



On Tuesday 7 January 2025, the Finance & Administration Committee members met to discuss the draft budget for the 2025/26 financial year. Members reviewed the income and expenditure before a budget was agreed upon to recommend approval to Full Council.

Following this meeting, the Full Council met and set its budget for the 2025/26 financial year and subsequently what it would request as its precept from Dorset Council, paid by those who pay Council Tax, to support that budget. The total expenditure is £699,663.00 which includes operating costs and exceptional and capital items. Exceptional and capital costs are one-off items within the year that the Council feels are either required to meet its obligations or are for the benefit of the community. After calculating these figures in line with the Tax base set by Dorset Council, this leaves the Council with a deficit of £148,538.00.

During the 2024/25 financial year, due to an underspend, as a result of reduced employee costs, efficiencies and higher than predicted income from sports provision and pavilion along with increased bank interest, the Council has already transferred £80,000 of the underspend to the earmarked reserves for the potential pavilion rebuild project with a balance of just under £158,000 held for the project, along with just under £205,000 also earmarked and has restrictions upon how it can be used under a section 106 agreement with a developer and Dorset Council. Holding earmarked reserves for the project will reduce of the level of future borrowing required to progress the project. The Council also needs to hold 3-6 months of operating costs.

The Council resolved to allocate a further £80,137.41 from the general reserves to reduce the budget deficit to £68,400.49. With this in mind, the precept required by those who pay Council Tax, to support the budget is £619,525.59.

The impact of these decisions means the Town Council will be raising its precept by £13.73 for the year, or £1.14 per month, for a Council Tax Band D property. Obviously, this will be less for Bands A, B, and C properties and more for Bands E and higher, based on the percentage calculation. The percentage increase on the Corfe Mullen Town Council precept part of your Council Tax from the 2024/25 year to the 2025/26 year is 9.90%. When considered as a percentage figure it is slightly higher than last year, but it is as a direct result of difficult decisions in previous years that the Town Council is in a position to limit this year's rise, despite escalating costs. As stated, the 9.90% equates to £1.14 per month, or 26p per week on a band D property.

Clearly, the Town Council would prefer not to raise its precept as it recognises some residents are struggling with rising living costs. However, it is subject to the same financial pressures as all businesses and households in respect of rising utilities, supplies and increased employer national insurance contributions, which has now put the Town Council in a position where the choice is to make cuts to the services it offers or raising the precept to meet the need, it was decided that cutting services in 2025/26 would be detrimental to the community and its residents.

The Town Council maintains a number of services across the Parish which residents enjoy unfettered, such as the recreation ground facilities including the sports pitches and pavilion, public toilets, play areas, two cemeteries, allotments, and Springdale open space, while also supporting local organisations and charities who directly assist residents of Corfe Mullen.

It is the pride for Corfe Mullen that the Town Council is determined to retain by continuing to provide excellent services to its community and it hopes that its residents understand the need to ask for an additional 26p per week to do so.

**Corfe Mullen Town Council**  
**January 2025**