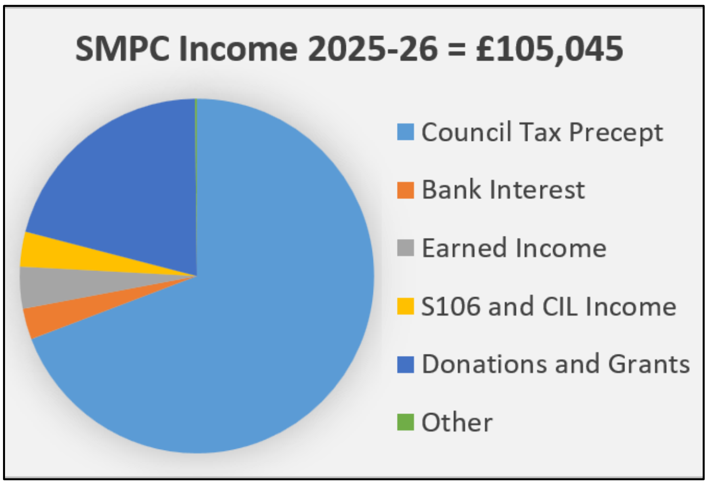
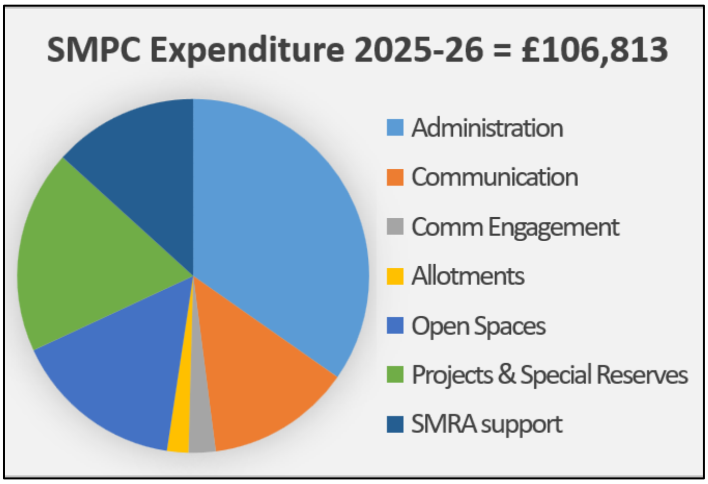
South Marston Parish Council

SOUTH MARSTON PARISH COUNCIL ACCOUNTS 2025-26

The Parish Council finances undergo both internal and external audit processes between May and August. The accounts are displayed in the form of an Annual Return, which will, when completed, be posted on the South Marston website. Below is a summary showing how we obtained our income and how it was spent.



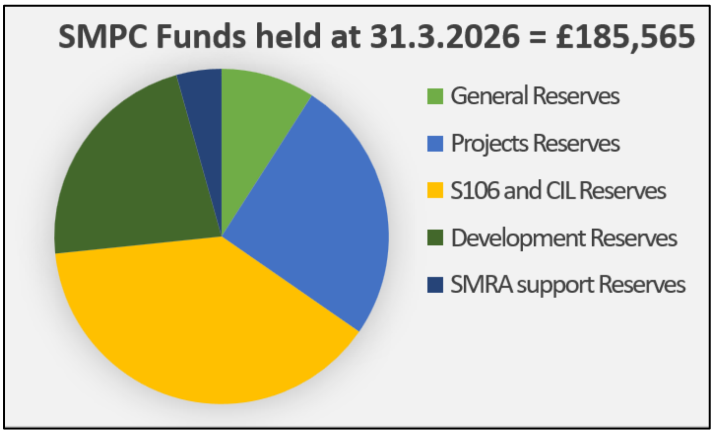


Our ongoing work is mainly funded via the 'precept', collected via Council Tax. The amount paid by residents in 2026-27 is £177.77 for an average household in South Marston. We also earn income from the allotments and we access grants to support our work. Last year, we acquired a second *Trees for Climate Change* government grant that not only funded the planting of trees but was accompanied by significant money to cope with 15 years of maintenance.

Section 106 and CIL both relate to ‘planning gain’ which are capital funds paid by developers to support village facilities and infrastructure needs that are required as a result of development.

Fulfilling our basic Parish Council duties and the cost of the two part time staff we employ explains the dominance of administration and communication within our expenditure profile. The remaining costs relate to our practical work within the village such as provision of allotments, maintenance of the Recreation Ground and the local environment, as well as ensuring SMRA is able to maintain the Village Hall as an effective space for community activity.

The long term nature of our large one-off projects means overall income and expenditure fluctuate considerably year by year, and with timescales often not under our control. We therefore separate our ongoing work (administration, communication, community engagement, allotments and open spaces) within our accounts and closely monitor these to ensure we remain financially prudent.



General Reserves are what we need to cover any fluctuations in our ongoing work and we aim to maintain these at a level of around 3 months expenditure.

The majority of the funds we hold are for longer term needs associated with the housing development in the village. Section 106 and CIL expenditure is monitored by Swindon Borough Council and can be restricted to particular purposes, so we have to carefully plan any use of these funds. We also hold a Development Reserve that has been built up over many years and is earmarked, for instance, for any legal and professional costs in taking on the ownership of new facilities.

We will be drawing on these accumulated funds throughout the next 5 years. The current housing developers are required to provide basic new hall facilities at the expanded Recreation Ground, but we want to obtain best value by adding finance that can make a real difference to the quality of the build and the surrounding open space. We also have to manage the transition over the next 10 or more years from a Parish Council with just 2 part time staff to a parish with up to 10 times the population, requiring investment in staff capacity and equipment.