

Girton Parish Council

Precept Recommendation for Consideration

Agenda Item: Precept Recommendation for 2026/27

Council will consider the business case for a Band D increase of +£10 (from £96 to £106), which adds ~£32,260 to the parish budget. This funds an Assistant Groundsman, a phased Comms/Data Steward/PM role, and paid extra hours for Clerk and Facilities Manager, while confirming the community mandate for the MAJOR project before any capital spend.

Councillors may approve, amend, or reject this recommendation—discussion should weigh affordability, delivery priorities, and survey evidence (median willingness = £10; mean ≈ £17.4). If Council wishes to go against the recommendation, that is acceptable, but please ensure rationale is recorded for transparency.

Parish Council Precept: Explanatory Notes

What is a Precept?

- A precept is the amount a parish council asks the billing authority (District Council) to collect via council tax.
- It funds local services and projects delivered by the parish (e.g., play areas, grounds maintenance, community engagement).
- The precept is not optional—it is part of the council tax bill residents pay annually.

Why Band D is used

- Band D is the national benchmark for comparing council tax across authorities.
- All other bands (A–H) are calculated as proportions of Band D (e.g., Band A = 6/9 of Band D; Band H = 18/9).
- Using Band D ensures consistency when discussing precept changes and their impact.

Acronyms Explained

- PUWER: Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (UK safety law for equipment use).
- AGAR: Annual Governance and Accountability Return (statutory financial and governance report for councils).
- CAPALC: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils (advisory body for parish councils).
- NI Relief: National Insurance relief (apprenticeship or under-25 employment incentive).
- SSOT: Single Source of Truth (data governance principle for accurate, centralised information).

Local Government Responsibilities Compared

Council Tier	Main Responsibilities
County Council	Education, highways, transport, social care, libraries, strategic planning.
District Council	Housing, planning applications, waste collection, environmental health, leisure centres.
Parish Council	Local amenities (play areas, recreation grounds), community engagement, minor highways issues, local events, footpaths, allotments.

Girton Parish Council – Precept Recommendation for consideration

Recommendation: Approve a Band D increase of +£10 for 2026/27 (from £96 to £106), yielding a projected total precept of £246,916.40 on a projected tax base of 2,329.4 (Δ vs 2025/26: £32,260.40).

Fund an Assistant Groundsman (20 hrs/wk) and a phased Comms/Data Steward/PM (contractor, 0% on-costs), with paid additional hours for Clerk (+7 hrs in Nov/Dec) and Facilities Manager (+5 hrs/week).

Use 2026/27 to confirm the mandate for Girton’s MAJOR project before committing to large capital works.

Council asked to note for December Full Council

Council to note a Band D increase of +£10 to £106 for 2026/27 (projected total precept £246,916), and to fund:

(a) an Assistant Groundsman (20 hrs/week) from April;

(b) a Comms/Data Steward/PM as a contractor with phased hours in H1 and ramp in H2;

(c) paid additional hours for the Clerk (+7 hrs in Nov/Dec) and the Facilities Manager (+5 hrs/week) to provide governance capacity, scheduling, supervision and reporting.

Council authorises minor deferrals (non-statutory comms/event extras) to remain within the uplift and, if required, a capped one-year General Reserve bridge not exceeding £2,500 with a Q2 checkpoint.

Council further adopts the Assertion-10 risk controls and instructs the Clerk to implement a community mandate confirmation plan in 2026/27 for the MAJOR project, reporting quarterly via dashboards and public streaming.

Caveat (Timing & Assurance):

Final grant positions, apprenticeship/NL relief confirmations, and supplier quotations are expected by the January meeting. This recommendation is therefore presented as a preferred, affordability-balanced option. If any material changes (\geq £5,000 impact on 2026/27 cash requirement) arise from January confirmations, the Clerk will present an updated paper before Council takes a final precept decision to ensure residents are informed.

Public Explainer — What £10 Buys & How We’ll Confirm the Big Project

Band D £96 → £106 (2026/27). Adds ~£32,260 to the parish budget; total precept ~£246,916.

What £10 buys:

- Safer, tidier spaces: Assistant Groundsman for play inspections, hedge/gully routes, lighting checks, match-day readiness.
- Better governance & transparency: Comms/Data/PM to build a Single Source of Truth, dashboards and asset hygiene; paid extra hours for Clerk and Facilities for scheduling, supervision, compliance.
- Community reporting: quarterly “What £10 buys” updates and live streaming of key meetings.

How we’ll confirm the BIG project mandate working together with the community during 2026:

Engagement plan (surveys, pop-ups at the Rec, school-gate sessions, digital); transparent options with costs/funding; published results before any major capital commitment.

Survey Support & Conservatism – Precept Survey

Median willingness to pay = £10; mean ≈ £17.4. £10 aligns with the median and is conservative relative to the mean. Category responses show strong appetite for “more” across themes.

Response	Count	Percent
Don't know	37	22.4%
No	31	18.8%
5	28	17.0%
20	17	10.3%
10	17	10.3%
(no answer)	14	8.5%
>£40 (improved facilities)	10	6.1%
40	9	5.5%
See below	1	0.6%
Can't afford any more	1	0.6%

Confirming the MAJOR Project Mandate (2026/27)

Purpose: validate a clear community mandate OR Not for capital options (Pavilion/Active Travel/Play/Compound) before committing significant reserves or borrowing.

Q1–Q4 methods: (1) Structured engagement; (2) Transparent reporting with Plan visuals and costs; (3) Mandate test with ranked preferences and affordability signals; (4) Publish results into 2027/28 budget/precept.

Precept: Note on Relative Position of SCDC Parishes (“League Table”)

The internal precept workbook contains illustrative historical Band D figures but no verified 2026/27 data for neighbouring parishes. On that internal range, £106 would sit upper-mid to upper quartile. Without countywide returns, no definitive ranking is asserted.

[SCDC council-tax-parish-council-bands.xlsx](#)

Precept Survey - “Resident voice” panel to accompany the table (quotes + how the precept meets requirements)

Evidence base:

Survey shows **median willingness = £10, mean ≈ £17.4**, with clustered preferences at **£5, £10**, and a cohort at **£20–£40+**; also non-support and “don't know” segments.

This positions **+£10 as supported (median) and conservative** vs average appetite.

Resident Voice (for flyer/paper):

- “**I can support around £10** if it makes our play areas safer and the village better maintained.” *(Matches median willingness £10 and category appetite for “more” on safety/maintenance.)*
- “I want **clear communication** and **evidence** of progress—show me the dashboard and what my money is doing.” *(Comms/Data role delivers SSOT + dashboards; quarterly updates.)*
- “Please **ask us before big spending**—show options and costs first.” *(Mandate-confirmation plan: surveys, pop-ups, streaming; capital only after published results.)*

How the +£10 precept meets these requirements:

- **Safety & maintenance:** Funds the **Assistant Groundsman** to catch up inspections, hedge/gully, lighting checks, and match-day readiness.
- **Transparency & evidence:** Phased **Comms/Data Steward/PM** builds a **Single Source of Truth** and dashboards; Clerk/FM paid hours safeguard minutes, scheduling, and compliance; quarterly “What £10 buys” updates.
- **Ask before we invest big:** A **2026/27 mandate-confirmation plan** (surveys/pop-ups/streaming + published options & costs) ensures **evidence before investment** in the MAJOR project.

Standard Risk Statement:

Council notes that all proposals are subject to financial, operational, compliance/IT, delivery, and reputational risks. Controls align with AGAR Assertion-10 and the Council's adopted risk policy. Key mitigations include phased delivery, supplier due diligence, community mandate confirmation, and governance checkpoints. Material changes (\geq £5,000 impact) will trigger an updated report before any commitment.

Staffing Plan & Capacity

- Assistant Groundsman (staff): £19,210.53 p.a. at 20 hrs/week.
- Comms/Data Steward/PM (contractor): £18,147.85 p.a. at 22 hrs/week full-year; will be phased to fit within +£10 uplift.
- Paid increments (October and November 2025): Clerk (+7 hrs Nov/Dec) and Facilities Manager (+5 hrs/week) are included within operations. Volunteer Clerk hours provide strategic spikes on top.

Risk (AGAR Assertion-10) – Summary

Category	Risk
Financial	Pressure if Comms/Data/PM ran full-year at listed hours under +£10; mitigated by phasing, minor deferrals, and capped (<£2.5k) reserves bridge with Q2 gate.
Operational	Supervision and onboarding load; mitigated via Facilities +5 hrs/week, task boards, toolbox talks, and 30–60–90 plans.
Compliance/IT	PUWER, lone working, GDPR and streaming; mitigated by formal inductions, role-based access and audit trails with Clerk oversight.
Delivery	Training-to-productivity lag; mitigated by phased milestones, minutes/inspections SLAs, and quarterly reporting.
Reputation	If mandate is unclear while costs rise; mitigated by explicit mandate-confirmation plan and transparent publication/streaming.

What are the options in raising the precept and what is the impact

Increasing precept - Financial Options (2026/27)

Option	Band D (£)	Tax base used	Total Precept (£)	Δ vs current (£)	Covers 2 roles?	Headroom after 2 roles (£)	Covers 3 roles?
Freeze	96.00	2329	223,622.40	8,966.40	No	-25,800.99	No
+£3.73	99.73	2329	232,311.06	17,655.06	No	-17,112.33	No
+£5	101.00	2329	235,269.40	20,613.40	No	-14,153.99	No
+£10	106.00	2329	246,916.40	32,260.40	No	-2,506.99	No
+£15	111.00	2329	258,563.40	43,907.40	Yes	9,140.01	No
+£20	116.00	2329	270,210.40	55,554.40	Yes	20,787.01	Yes
+£50	146.00	2329	340,092.40	125,436.40	Yes	90,669.01	Yes

What could Girton purchase” at each raise level, and the risk at each level

Assumptions used: Roles costs: Assistant Groundsman £19,210.53, Comms/Data Steward/PM £18,147.85 (contractor; 0% on-costs), Apprentice Clerk £15,556.86. Raise scenarios and totals: Freeze, +£3.73, +£5, +£10, +£15, +£20, +£50 as per your pack.

Raise option	Raise vs current precept	Total precept Girton	What we can purchase/do within the uplift	Key risks (Assertion-10) & mitigations
Freeze	+£8,966	£223,622	Minor operational improvements only (tax-base effect): short bursts of inspections and small tidy-ups; no new posts.	Delivery risk: visible progress limited; Mitigation: focus on statutory safety tasks first. Financial risk: no capacity uplift; Mitigation: communicate constraint clearly.
+£3.73	+£17,655	£232,311	Partial seasonal uplift: increased inspections and some hedge/gully routes; still no new roles.	Operational risk: backlog persists; Mitigation: targeted scheduling and volunteer coordination.
+£5	+£20,613	£235,269	Enhanced maintenance cycle and limited quick-wins (signage/lighting checks); still no posts fully funded.	Reputation risk: residents expect more than can be delivered; Mitigation: publish a “What +£5 buys” list and quarterly outputs.
+£10 (Recommended)	+£32,260	£246,916	Fund Assistant Groundsman (20 hrs/wk); phase Comms/Data Steward/PM (start at 0.6–0.7 FTE, ramp H2); paid Clerk +7 hrs (Nov/Dec) & Facilities +5 hrs/week to secure governance, scheduling and supervision.	Financial risk: full-year Comms/Data at listed hours would exceed uplift; Mitigation: phase the role, minor deferrals (non-statutory comms/events), capped reserves bridge <£2.5k with Q2 gate. Compliance: PUWER/lone working/GDPR; Mitigation: inductions, role-based access, audit trail.
+£15	+£43,907	£258,563	Fully fund two roles (Groundsman + Apprentice or Comms/Data), with ~£9.1k headroom; can run Comms/Data near full-year with minimal phasing.	Delivery risk: still tight if three roles attempted; Mitigation: stick to two posts + targeted third-role hours, publish outputs each quarter.
+£20	+£55,554	£270,210	Fully fund two roles and just about fund Comms/Data full-year (tight slack).	Financial risk: minimal headroom for shocks; Mitigation: maintain contingency

Raise option	Raise vs current precept	Total precept Girton	What we can purchase/do within the uplift	Key risks (Assertion-10) & mitigations
+£50	+£125,436	£340,092	Funds all three roles full-year with strong headroom; enables larger programme preparation.	and supplier due-diligence; only commit capital after mandate. Reputation risk: affordability optics; Mitigation: only consider if a clear, strong mandate exists; staged commitments; exceptional comms.

Additional Information

Precept history (for Information)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Tax Base</i>	<i>Band D (£)</i>	<i>Parish Precept (£)</i>	<i>increase/decrease</i>
2018/19	1,802.3	65.228319	117,561	Not Applicable
2019/20	1,829.5	67.471440	123,439	+2.243121
2020/21	1,847.4	68.822128	127,142	+1.350688
2021/22	1,887.2	69.391691	130,956	+0.569563
2022/23	1,897.7	73.588028	139,648	+4.196336
2023/24	2,013.6	74.505860	150,025	+0.917833
2024/25	1,952.4	92.269514	180,147	+17.763654
2025/26	2,236.0	96.000000	214,656	+3.73

Current charges (2025/26) vs Proposed (2026/27) All Bands

BAND	CURRENT (£96 BAND D)	PROPOSED (£106 BAND D)	INCREASE (£)
A	£64.00	£70.67	+£6.67
B	£74.67	£82.47	+£7.80
C	£85.33	£94.27	+£8.94
D	£96.00	£106.00	+£10.00
E	£117.33	£129.53	+£12.20
F	£138.67	£153.06	+£14.39
G	£160.00	£176.69	+£16.69
H	£192.00	£212.00	+£20.00