



# Headley Parish Council Precept 2026/27

## Financial Budget

The Budget for financial year 2026/27 falls broadly into three categories:

1. Council Running Costs
2. Open Spaces & Parish Enhancement
3. Community & Sports (Headley Playing Fields & Headley Pavilion)

### **1. Council Running Costs - Budget**

Comprising net costs of:

- Administration
- Parish Office running costs
- Staffing costs
- Recommendation to keep a 6-9 month General Reserve for running costs.

The running costs budget for 2026/27 is slightly higher than that of the current financial year by +2.2% - broadly in line with inflation. Most of these cost heads are actually lower than the current year. However, there is a non-recurring provision of £10,000 for re-organisation of the Parish Office to update rooms that are long-overdue improvement and meet a recommendation by the Council Internal Auditor to prepare for workflow changes accommodating management of the Headley Pavilion.

### **2. Parish Open Spaces - Budget**

Comprising net costs of:

- General Village Repairs & Enhancements
- Village Green
- Upkeep of owned Land (including Arford Common, Stanford Green, Headley Hill Woods, Saunders Green)
- Trees maintenance on owned land
- Playgrounds

The budget for 2026/27 is broadly in line with that of the current financial year through a prudent budget reduction in multiple cost heads, albeit offset by increased activity in Village enhancement and the escalating costs of tree maintenance across heavily wooded Parish owned Common, Woods and Greens.

### **3. Community & Sports - Budget**

Comprising expenditure from:

- Pavilion Operating costs
- Rates and Utilities



- New Caretaker job share
- Pitch Maintenance
- Land rental
- Public Works Loan Board loan repayment
- Maintenance of Earmarked Reserves

Comprising revenues from:

- Room hire receipts
- Sports Club Licence Fees, cost contributions & Utility recharges

The budget for 2026/27 is higher than its equivalent of last year by +78.8% to meet the significant additional costs that the Council has taken on to manage and maintain the newly refurbished Headley Pavilion. At this stage, revenue projections are intentionally modest reflecting the need to build demand for the Pavilion product through the year. HPC anticipates revenues in the next budget cycle to be more substantial.

### Precept Calculation

The Headley Parish Council Budgeted spend for 2026/27 is £232,972. This is an increase of +22.7% on the current year's Budget spend.

To fund this Budget Headley Parish Council (HPC) has sought a Precept of £223,000 – an increase of 26.8% on last year's Precept. The shortfall in Precept vs. Budget (£9,972) is fully funded by a projected budgetary underspend carried forward from the current financial year.

The increase in Precept for 2026/27 represents an increase of £17.59 per Band D household per year (£1.47 per month, approximately 34p per week)

### Background to the Changes

The Headley Pavilion is now some thirty years old. When it was built, the original funders passed ownership to Headley Parish Council who in turn leased it to the Headley Sports Association (HSA). The HSA was responsible for the maintenance of the building. The funding members of the HSA were the resident sports clubs.

The HSA benefited from the excellent services of a voluntary caretaker until some four years ago. Upon his retirement there was no replacement available. However, as the building aged, the funds being generated by club contributions were inadequate to arrest its decline and the fabric of the building deteriorated.

Four years ago, Headley Parish Council commissioned a survey of sporting provision which recommended (amongst other things) various significant upgrades to the Pavilion building to bring it in line with modern sports and accessibility requirements. These included the complete refurbishment of toilets, the addition of accessible change area and toilet, the creation of separate referee change rooms and the extension of the Main Hall to promote indoor sport both winter and summer. In order to bring the facilities up to standard, HPC has spent over £1.2m extending and refurbishing the Pavilion and is now about to open it for sports and community use.



HPC sought grant and government loan funding to embark upon the required extension and refurbishment upgrade. Nearly £1.0M has been raised from various S106 and CIL grant pots primarily courtesy of East Hants District Council and much of the remainder was met through a long-term loan from the Public Work Loan Board. HPC has, however, also had to dip into its reserves to meet additional and unexpected costs.

The previous long-term arrangement with the HSA as tenant is, regrettably, no longer the right vehicle to manage and maintain the building to the quality level required by the major upgrade. HPC had to take control in order to protect its major investment. The overall value of the Pavilion is now in the region of £2.6m.

The HSA remained the lessor of the Pavilion until the end of Quarter 1 2025 when HPC took possession in order to perform the requisite building works. As we near the end of the current financial year, HPC now has full possession of the building and plans to reintroduce sports clubs' usage from April and welcome community lettings shortly thereafter.

The 2026/27 budget now provides the financial support required for HPC to exercise full management control of the Pavilion and sports fields operation.

## **IN SUMMARY**

### **Key Points**

- Headley Parish Council recognises that the Precept increase for 2026/27 is significant and appreciates the concern that some Parishioners have expressed.
- However, while the Council's overall Precept increase of 26.8% is substantially larger in percentage terms than other budget increases on the Council Tax Bill, HPC's share of the overall Council Tax is small and the increase in cash terms is, therefore, also comparatively small – for a Band D property, for example, the Precept increase represents an extra £17.59 per year (i. e. just £1.47 per month or approximately 34p per week).
- Moreover, the increase is necessary to meet significant new costs that the Council has had to take on in running the newly refurbished Sports Pavilion in Mill Lane.
- Until last year, the Pavilion was leased and wholly operated by the Headley Sports Association, who maintained it as best they could using volunteers.
- When it became clear that the ageing Pavilion was no longer fit for purpose and that the HSA was not in a position to continue to operate it, HPC had no choice but to step in and take control of the building and its operation.
- In order to bring the facilities up to standard, HPC has spent over £1.2m extending and refurbishing the Pavilion and is now about to open it for sports and community use.
- The excellent facilities provided by the new Pavilion will not last if the building is not properly maintained and HPC has found it necessary to employ two local caretakers on a job-share basis to ensure that the buildings are readily available, clean, safe and secure.
- HPC hopes that income from sports and community usage will help to offset the additional costs of running the Pavilion in the future, but in the meantime these costs need to be met through the Council Tax Precept.