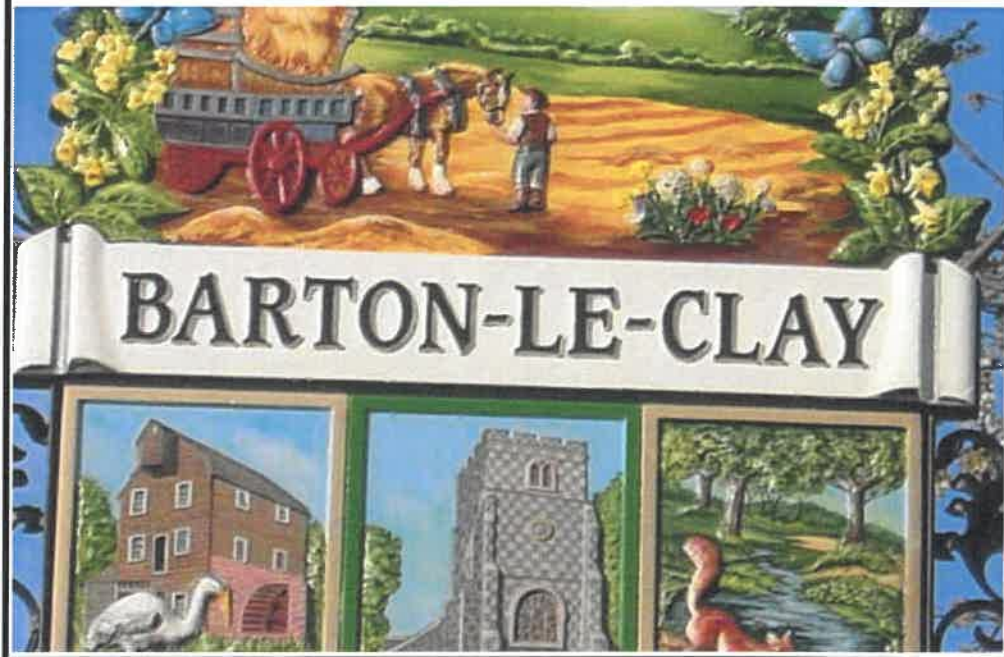




ANNUAL REPORT

2025—2026

Published May 2026



PARISH COUNCIL FACTFILE

Members of the Council 2025/2026

Chair: Jonathan Paxton
Vice Chair: Jill Mikkelson
Gill Gardner (died October 2025)
Abby Fletcher
Steve Laycock
Will Rudd
John Selley
Barbara Thomas (resigned March 2026)
Alison Vale
Adele Tebb
Kalim Qureshi

Staff

Carolyn Callen Clerk to the Council
Suzanne Cowie Assistant Clerk to the Council
John Fitzgerald Full-Time Grounds/Facilities Maintenance Person
Ian Nicholls Part-Time Groundsman (resigned August 2025)
Jim Pope Part-Time Groundsman (resigned December 2025)
Simon Jennings Part-Time Parish Ranger (joined September 2025)
Phil Horton Part-Time Parish Ranger (joined September 2025)
Karen Small Norman Road Playground Keyholder
Selina McConville Norman Road Playground Keyholder

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Barton-le-Clay
Bedfordshire
MK45 4NA
Telephone: (01582) 883990

E-mail: theparishclerk@bartonleclay-pc.gov.uk
Website: www.bartonleclay-pc.gov.uk
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1563405067289955>

2025/2026 Precept: £243,059

BARTON-LE-CLAY PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 2025 – 2026

Working together to keep our village a safe, vibrant and welcoming place to live

In a year of progression for Barton-le-Clay Parish Council, the highlight has clearly been the adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan, following a convincing referendum result on 19th February 2026, with over 96% voting 'Yes'. This means the Parish Council has greater powers to challenge inappropriate development and maintain our Village's character. The work put into this over the years by councillors, staff and residents cannot be underestimated and I must thank Cllr Abby Fletcher and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee, whose hard work and energy led to the excellent result.

Whilst we are positive about the future of the Village, the year has been tinged with sadness following the passing of long-standing Councillor Gill Gardner. As well as being a Parish Councillor, Gill was involved in the Women's Institute, Bowls Club and St Nicholas Church. She was heavily involved with the Planning Committee, and I know she would have been delighted with the referendum result. Gill led the Horticultural Show Sub-Committee for many years, as well as being a key member of the Leisure Committee. I would also like to thank Councillor Barbara Thomas who recently stepped down from the Parish Council after many years, including two spells as Chair. Barbara has been a good friend and support for me on the Council over the years and we all wish her well.

In September 2025, we welcomed two part-time Rangers to the team. Phil Horton and Simon Jennings are sharing the role and are developing their skills and knowledge to keep the Village in good order. Whilst Phil and Simon have joined the team, we sadly said goodbye to Ian Nichols our weekend Groundsman in August 2025. Ian had dedicated many years of service at the Sports Field and has left to follow a new path. We also said goodbye to Jim Pope, part-time Groundsman. Jim hung up his tool kit and strimmer in December 2025 to enjoy his well-earned retirement. We thank both Ian and Jim for their commitment and years of hard work. Our Grounds staff work incredibly hard for the Village so if you see them out and about carrying out their many duties, please say hello.

Key highlights in the past year were the VE Day 80th Anniversary Celebrations in May 2025. It was good to see so many people enjoy the refreshments in the library and congratulations to all those who entered the cake competition.

The commemorations ended with a beacon lighting on 8th May, and we thank everyone who attended the events, helped with the organisation, performed or took part in any way. A few months later in August, we joined

together to commemorate the VJ Day 80th Anniversary with a tea and cake event in the library and wreath laying at the War Memorial. Remembering those who served, abroad and at home and those who lost their lives is so important and must never be forgotten. The year of commemoration ended with the Remembrance Sunday Service on 9th November 2025. These events take a lot of organising and are only possible with help from volunteers. If you have some time, and are willing to help at this years event, please let the Parish Office know.

The Coronation Community Garden has continued to grow and offers a great space for villagers to enjoy. The Garden is maintained by a small number of volunteers and weeding sessions are held regularly. If you would like to join the weeding sessions or other activities, please contact the Parish Office.

The Grounds Staff have been busy throughout the year maintaining our green spaces. Two new picnic benches were purchased for the play areas and offer visitors additional seating and a place to relax whilst visiting.

In September 2025, a new fence was installed at the Sports Field. It was installed to tackle ongoing issues of dog fouling, antisocial behaviour and dogs off lead, which are not permitted on marked out pitches. The Sports Field is hired by over 20 youth football teams, Sunday League adult teams, Football Academy and One-to-One training, and we are fortunate to have such a fantastic facility in the Village. Since the fence was installed, it has made the facility a safer place to use.

Over one weekend in April 2026, we held a very successful Allotment Open Day. The event attracted several visitors, many of which have decided to take on a plot and join the Allotment community. We still have a small number of vacant plots available to let, so if you are interested please contact the Parish Office for more details.

As ever, my gratitude goes to our incredible staff for working so diligently and effectively to maintain our Village, and to my fellow Councillors for giving up their time to facilitate meetings and help make Barton-le-Clay a great place for us all to live.

Please visit the Parish Office to share any views you may have with regard to the Village. If you find yourself with some spare time and have an interest in what happens within the Village, and want to shape its future, please consider applying to become a Parish Councillor. There are currently vacancies to be filled, so contact the Parish Office for further information.

Councillor Jonathan Paxton
Chair Barton-le-Clay Parish Council

PLANNING COMMITTEE

As a statutory consultee, the Planning Committee, on behalf of the Parish Council, have met regularly throughout the year, to consider all planning applications submitted for the Barton-le-Clay Parish. We have commented where we agree inappropriate or insufficient plans have been provided and object when considered necessary. Reviewing the plans involves looking at previous and proposed plans, visiting the site or property to understand the context of the proposal and then discussing them at the Committee meeting. Over the last year, we have considered 55 applications, commenting on 21, objecting to 11 and raising no comments on 23.

Now that the Neighbourhood Plan for Barton-le-Clay has been adopted, the approved planning policies will help to shape the future of Our Village and surrounding area and put us in a much more powerful position legally, to ensure that any new developments meet our needs.

You will see that work has begun on the housing development on Higham Gobion Road. We will continue to work with the Developer as it progresses, on behalf of the Village.



LEISURE COMMITTEE

The Leisure Committee are responsible for supply and maintenance of the Parish Council's Allotment Gardens, Norman Road Play Area and Arnold Recreation Ground. They plan improvements and carry out maintenance to ensure the Village green spaces comply with relevant health & safety policies and guidance. These facilities are vital for the Village and provide essential sites for wellbeing, for all ages. Sadly, they are often a target for vandalism, meaning that the resources set aside to upgrade and improve facilities are often diverted.



BURIAL GROUNDS COMMITTEE

The Burial Grounds Committee is responsible for the management and maintenance of the Parish Council's Burial Ground, the closed Churchyard of St Nicholas Church & are custodians of the Village War Memorial and area. The Committee also organise and oversees the annual Remembrance Sunday service, and other commemorations such as the VE Day and VJ Day 80th Anniversaries held in 2025.

They meet regularly to ensure health and safety policies and landowner/ employer responsibilities are adhered to. They are responsible for setting the Burial Ground Fees and Regulations, which are reviewed annually.



SPORTS FIELD COMMITTEE

The Committee are responsible for supplying 9 football pitches of various sizes and the Pavilion changing facilities, which are hired by over 20 local Youth Football teams, weekend Adult teams, a weekday Football Academy and one-to-one training coaches. They plan for improvement projects, such as the annual reseeding programme and future 3G provision on the site, as well as maintaining the site to ensure it complies with health and safety policies and guidance.



POLICIES & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The Committee considers management issues, such as the Council's finance, administration and asset resources/risks. They undertake a regular review of the Council's policies not covered by other committees and each year award small grants to non-profit organisations that directly benefit our community.

Grant applications are invited in September each year, details of which can be obtained from the Parish Clerk. In 2025, the Parish Council awarded grants totaling **£3,445.44** to the following good causes. In addition, they donated a Pool Table to the residents of Gale Court, at a cost of **£483.32**.

Barton-le-Clay Pre-School £150.00 <i>Wooden arch for role play</i>	Noah's Ark £50.00 <i>Childrens books</i>
Barton Kids Club £300.00 <i>Replace oven/paddling pool</i>	Barton Helping Hands £220.94 <i>Public Liability Insurance</i>
Arnold Academy PTA £200.00 <i>Outdoor team building games</i>	Royal British Legion £100.00 <i>Poppy Wreath for Remembrance service</i>
Arnold Academy £50.00 Year 8 Leavers Prizes	1st Barton-le-Clay Rangers <i>Upcycle book case & badges</i> £174.50



Barton Rovers Football Club <i>Accessible walkway</i> £375.00	Barton-le-Clay Bowling Club <i>Accessible walkway</i> £375.00
Unity Hall £300.00 <i>Replace cooker/fridge</i>	Blooming Barton £200.00 <i>Plants & tools</i>
Barton-le-Clay Carpet Bowls <i>New tops for members</i> £200.00	Wanderbus Ltd £750.00 Replacement bus

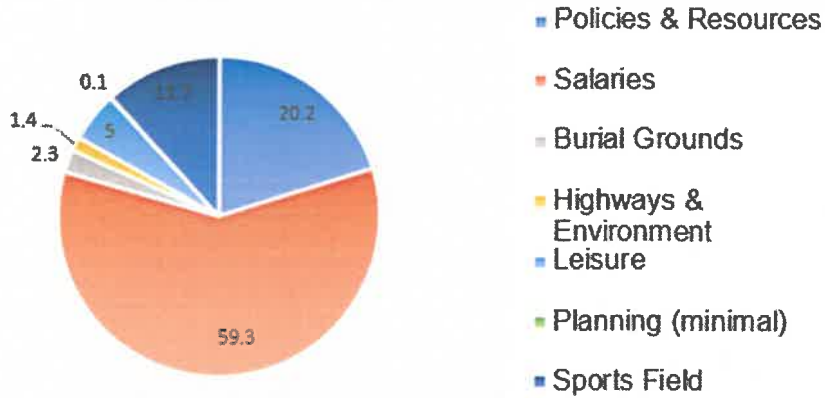
Annual Accounts

The Parish Council financial year ends on the 31st March. It is required to prepare year-end accounts which are then overviewed by an independent internal auditor who reviews the report on finances, policies, procedures and accountability. The Parish Council submits a statement of financial fact to a nationally appointed external auditor chosen by Central Government — Forviz Mazars LLP.

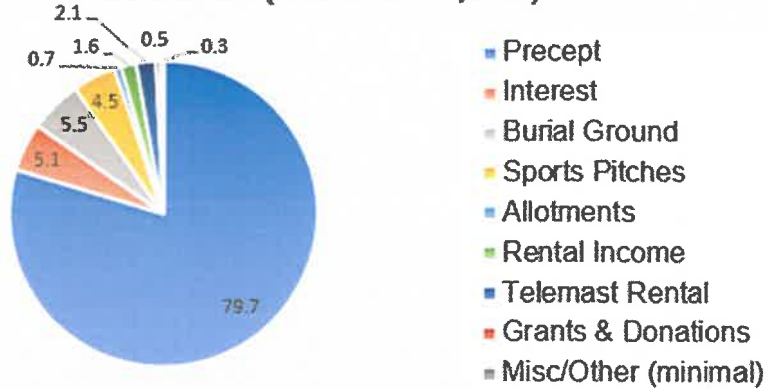
The Parish Council publishes its accounts each year, which can be viewed at both the Parish Office and online Website. The annual accounts will be available to read/download from the Parish Council website by end-June.



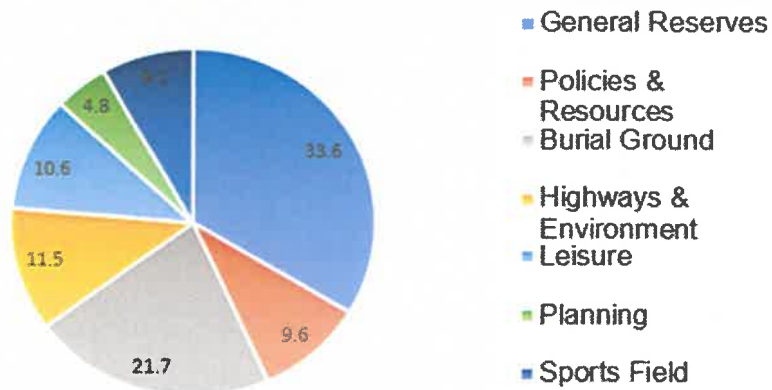
EXPENDITURE (Total £278,791)



INCOME (Total £304,531)



RESERVES (Total £389,058)



BARTON-LE-CLAY PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2026		
31st March 2025		31^s March 2026
	Current Assets	
3,236	Debtors	693
4,394	VAT	4,549
4,801	Prepayments	5,028
13,669	Current Bank A/C	9,194
10,434	Savings A/C	10,796
184,883	Public Sector Deposit Fund	208,980
17,586	Tennis Club Account	19,617
84,792	Hampshire Trust	88,371
53,948	Nationwide 45DN Savings A/C	54,058
70	Petty Cash – Office	70
377,815		401,357
377,815	Total Assets	401,357

	Current Liabilities	
2,692	Creditors	806
2,902	Accruals	1,498
1,600	Allotment Deposits	2,350
2,722	Wages	2,930
1,331	Pensions	1,465
3,250	Receipts in Advance	3,250
14,497		12,299
363,317	Total Assets Less Current Liabilities	389,058

	Represented by:	
121,531	General Reserves	130,559
241,786	Earmarked Reserves	258,498
363,317		389,058

COMMUNITY EVENTS



COMMUNITY EVENTS





BARTON-LE-CLAY PARISH COUNCIL

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