

RATLEY AND UPTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Parish Council Meeting held on 12th March 2026 in Ratley Village Hall at 7:45 pm		
No	Agenda Item	Action by
	<p>Present Cllrs. A Graham (in the Chair), D Payne, A Berry, County Cllr. C Mills, District Cllr. Littlewood, J Obbard, Clerk and two members of the public</p>	
1.	<p>Open Forum A resident of New Road wished to warn the Council, vis the Clerk, of some recent unsavoury behaviour at the top end of Ratley – entered her garden and left hose running, lots of rubbish left, and suspected tampering with barbeque. Councillors agreed to monitor.</p>	All
2.	<p>Apologies Apologies were received from Cllr. Simpkins who was unable to attend due to illness. The Parish Council wish a her a speedy recovery. Cllr. Graham agreed to take the role of Chair for this meeting. Cllr. Hornsby was unable to attend due to unexpected work commitments</p>	
3.	<p>Declarations of Interest None received</p>	
4.	<p>Edgehill Quarry updates. No significant quarry traffic has been reported since the last meeting. The new weight restriction signs have now been installed.</p>	
5.	<p>Edgehill Lorries. Following a significant intervention from Cllr. Mills, the recent problem of lorries driving through Edgehill en-route from Kineton School has been solved. Councillors expressed their gratitude to Cllr. Mills.</p>	
6.	<p>Minutes of previous meeting – 29th January 2026 The minutes of the last meeting were proposed by Cllr. Payne, seconded by Cllr. Graham, agreed by all and duly signed by the Chair.</p>	
7.	<p>Matters arising from minutes of meeting on 29th January 2026</p> <p>7.1 Batchelor’s Lane stop sign and white lines. As Batchelor’s Lane is an unadopted road, WCC Highways have no jurisdiction to install safety measures. Clerk to approach owners of the camp site to request installation of these measures as users of the camp site are the main users of the lane. This has been superseded by a planning application – See 8.3</p> <p>7.2 Claranet Web Hosting - Clerk to make arrangements to procure a compliant “.gov” email address. This has been procured but isn’t working yet. Clerk to resolve through Claranet. Carry over.</p> <p>7.3 Collective Edgehill considerations. Cllr. Graham reported the following:-</p>	JO

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	<p>7.3.1 Birds mouth fencing around the edge of the green on the corner. There were mixed feelings about whether this was a good idea. Councillors agreed to hold fire on any request for fencing to be installed at the current time. Presumably due to some communication glitch, WCC had already installed the fencing. Councillors agreed that it looked good and there had been no complaints from members of the public so it was agreed that no further work will be required.</p> <p>7.3.2 Speed Camera training. There was good support for some police speed survey training to be carried out to enable teams of residents to carry out speed checks. Clerk to explore contact details to arrange for training sessions. Clerk provided update on attempts to arrange training courses. Thames Valley vs. Warwickshire! Clerk to make further attempts to arrange some camera survey training.</p> <p>7.3 Finance. All January Finance actions were completed.</p> <p>7.4 All January Planning actions were completed</p> <p>7.5 Grange Close green – two new trees needed to replace dead trees. – trees have been ordered and are due for delivery before the end of March. Existing dead trees will need to be felled.</p> <p>7.6 Streetlight 1 – is still not working due to access problems – In view of the street light being out for approximately 12 months and no enquiries or complaints being made by parishioners, Cllr. Berry proposed that we abandon the street light and save on the cost of electricity and maintenance charges. This was agreed by all.</p>	<p>JO</p> <p>JO</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Planning Applications</p> <p>8.1 26/00420/PIP Former Quarry Land – Grange Lane. Councillors had previously commented on this application – there was some concern that this did not really meet the requirements for a ‘local home for a local family’. However, no objections on planning grounds were made. Clerk posted a ‘no objection’ comment on the Planning Portal.</p> <p>8.2 26/00066/LBC The Steps – Oak staircase Councillors had previously commented on this application. Councillors had no objections. Clerk posted a ‘no objection’ comment on the Planning Portal.</p> <p>8.3 26/00110/COUR Mount Farm – Change of use Councillors had previously commented on this application. Clerk posted an objection to this application, pending an agreement to install a STOP sign and white lines at the end of Batchelors Lane. Clerk posted an ‘objection’ comment on the Planning Portal.</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p>District and County Councillors reports</p> <p>9.1 District Council report – Cllr. Littlewood presented his report. This is shown in Appendix 2</p>	

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	9.2 County Councillor's report – Cllr. Mills presented his report, which had been previously supplied. This is shown at Appendix 1	
10.	Parish Plan 10.1 Communications Sub-Committee. No items 10.2 Environmental sub-committee No items	
11.	Correspondence 11.1 326 emails, and 2 printed communication received since the last meeting .	
12.	Finance 12.1 Invoices for Payment – 2 transactions had been approved Councillors and paid by the Clerk plus two service charges since the last meeting – See Appendix 2 for details. 12.2 2025/26 Accounts – these were discussed – See Appendix 2. 12.3 Bank statements for both the Current account and the Savings account covering the period since the last meeting were presented for inspection. These tally with the Parish Council accounts.	
13.	Parish Maintenance 13.1 Trees. Residents of a house in Grange Close have offered to contribute to the cost of the works required on the stand on Beech trees in Old Road and have provided the contact details for a Tree Surgeon who may be able to offer competitive rates. Clerk to make contact and ask for a quote.	JO
14.	Urgent Business 14.1. No items	
15.	Next meeting. The next meeting will be held in Ratley Village Hall on April 16 th Dates of following meetings: May 21st (Annual Parish Meeting and annual meeting of the Council) June 25 th , September 3 rd , October 22 nd , December 3 rd . Meeting closed at 21:00	

Signed (Chair) _____

Date _____

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Appendix I – County Councillor Report

County Councillor Report

Ratley & Upton Parish Council Meeting 12th March 2026

Warwickshire County Council budget 2026/27

Warwickshire County Council met on Tuesday 17 February to conclude their budget negotiations. Warwickshire County Council has approved its budget for 2026/27, alongside the medium-term financial strategy for the next five years.

The budget includes a 4.4% increase in Council Tax, including the 2% adult social care precept. This is lower than the maximum permitted increase of 4.99%, reflecting the Council's wish to support residents with cost-of-living pressures. The medium-term financial strategy also sets out a programme of efficiency savings and investments to maintain the Council's strong focus on prevention to help reduce future demand on services.

For a Band D property, the overall increase in the Council Tax bill will amount to an additional £1.56 per week. Find out more:

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/7436/warwickshire-county-council-approves-2026-27-budget-to-protect-vital-services-and-support-residents>

Increased SEND provision for Warwickshire

Warwickshire County Council's Cabinet has approved additions to the Education Capital Programme 2025/26 to expand specialist resourced provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. At its meeting on Thursday 5 March, Cabinet agreed to allocate over £320k from the High Needs Provision Capital Allocation to establish new resourced provisions at

three county primary schools and to increase places at an existing provision in Rugby. Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/7469/investment-approved-to-expand-specialist-provision-in-warwickshire-schools>

SEND Reform consultation

Government is consulting on proposed changes to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND, including: early, local and fair support, effectively grounded in evidence, and with shared accountabilities across local partners.

Why your views matter

We are consulting on proposals to reform the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) system.

The consultation document explains the changes we plan to make and asks for comments from everyone with an interest.

The changes aim to improve help and support for children and young people with SEND across the 0 to 25 years system.

We would like to hear from everyone who has an interest in the reforms including:

- children, young people and families
- teachers and leaders
- schools, trusts and early years and post-16 providers
- local authorities

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- experts and academic organisations
- representative groups

You can also respond to this consultation via email

at SENDreform.CONULTATION@education.gov.uk, or by post to:

SENDAP Reform, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT.

Have your say: <https://consult.education.gov.uk/send-strategy-division/send-reform-putting-children-and-young-people-firs/>

Adult Social Care Service Rated ‘Good’ by CQC

WCC is celebrating a positive outcome from the Care Quality Commission’s assessment of Adult Social Care which recognises the county as a high performing on Adult Social Care needs. Read more:

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/7440/warwickshire-s-adult-social-care-service-rated-good-by-the-care-quality-commission>

Utility bill support available in Warwickshire

A scheme providing financial assistance to help those who may be struggling with their utility bills this winter is now available until 16th February. The Warwickshire Local Welfare Scheme is distributing funding from the Department for Work and Pensions’ Household Support Fund providing a one-off voucher payment to meet an immediate need and help those who are finding it hard to manage the cost of their energy and water bills. Find out more:

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/7370/utility-bill-support-available-through-warwickshire-local-welfare-scheme>

Have your say on Local Government Reorganisation

Have you given your views on what Local Government Reorganisation should look like in Warwickshire? This statutory consultation seeks views on the proposals that the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has received following the Secretary of State’s invitation to councils in Warwickshire to submit proposals for unitary local government for their area. You can find full details of the consultation, including a privacy statement, at: [Local government reorganisation in Warwickshire - GOV.UK](#).

The 2 proposals in this consultation were made by the following councils on 28 November 2025:

1. Warwickshire County Council and Rugby Borough

Council proposed one unitary council for the whole of the area of Warwickshire comprising the current areas of:

- North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedworth, Rugby, Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick. You can find the proposal at: [Warwickshire single unitary proposal](#)

2. North Warwickshire Borough Council, Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council, Stratford-on-Avon District Council, Warwick District Council proposed 2 unitary councils. These would comprise the current areas of: North unitary authority: North Warwickshire, Nuneaton & Bedworth, and Rugby.

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South unitary authority: Stratford-on-Avon, and Warwick. You can find the proposal at: [Warwickshire 2 unitary proposal](#)

This consultation asks questions about each proposal to help inform the assessment of the proposals. Complete the consultation survey here:

<https://consult.communities.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation/warwickshire/>

Measles

Measles cases are rising in the West Midlands, and children under 10 years of age are most at risk. Over 99% of those who have two doses of the MMRV vaccine offer long-term protection against measles and rubella. Although mumps protection is slightly lower, cases in vaccinated people are much less severe. For more information, please visit www.gov.uk/government/publications/mmr-vaccination

Child Exploitation Awareness Day 2026 – 18 March 2026

Warwickshire agencies are once again joining the national effort to tackle child exploitation as part of Child Exploitation Awareness Day on Wednesday 18 March.

Every year, hundreds of children and young people experience exploitation.

Behaviours such as missing school, secrecy online, or spending time with older individuals can all be signs that something isn't right – and everyone has a part to play in spotting and reporting concerns. Read more:

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/7474/warwickshire-partners-campaign-to-help-public-spot-signs-of-child-exploitation>

WCC Cabinet: March 2026

Warwickshire County Council's Cabinet met on Thursday 5 March 2026 at Shire Hall to consider a range of items focused on supporting residents, strengthening local services, and planning for the county's future. Discover more:

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/7472/recalibrating-warwickshire-is-the-focus-of-latest-warwickshire-county-council-cabinet-meeting>

Warwick Castle Unboxed

Discover untold stories from the Warwick Castle archive at this new exhibition at Market Hall Museum, Warwick. Warwick Castle Unboxed combines objects and documents to tell some fascinating stories. The exhibition opens on Friday 20 March: The culmination of a four-year project, this exhibition begins with Fulke Greville asking King James I for Warwick Castle, over 300 years ago. The exhibition features stories about the Greville family, courting scandal in Regency society and managing ambulance trains in WW1

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/7459/warwick-castle-unboxed-new-stories-from-an-old-castle>

Chris Mills
County Councillor
Ratley & Upton

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Appendix 2 – District Cllr. Littlewood report:

This month;

1. **Five Year Housing Land Supply.**
2. **South Warwickshire Local Plan (SWLP).**
3. **Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP) and Funding.**
4. **Local Government Reform.**
5. **Cost of Living – Iran War effects and vulnerable households fuel costs.**
6. **Council Tax 2026/27.**

Five Year Housing Land Supply

The 5YHLS remains well below the target. How can that be with all the planning applications for outline schemes of 10's, 100's, and 1,000's of new homes? Well, they don't count until there is a confirmed build-out plan that is open to scrutiny. Of course, the build-out rate is controlled by the developer not the Planning Authority. If developers don't see the demand, then they do not start building. It takes roughly six or seven months to bring a new house onto the market from breaking ground. So, they would need to start in March for delivery in August/September. My understanding is that demand is very low for the houses that developers want to build so we could be in a situation where there will be a huge bank of available land, and we will still not have a 5YHLS. I am also told that the real demand is for one- and two-bedroom houses and starter homes at affordable prices and rents. Unfortunately, SDC is not a Housing Authority and cannot build significant quantities of houses itself. This should change with the establishment of the new Unitary Authority.

South Warwickshire Local Plan

The SWLP has suffered some delays in its preparation. It is needed to replace the current Local Plan – the Core Strategy which has been determined by an inspector at appeal to be out of date as there is only 2.74 years Housing Land Supply. Not all the Core Strategy policies are deemed to be out of date only specific policies, specifically:

- CS.15 -m Distribution of Development.
- CS.16 – Housing Development.
- CS.21 – Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showman (because the County does not have sufficient sites to meet the calculated need.
- AS.10 – Countryside and Villages.

All the above are very pertinent to this Ward. It should be noted however that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is the overarching policy for planning and therefore applications must meet the conditions of the NPPF regardless of the status of the Local Plan.

Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP) and Funding

If a NDP is made and current (up to five years) then in the case where the Local Plan is deemed out-of-date, then the NDP takes precedent assuming that it has been drafted reflecting the NPPF, the parish has land supply to fulfil stated housing need in the NDP and shows site allocations. NDP's are hard work taking two or three years to be made. Once made, they are legal documents and form part of planning policy. Small parishes can join to build a NDP covering both settlements. This is particularly useful if they are close together and can then protect the countryside between them from unwanted development. An example is the Tysoe Parish NDP which has made the open space between Middle and Lower Tysoe protected and therefore stopping coalescence of the two communities.

SDC has a grant fund of £100k per annum for the next three years available to fund new and out of date NDP's.

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Local Government Reform and Devolution

There are two major policy changes being put through by Central Government: Local Government Reform (LGR) and Devolution.

Local Government Reform. The first is Local Government reform which abolishes District and Borough Councils and establishes a Unitary Authority. Two proposals have been jointly submitted by Warwickshire County Council and the District and Borough Councils. WCC preferred proposal is to have a single Warwickshire Continuing Authority. Rugby Borough Council preferred option is for a single UA but not continuing authority, and the remaining District and Borough Councils prefer a two UA of North Warwickshire and South Warwickshire. The Government will determine which option is to be established later this year.

There are arguments that 'big is better' and more efficient. Indeed, the single UA option would save around £2.0m per annum, putting this into context, the gross spend of all the councils in Warwickshire is I calculate around £1.5b. This saving calculation is too small for significance in terms of forecasting, so I determine that there will be no financial gain. That means the key arguments must be around delivery of service, and it is clear from the commissioned 'PeopleToo' report that the needs of North Warwickshire are very different from those of South Warwickshire. Moreover, the same report shows that historically that the optimum size for an authority is for a population of between 250,000 and 350,000. The current populations of North and South Warwickshire (comprising SDC & WDC) sum to 632,000, with the population of South Warwickshire at of 295,082.

Devolution. At the same time there is a Whitepaper (Dec. 2024) that requires the whole of England to be formed into Strategic Authorities. The target population for such authorities is around 1.5m although this is not considered to be a hard and fast rule, and there are already examples of the SUA being formed with lower populations. In addition, no single UA can qualify for a Strategic Authority on its own and must join with another UA with the prospect of forming a Mayoral Strategic Authority which will achieve full devolution powers. A Mayoral SA would take responsibility for the role of the Police Commissioner, the Police Authority, a Fire Authority and attract significant additional funding from Central Government. It should be noted that Warwickshire had already achieved significant devolved powers prior to the May 2024 elections.

What does this mean?

A single continuing or reformed UA would have to join with other authorities to qualify as a SUA. The options available to Warwickshire would be joining with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) but this has been clearly ruled out by the sitting Labour Party Mayor of the WMCA and would not be beneficial to Warwickshire residents. The population of the WMCA is 3m in a geography less than the size of that of SDC, roughly 977km² with 142k residents.

The alternatives would be to join with Northamptonshire with which, except for Rugby, the County has little in common in terms of main transport communication corridors or industry. Northamptonshire also carries a significant debt. Alternatives would be joining with North Cotswolds, or Hereford and Worcestershire. Both options would achieve the population targets but would leave Shropshire as a 'Devolution Island', and that is not acceptable.

I believe the best option would be for the two North & South Warwickshire Unitary Authorities combining as a SA, or South Warwickshire joining North Cotswolds in a SA.

There is however yet another layer of organisation including Police Authorities, Fire Authorities and National Health Service regions. At the same time as LGR and Devolution is progressing; Central Government is determining how to reduce the current number of Police Authorities significantly. What this means to Warwickshire residents is uncertain.

Residents can have their say by responding to the government consultations.

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Cost of Living – Iran War effects and vulnerable households fuel costs.

The huge increases in the price per barrel of oil will have an extraordinary effect on inflation, interest rates, tax increases to businesses, and the cost of living for residents. Please keep out an eye for those vulnerable residents that will find heating their homes and feeding their families more and more difficult. There is help available, so please involve both your County Councillors (copied here) and me, and we will do what we can to assist by action or signposting.

Council Tax 2026/27.

Warwickshire County Council has approved its budget for 2026/27. The budget includes a 4.4% increase in Council Tax, including the 2% adult social care precept. This is lower than the maximum permitted increase of 4.99%. For a Band D property, the overall increase in the Council Tax bill will amount to an additional £1.56 per week.

Kind regards,
Malcolm

Cllr. Malcolm I. Littlewood
Proud to be the Member for Tysoe Ward.
Opposition Group Deputy Leader
Stratford On Avon District Council

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Appendix 3 - Current Account status up to 12th March 2026

Payments					
Date	Who	Ref	VAT	NET	Total
02/04/2025	Thomas Fox - Cut 1	1531855582	£83.15	£415.75	£498.90
04/04/2025	Walc Subscription	1536707421	£25.00	£157.00	£182.00
22/04/2025	Bank Service Charge	452194490		£4.25	£4.25
23/04/2025	A Berry (Grass Seed)	1547005401		£11.99	£11.99
23/04/2025	J Obbard (Massey Harpers) Stock Board	1551966232	£62.06	£310.32	£372.38
25/04/2025	Thomas Fox - Grass cutting Cuts 2 & 3	1548308507	£166.30	£831.50	£997.80
26/04/2025	Screwfix (A Berry) - washers for climbing frame	1548808941	£2.97	£14.82	£17.79
26/04/2025	Metals4U (A Berry) - tubing for climbing frame	1548308507	£9.25	£46.26	£55.51
17/05/2025	Clear Insurance	1560991899		£492.24	£492.24
19/05/2025	Monika Morgan	1561944446		£75.00	£75.00
19/05/2025	Bank Service Charge	454640713		£4.25	£4.25
23/05/2025	Thomas Fox - Grass cutting Cuts 4 & 5	1569335567	£166.30	£831.50	£997.80
23/05/2025	John Hopkins - bus shelter	1564228576		£100.00	£100.00
23/05/2025	Ratley Village Hall - donation	1555344373		£750.00	£750.00
23/05/2025	Ratley PCC - maintenance support	1560481625		£750.00	£750.00
04/06/2025	No Butts Bins - picnic bench	1562706577	£149.00	£745.00	£894.00
14/06/2025	J Obbard - Clerk fees Q1	1580499308		£517.14	£517.14
14/06/2025	HMRC - PAYE Q1	1576832068		£344.76	£344.76
17/06/2025	Bank Service Charge	454640713		£4.25	£4.25
24/06/2025	A Berry - Wickes Paint and sundries for goal posts	1582638735	£6.90	£34.50	£41.40
24/06/2025	A Berry - Wickes Paint for goal posts	1582390596	£2.70	£13.50	£16.20
24/06/2025	A Berry - Wickes White Spirit for goal posts	1582639359	£0.98	£4.87	£5.85
26/06/2025	Thomas Fox - Grass cutting Cuts 6 & 7	1587180100	£166.30	£831.50	£997.80
18/07/2025	Bank Service Charge	454640713		£4.25	£4.25
23/07/2025	Thomas Fox - Grass cutting Cuts 8 & 9	1599067901	£166.30	£831.50	£997.80
06/08/2025	Claranet Web Hosting	1607475370	£12.46	£62.32	£74.78
15/08/2025	Moore - External Audit	1608359160	£42.00	£210.00	£252.00
18/08/2025	Bank Service Charge	461828629		£4.25	£4.25
05/09/2025	Thomas Fox - Grass cutting Cuts 10, 11, 12	1624481999	£249.45	£1,247.25	£1,496.70
16/09/2025	Bank Service Charge	464271009		£5.17	£5.17
17/09/2025	PlaySafety Ltd	1634367771	£20.00	£100.00	£120.00
17/09/2025	J Obbard - Clerk fees Q2	1635770234		£550.60	£550.60
17/09/2025	HMRC - PAYE Q2	1626937300		£367.20	£367.20
29/09/2025	A Berry - concrete for playground	1637464880	£6.08	£30.38	£36.45
29/09/2025	A Berry - shackles for playground	1637464880	£24.45	£122.26	£146.71
29/09/2025	A Simpkins - paint for elephant	1641034995	£17.21	£86.03	£103.24
05/10/2025	Thomas Fox - Grass cutting Cuts 13, 14	1632378255	£166.30	£831.50	£997.80
17/10/2025	A Berry - concrete for playground	1647990060	£6.75	£33.75	£40.50
20/10/2025	Bank Service Charge	466709777		£4.25	£4.25
25/10/2025	Thomas Fox - Grass cutting Cuts 15, 16	1652496329	£166.30	£831.50	£997.80
01/11/2025	J Obbard (Majestic gift for A Berry)	1660203215		£70.00	£70.00
05/11/2025	Ratley Flower Show	1659299175		£242.50	£242.50

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18/11/2025	Bank Service Charge	469187577		£4.25	£4.25
19/11/2025	Thomas Fox - Grass Banks and hedges	1671620416	£93.32	£466.62	£559.94
14/12/2025	J Obbard - Clerk fees Q3	1682031621		£533.85	£533.85
14/12/2025	HMRC - PAYE Q3	1681819955		£356.00	£356.00
14/12/2025	Claranet email web hosting	1686892957	£1.33	£6.63	£7.96
16/12/2025	Bank Service Charge	471641978		£4.25	£4.25
30/12/2025	J Obbard - 2 x trees	1695701113		£115.96	£115.96
02/01/2026	Claranet Web hosting	1688761111	£22.00	£110.00	£132.00
18/01/2026	nPower	1705701765	£3.84	£76.89	£80.73
19/01/2026	Bank Service Charge	474121691		£4.25	£4.25
17/02/2026	Bank Service Charge	476573640		£4.25	£4.25
26/02/2026	Thomas Fox - Grass Banks and hedges - cut 2	1722013651	£39.24	£196.22	£235.46
05/03/2026	WCC - Street light maintenance	1723036093	£15.29	£76.44	£91.73
	Year 2025/26 Total		£1,718.21	£13,395.97	£16,773.94
	Current Balance				£909.14