding applications, including this one, which are with the authority and their allocated priority ranking against the authority's Statement of Priorities, together with the authority's estimated decision time for determining this application; and
- (iii) your authority's comments on the direction request which has been made.

After consideration, the responses are set out as per the below:



Cheshire West  
and Chester

# Cheshire West & Chester Council

(i) As of this communication, CWAC does not have a published Statement of Priorities but are very close to having a draft version completed and approved. This is due to, as per most local authorities across the country, a lack of resource and staffing. From a CWAC perspective, we have three PROW Officer that all started at the same time in 2023 and only appointed a PROW team leader in April 2025. Please note though that formalising a Statement of Priorities is a priority matter as it has been unattended for several years.

(ii) As a Statement of Priorities is not yet published, we are unable at this moment in time to provide an allocated priority ranking against it nor provide an estimated decision time. I would like to point out that CWAC currently has two matters that are dealing with PINS; one which has recently been directed and one which is pending. CWAC understands a third matter has been sent to PINS by the applicant for consideration but nothing official in respect of direction as been received as of the date of this communication. However, I understand that there was a 'list' of sorts (but not a published Statement of Priorities), and as of 2021 this matter was third on said list (as per an email reference) – which leads into the attempted progression of the same as set out below.

(iii) I feel compelled to point out that there was communication between CWAC and Elton Parish Council as recent as an email on 12 April 2022 regarding this matter. CWAC provided the redacted version of the application and the evidence of use that was previously submitted. It went on to state that three of the user evidence forms were from people where the houses have since (the original application) has been sold, and therefore, the evidence forms may not be completely useful (implying to address this issue). It was further suggested to the applicant that an application based on user evidence, if successful, would only likely record a width that was derived from the width that had been "used" i.e. walked. On that basis, a document with a list of sources for documentary evidence of highway status was also provided



Cheshire West  
and Chester

# Cheshire West & Chester Council

to the applicant on the understanding that a route existed before houses were built, it may be possible to identify a width based on maps or other sources of information. It was suggested that The Cheshire County Archives are very helpful and there are several online resources such as the Cheshire Tithe Maps website. The email ended with a line stating that CWAC was not able to help directly with the application (referring to the processing of the above helpful guidance) as it had to provide a balanced view based on the evidence. In summary then to the above it is clear to suggest then that CWAC was trying to assist the applicant in a manner which did not impact on the legal process, but at the same time was looking to be progressed by CWAC. However, as of the date of this correspondence, there has been no additional information provided by the applicant. Finally, in your letter dated 3 November 2025 (but received by email) and specifically at paragraph three I refer to your comment '*as is normal practice the applicant for the direction has been asked if there are any special circumstances which apply to this case, which were not set out in the application to the authority, as supporting reasons for this application to be given priority and the Secretary of State to consider directing the authority to determine the application by a specified date. A copy of the correspondence received from the applicant in response to that enquiry is enclosed*

. Unfortunately, there doesn't appear to be an enclosure/attachment to the letter/email dated 3 November 2025, so I am at this moment in time unable to address any special circumstances that the applicant may have raised. I would be grateful that no direction be issued until CWAC has had the right to address those special circumstances in future communications please.

I trust the above is a satisfactory response and look forward to your further correspondence.

Yours sincerely

Michael Goan

Public Rights of Way Officer



Cheshire West  
and Chester

Dear Ms Jacob,

I refer to your application and enclose for your information a copy of the Authorities response.

The exchange is now closed, and arrangements are being made for the file to be sent to an Inspector for a decision.

I will write to you again in due course when the decision has been completed

Kind Regards,



Planning  
Inspectorate

**Rachel Newman**

**Case Officer**

**Planning & Environmental Applications Service**

Planning Inspectorate

**T 030 344 45363**



## Specification Document for providing tree and hedge cutting services – one off

### Introduction

Elton Parish Council owns the following assets:

car park and parish field, including the play area and pump track and bench and bin infrastructure at The Community Centre, School Lane, Elton CH2 4PU

open area of land on Ince Lane known as Greenbank

area of land off Links Road known as Jubilee Field and configured to include two dog exercise fields and a separate garden area including fruit tree orchard with associated boundary fencing, benches and bins

In addition, the parish council also has a long-term lease on a toddler play area at Sorbus Close with associated play equipment and benches

This specification document outlines the requirements for contractors interested in supplying a one-off quotation for tree and hedge cutting works.

### Scope of Works

#### Car Park and Parish Field

- Removal of self-seeded Ash tree growing in proximity to the Community Centre building, marked 8 on plan.
- Removal of Rowan tree, tagged 904, marked 15 on plan.
- Remedial cutting to hedging plants running parallel to play area (to right of area marked 9 on plan) to reduce height to a maximum of 2m.
- Remedial cutting to hedging plants on car park, marked 2 on plan, to reduce height to a maximum of 2m.

#### Greenbank

- Removal of Sycamore, marked 1 on plan, that is growing against boundary fence
- Removal of leaning tree from mixed linear group, marked 2 on plan
- Remedial cutting to restore group marked 2 to hedging plant height of no more than 2m

#### Jubilee Field

- To supply and fit appropriate tree guards to fruit trees, marked 3 on the plan, to protect from strimmer damage.

- To supply and plant hawthorn whips to fill gaps in establishing hawthorn boundary hedging, marked 4 on plan, and to trim existing plants to begin establishment as a boundary hedge.

## Contractor Requirements

1. Responsiveness: Provide a quotation and carry out works within a reasonable timeframe, taking into account the needs of wildlife.
2. Communication: to notify the council when on-site, report any deviations from the requirements before undertaking such works and to provide a report with photographic images on completion.
3. Quality Standards: Complete all work to a high standard using appropriate materials, equipment and methods, in line with industry best practice and British Standards.
4. Safety and Compliance: Comply with health and safety legislation, including risk assessments before commencing work.
5. Insurance: Hold valid public liability insurance and supply evidence on request.
6. Qualifications: Possess relevant qualifications and certifications appropriate for the works being undertaken.

## Confirmation of acceptance of quote

1. Elton Parish Council will email the successful contractor to confirm acceptance of the quotation and will notify unsuccessful bidders and explain the rationale in awarding the contract.
2. The successful contractor should acknowledge the award of contract and contact the Clerk to arrange scheduling and make available the necessary Public Liability Insurance certificates, risk assessments, method statements and any licences for waste disposal necessary for carrying out the works.
3. The contractor will proceed to complete the agreed works within the agreed timeframe.
4. The contractor will immediately communicate any unforeseen issues, complications, or additional required works to the Council and will not carry out any such additional works until a written agreement has been issued by the Council.
5. Elton Parish Council reserve the right to withdraw from the contract should any documents submitted not meet the requirements as set out.

## Evaluation and Payment

The payment terms will be those agreed at the awarding of the contract. Any additional costs must be notified prior to works being carried out and a written agreement of those additional costs received by the contractor, unless otherwise agreed at the time of notification.

The Council reserves the right to inspect completed works prior to payment.

Contractors may need to submit invoices with accompanying reports and photographs.

## Contact Details

All correspondence regarding this specification should be directed to:

Elton Parish Council Clerk

[Insert contact details here]

## Appendix

Contractors are encouraged to visit the relevant sites before quoting for any works (maps enclosed below)

The Council may request references or examples of previous similar work.

By submitting interest, contractors confirm acceptance of the requirements detailed in this specification document.

## Maps

Parish Field and Play Area, School Lane, Elton



## “Greenbank”



## Jubilee Field





## Specification Document for providing Ad Hoc Repair services

### Introduction

Elton Parish council owns the following assets:

car park and parish field, including the play area and pump track and bench and bin infrastructure at The Community Centre, School Lane, Elton CH2 4PU;

open area of land on Ince Lane known as Greenbank;

area of land off Links Road known as Jubilee Field and configured to include two dog exercise fields and a separate garden area including fruit tree orchard with associated boundary fencing, benches and bins;

In addition, the parish council also has a long-term lease on a toddler play area at Sorbus Close with associated play equipment and benches

This specification document outlines the expectations for contractors undertaking ad hoc, timely repairs to Elton Parish Council assets. The Council is seeking dependable contractors who can respond quickly and professionally to maintenance needs as they arise.

### Scope of Works

#### Car Park and Associated Infrastructure

- Surface Repairs: Carry out patching and filling of potholes, cracks, and other damage to the car park surface to maintain safety and usability.
- Pathways: Inspect, repair, and resurface pathways within and adjacent to the car park, ensuring smooth and secure pedestrian access.
- Bollards and Safety Features: Check all installed bollards regularly, repairing or replacing any damaged or missing units. Ensure all safety features—such as curb markers or signage—are intact and visible.
- General Upkeep: Undertake minor repairs to edges, kerbs, or boundaries as needed.

#### Play Areas (Parish Field and Sorbus Close)

- Respond to requests to undertake minor repairs to play equipment, which might include tighten bolts and fastenings.
- Replace or repair damaged equipment components where such work is within the reasonable capability of a general operative.
- Ensure all repairs meet current safety standards and regulations.

#### Park Area

- Make running repairs to all fencing, including replacing broken panels, posts, or rails.

- General maintenance to ensure boundary safety and security.
- Carry out additional minor repairs as requested.

## Contractor Requirements

1. Responsiveness: Provide a quotation and attend to repair requests within 48 hours of notification unless otherwise agreed.
2. Quality Standards: Complete all work to a high standard using appropriate materials and methods, in line with industry best practice and British Standards.
3. Safety and Compliance: Comply with health and safety legislation, including risk assessments before commencing work.
4. Reporting: Provide a brief report after each job, outlining repairs undertaken and any recommendations for further action.
5. Insurance: Hold valid public liability insurance and supply evidence on request.
6. Qualifications: Possess relevant qualifications and certifications appropriate for the works being undertaken.

## Work Process and Communication

1. Receive repair notifications from Elton Parish Council via email or phone.
2. Acknowledge the request and supply an estimated cost and timeline for attendance.
3. Complete repairs within the agreed timeframe.
4. Immediately communicate any unforeseen issues, complications, or additional required works to the Council.

## Evaluation and Payment

Payment terms will be agreed upon before the start of work. The Council reserves the right to inspect completed works prior to payment. Contractors may need to submit invoices with accompanying reports and photographs.

## Contact Details

All correspondence regarding this specification should be directed to:

Elton Parish Council Clerk

[Insert contact details here]

## Appendix

- Contractors are encouraged to visit the relevant sites before quoting for any works (maps enclosed below)
- The Council may request references or examples of previous similar work.

By submitting interest, contractors confirm acceptance of the requirements detailed in this specification document.

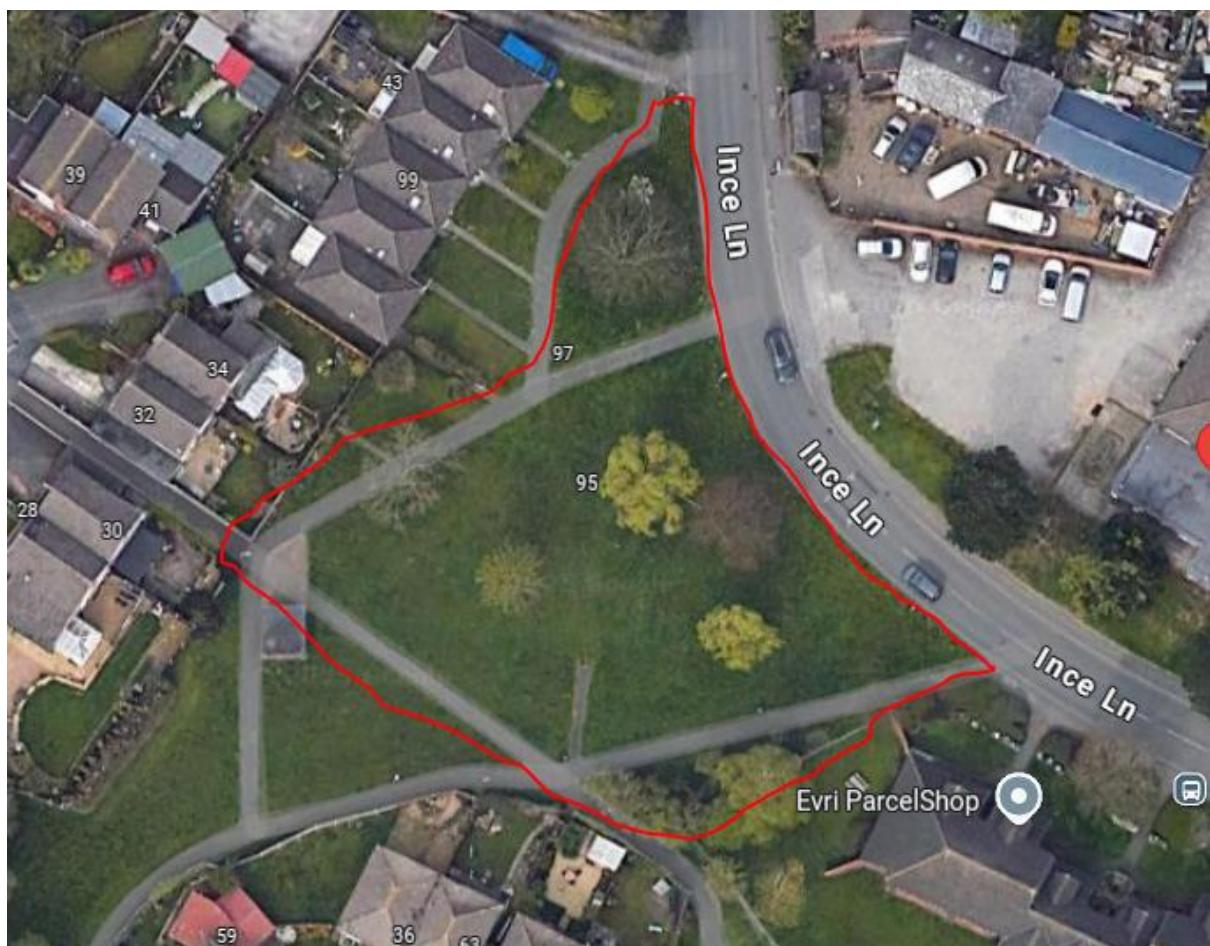
### Parish Field and Play Area, School Lane, Elton



### Elton parish Council Community Centre Car Park



“Greenbank”



Jubilee Field



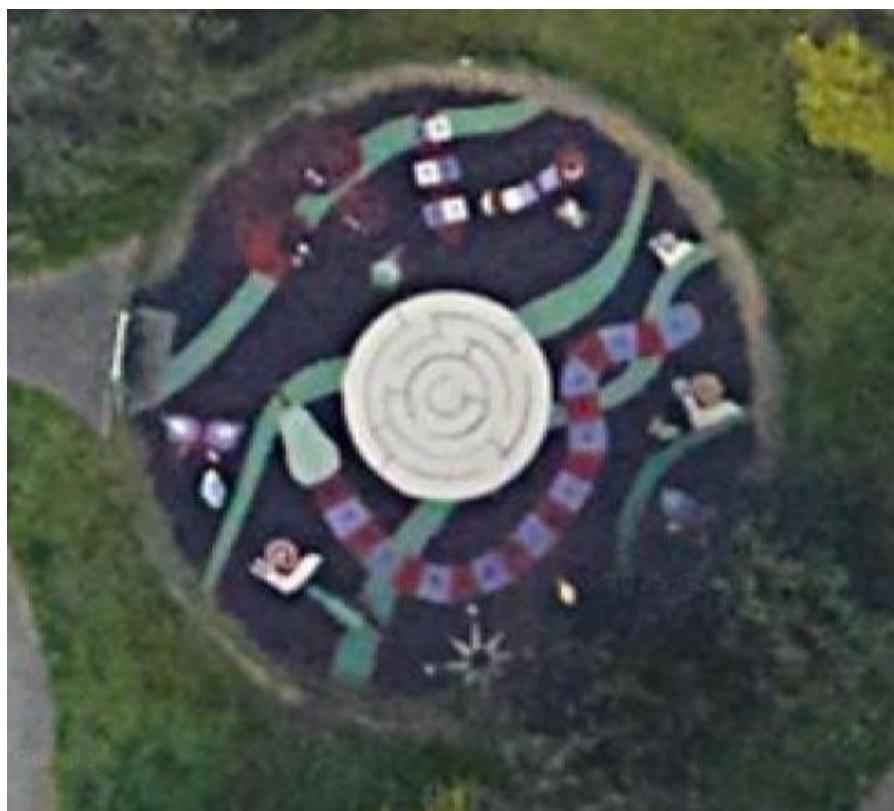
## Sorbus Close Play Area

### Location



## Sorbus Close Play Area

### Detail





**Quote from Clayton for clearing perimeter of parish field**

Hi Lara,

I hope you had a good Christmas.

That's great news re the gate, and yes, I'll include the new area in the quote, when would you like this submitting by.

With regard to the overgrowth and school fence line I'll mulch it down as far as possible and will look to do them early Jan, the cost of this will be £185.

All the best for 2026.

Clayton

## Public Transport Survey Shows Strong Support for Improved Local Services

Almost 700 residents from Elton, Ince and surrounding villages have responded to a recent public transport survey, providing clear evidence of strong demand for improved bus and rail services in the area.

The survey found that 64% of respondents currently use bus services. Of those bus users, 75% said they would use buses more frequently if services served the villages of Elton and Ince after 6pm. There was also strong support for the introduction of Sunday and Bank Holiday services, with many residents highlighting how current limitations restrict access to work, education, healthcare and social activities.

Rail connectivity also emerged as a key priority. An overwhelming 88% of respondents said they would like to see a regular rail service from Elton, linking to Merseyrail services at Ellesmere Port. The same proportion expressed a desire for improved connections via Helsby, providing access to wider rail networks operated by Northern Rail and Transport for Wales. Most respondents who supported improved rail services said they would use them at least weekly, particularly for social and leisure travel.

Overall, the findings highlight a strong appetite for more frequent, accessible and better-connected public transport, especially for residents without access to a car, older people, young people and those with disabilities. Many respondents emphasised that improved services would help reduce isolation, support local employment and education, and encourage more sustainable travel choices.

The survey results will now form the basis of constructive discussions with Cheshire West and Chester Council, local bus operators Stagecoach and Arriva, and rail operators Northern Rail and Merseyrail. These conversations will focus on how the clear views expressed by residents can help shape future public transport provision in the area.

Thank you to everyone who took part in the survey. Further updates will be shared as discussions with the local authority and transport providers progress.