



**MARLOW**  
TOWN COUNCIL

**Marlow Town Council**

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**To members of the Council:**

**Town Mayor Cllr M Boulay, Cllr P Burden, Cllr O Elliott, Cllr E Hawkins, Cllr G Nuttall, Cllr L Riches, Cllr F Schoofs, Deputy Mayor Cllr J Simnett, Cllr M Skoyles, Cllr K Thomson, Cllr J Towns, Cllr J Whelan**

A meeting of the Town Council will be held on **Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2026 at 7.00pm** in **The Higginson Room**, Court Garden House, Pound Lane, Marlow and you are hereby summoned to attend:

Signed: *Hilary Martin*

Town Clerk | Date 22.01.2026

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**Public forum:** Questions, statements and concerns are invited

## **Agenda**

<b>M.86.25</b>	<b>Apologies for absence</b>	Decision
<b>M.87.25</b>	<b>Declarations of interest</b>	Information
<b>M.88.25</b>	<b>Communications from the Town Mayor</b>	Information
<b>M.89.25</b>	<b>Town Council minutes</b>	Decision
<b>M.90.25</b>	<b>Committee minutes</b>	Decision
<b>M.91.25</b>	<b>Management accounts</b>	Decision
<b>M.92.25</b>	<b>Gate to access Gossmore car park</b>	Decision
<b>M.93.25</b>	<b>Urgent repairs to play equipment</b>	Decision
<b>M.94.25</b>	<b>River Partnership</b>	Decision
<b>M.95.25</b>	<b>Trial of Insignis for investments</b>	Decision
<b>M.96.25</b>	<b>Budget 2026-27</b>	Decision
<b>M.97.25</b>	<b>Precept 2026-27</b>	Decision
<b>M.98.25</b>	<b>Information reports</b> a) Buckinghamshire Councillor reports b) Outside representatives reports c) FOI request	Information
<b>M.99.25</b>	<b>Date and time of next meeting</b>	Information

Filming/Recording/Photographing at Meetings – please note that this may take place during the public part of the meeting. Notices are displayed in the meeting room.

**Public forum:**

This Council is committed to engaging with the public at their Town Council meetings. The positioning of the public forum on the agenda is based on the meeting content; to allow informed debate and to expedite the business to be transacted. It will be decided on a meeting by meeting basis.

**M.86.25 Apologies for absence**

**M.87.25 Declarations of interest**

**M.88.25 Communications from the Town Mayor**

04.12.2025	Late night shopping event
05.12.2025	Meeting with Buckinghamshire Council re: Court Garden House
07.12.2025	Santa Fun Run
08.12.2025	Licencing Service for Rev Sam Follett
15.12.2025	Meeting with The Marlow Society
16.12.2025	Carols on The Causeway
21.12.2025	Carols by Candlelight at All Saints Church
12.01.2026	Meeting with Human Repair Cafe
12.01.2026	Meeting with UK Hospitality

**M.89.25 Town Council minutes**

**Recommended:**

That Town Council agree the minutes dated 02.12.2025 as a true record.

**M.90.25 Committee minutes**

13.01.2026

**Recommended:**

That the Town Council notes all the committee minutes published since the last meeting.

**M.91.25 Management accounts**

The Resources committee under minute RC.39.25: recommended that the management accounts dated 30.11.2025 be approved.

**Recommended:**

That the management accounts dated 30.11.2025 be approved by Town Council.

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## **M.92.25 Gate to access Gossmore car park**

Buckinghamshire Council has installed a lockable gate at the entrance to Gossmore car park. This will allow the car park to be locked during the hours of darkness.

- On weekdays, the gate can be locked and unlocked by Council Officers in the mornings and by volunteer residents in the evenings.
- On weekends, a contractor will be needed to lock and unlock the gate. The Council's current security patrol provider has agreed to do this as part of their existing patrols, at a cost of £1,000 per year.

### **Recommended:**

That Council agrees to the payment of £1,000 per annum to 4Front Security for the locking and unlocking of the Gossmore Car Park gate at weekends, and that delegated authority is given to Officers to agree with Buckinghamshire Council the opening and closing times.

## **M.93.25 Urgent repairs to play equipment**

Two items of play equipment have recently failed safety inspections and have therefore been taken out of use and secured. Both items require urgent repair or replacement which falls outside the approved budget. The equipment is no longer covered by the manufacturer's original 10-year guarantee.

### **Riley Park playground**

The springs on the rodeo board have significantly eroded and are now at high risk of failure. Replacement of the springs is required to return the equipment to safe use.

- **Cost:** £1,266
- **Warranty:** 10 years

### **Campbell Park playground**

The metal slide has developed a substantial structural split and cannot be repaired. The most cost-effective solution is to replace the slide unit using the existing support structure, allowing the equipment to be brought back into use.

- **Cost:** £3,409
- **Warranty:** 10 years

### **Financial position**

Current reserves for playground equipment replacement stand at **£5,953**.

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**Recommended:**

That Members **approve the repairs and replacements at a total cost of £4,675**, to be funded from the **playground equipment replacement reserves**.

**M.94.25 River Partnership**

Council is asked to consider in principle contributing to the cost of testing of E Coli levels in the Thames within Marlow Parish. Full costings and possible sponsorship opportunities will be brought back to Council in due course.

**Recommended:**

That Council approves in principle supporting the cost of testing with detailed costs to be brought back to Council.

**M.95.25 Trial of Insignis for investments**

Recommendation from Resources Committee

Officers were asked to arrange a demonstration of the Insignis Platform to be able to inform councillors of options for managing council banking and surplus cash balances, comparing the current relationship with Lloyds Bank against adopting or supplementing it with Insignis, a deposit management platform. The relevant reports are attached below.

[Comparison Report](#)

[Insignis Cash Template Treasury Policy](#)

[Insignis NFP Brochure Apr 25](#)

**Recommended:**

The Resources Committee requests a pilot with surplus funds to be invested with Insignis, subject to:

- Legal and procurement due diligence and auditor approval.
- Confirmation of FSCS coverage and account structure.

And delegates authority to a working group from Resources Committee of Cllr Schoofs, Cllr Simnett and Cllr Nuttall to work with the Clerk to update draft revised Financial Regulations and Treasury Management Policy and the amount of surplus cash value to be determined and bring these back to Council for approval.

Cllr Frank Schoofs Chair of Resources Committee

Current forecasts for the 2025/2026 financial year show that the Council is likely to end the year with a deficit of around £58,000, which would need to be met from our reserves. The budget was set in January 2025, but it did not fully capture anticipated costs, including contract and staffing costs (around £22,000). In addition there were unexpected costs, such as essential safety and maintenance work at Seymour Park and Riley Park playgrounds (around £34,000), and May 2025 election costs of £29,539 payable to Buckinghamshire Council. These election costs were around double what had been expected based on previous elections – we still have not received a satisfactory explanation for this increase.

Over the last four years, the Town Council precept was not increased, despite rising inflation and increasing costs. As a result, the Council's budget has reduced in real terms by almost 20%, which is equivalent to around £60,000.

The [proposed budget for the 2026/2027](#) financial year is based on cautious and realistic planning. We expect an income of around £156,000, excluding council tax, from sources such as devolved services from Buckinghamshire Council, allotment rents, cemetery fees and investment income. Planned expenditure is around £617,000, which will allow the Council to maintain the quality of services, events (Remembrance Service, Christmas Lights Switch-On, and Christmas on the Causeway) and community investment – all aspects that residents value. Savings have been identified wherever possible, without reducing essential services.

However, rising costs mean that current spending levels cannot be maintained without an increase in the precept. For example, the grounds maintenance contract will increase by 4% (£3,480) next year, and staff costs across the local government sector are expected to rise by 3% nationally (£6,000). Together, this contract and staffing account for around 57% of the Council's annual expenditure. In previous years, some contract increases were paid for from reserves rather than being built into the ongoing budget. We are also setting aside reserves to cover anticipated future costs, including higher 2029 election expenses (which could be up to £60,000; we spread them over four years) and essential maintenance to the flagpole and Frohman statue (around £12,000).

In 2025/2026, funding for community grants was set at £2,000, significantly below the usual level of £6,000–£8,000 seen in recent years. This limited the support available to local groups, charities and community organisations. Next financial year, the Council wishes to take a more proactive approach by investing directly and significantly in the community, with up to £30,000 available through our new community grant scheme.

For the 2026/2027 budget, the Council is seeking to avoid using reserves to fund day-to-day services, as this is not sustainable in the long term and would lead to large council tax increases in future years. To achieve this, the proposed precept income is £460,472, which equates to an increase of £10.89

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per year for a Band D property. On average, the increase will be £13.36 per year across Marlow. In any case, the increase will be less than £2 per month for any property.

The Council remains committed to achieving the best value for money. During the coming year, we will continue to seek operational efficiencies, such as reducing paperwork or increasing digital processes, and reviewing contracts as they come up for renewal. We will also explore opportunities to generate additional income from the Council's modest assets, with the aim of limiting future precept increases wherever possible. This additional funding will enable the Council to keep Marlow clean, safe and welcoming, with staff available to support residents and respond to questions.

**Recommended:**

That members approve the income and expenditure forecast and:

That members approve the [proposed income and expenditure budget for 2026-27](#) and;

That in pursuance of its powers conferred by section 137 of the local government act 1972 (as amended) the Town Council: -

Approves proposed expenditure for 2026-27 on the following items which in the opinion of the town council are in the interests of the town or its inhabitants:

Mayoral functions and civic events; grounds maintenance; grants £30,000; town twinning; Christmas tree and decorations; floral displays and summer bunting; allotment prizes; community, leisure and entertainment; youth project; security patrols; town bus.

## M.97.26 Precept 2026-27

Reminder for members on precept setting:

Local Government Finance Act 1992 – Section 106 – Will any members affected by Section 106 please note that any declarations to that effect should be made on the commencement of the meeting or immediately on arrival if this is later. Under Section 106 a member who has not paid an amount due in respect of their Council Tax for at least 2 months after it became payable is precluded from voting on any matters affecting the level of Council Tax or the arrangements for administering the Council Tax. (The member is, however, entitled to speak.)

**The tool below will help you set your Precept Request for 2026-27.**

### Input 1

Select your Organisation using the drop down Box in the Pink Box  
Parish Marlow Town

### Input 2

Enter either your proposed Precept Demand **E11** or Band D Council Tax for 2026/27 **E13**

Precept £460,472.00  
Or  
Band D Tax (Estimated)

Table - Summary of Results		Do not enter data below	
Year	2025-26	2026-27	Difference
Precept	£384,179.77	£460,472.00	£76,292.23
Income	£384,179.77	£460,472.00	£76,292.23
Tax Base	£6,953.48	£6,962.52	9.04
Band D Tax (Estimated)	£55.25	£66.14	19.71%

### **Recommended:**

That Marlow Town Council agree that the precept for the 2026-27 financial year be the sum of £460,472

## M.98.25 Information reports

a) Buckinghamshire Councillors

Report – Cllr A Collingwood

[Report – Cllr A Crabtree & Marlow Bridge works update](#)

Report – Cllr C Heap

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## Information reports continued

- b) Outside representatives

Reports to be received at the meeting.

- c) Freedom of Information request (FOI)

The following FOI has been received and processed

**FOI request, agreed 4th December 2025, responded to in bold December 17th 2025**

Christmas Lights

*What was the outcome when you shared my concerns with the council in 2023 as you said you would? To proceed with the extension without any amendments or additions to the scheme.*

*Please send/direct me to the minutes of the meeting where my concerns were discussed. No data exists as discussions were not recorded in minutes.*

*Please also sent/direct me to details of the tender process. Minute reference: [M.06.20\(4\)](#)*

*If you do not know the cost of keeping the lights on, can I assume this was not considered as part of the tender process? I would expect that cost is a key factor in council contracts due to public expenditure. No data available.*

*Please tell me the cost of keeping the lights on 24 hours every day while they're up. I assume this factored into your decision to renew the contract. No data available.*

Members are requested to note the reports.

**M.99.25 Date and time of next meeting:** Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2026 at 7pm