| Corporate Plan 2021-26



Our Vision is to work together with all sectors of the community to enhance the social and economic wellbeing of the people of Stratton St Margaret so that it is an even better place to live, work and visit.

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About this plan

Stratton St Margaret Parish Council's Corporate Plan aims to provide residents and businesses with a clear understanding of the Council's priorities and aspirations for the next 5 years (2021-2026).

The plan has been developed to provide an overview of the Parish Council's aspirations to:

- Contribute to the quality of life for residents.
- Provide assurance and support to businesses that already operate in the Parish, or are considering relocating to the area.
- Offer those who visit Stratton St Margaret a clear description of the area's identity and distinctiveness.

The plan aims to deliver a framework to:

- Enable Parish Councillors to be advocates for the residents they represent.
- Help those residents who want to contribute to or influence the decisions made about the quality of local services and how they are provided and managed.

The plan also sets out the Parish Council's priorities that will help deliver our aspirations and expectations and how we plan to collaborate with residents and those organisations and business to achieve a better place to live and work.

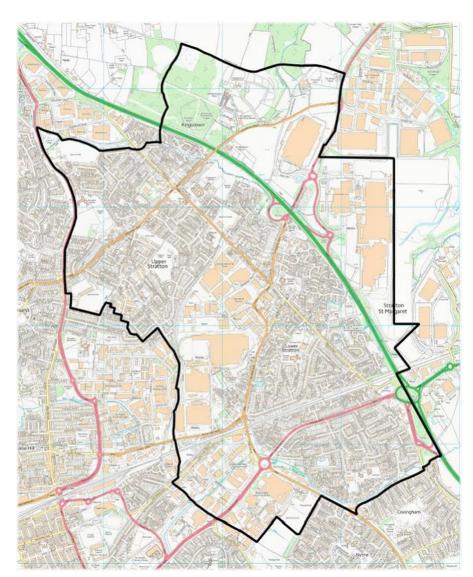
As the most local tier of local government, Stratton St Margaret Parish Council considers some local government services can be delivered far more effectively and efficiently at a local level for the benefit for all. This plan oversees these tasks and services and provides our Parish Councillors the basis and context in how they will be managed and monitored.

In order to measure how Stratton St Margaret Parish Council is performing, the **Strategic Plan** set out in **Appendix A** will be reviewed via a recurring agenda item within the Finance and General Purposes Committee while the whole **Corporate Plan** will be reviewed as part of the Council's annual budget and precept setting process.

About Stratton St Margaret

Stratton St Margaret was originally a small village that has since evolved to become the north east corner of Swindon. The parish was originally much larger than it is now with a large part of Gorse Hill being in the parish until it was absorbed into Swindon in 1890. A significant area of the housing estate of Penhill was once fields in Stratton St Margaret.

Stratton derives its name from the Latin, strata (a paved way or street) after the old Roman Road (Ermin Street) which passes through the parish from east to west. In the Doomsday Survey of 1086, the name is shown as Stratone, when the parish was in the possession of Nigel, the physician of William the Conqueror. The village consisted of three hamlets: The Street, The area around Green Road and Dores Road, including the few houses at Kingsdown, Stratton Green, mainly around Tilleys Lane.



Stratton St Margaret Parish Boundary

The parish church of St Margaret dates back to the 13th century, with many later additions, including partial rebuilding in the middle of the 19th century. Amongst the interesting churchyard tombs is that of Sir William Hedges who was president of the East India Company in the 17th century. He lived where the Crematorium now stands. The church registers date from 1608. Near the church once stood an Elizabethan style tithe barn, mainly of wooden construction, and the village pound and the small parochial school. The main tithe barn stood near Parsonage Farm in Swindon Road (both now demolished).

Stratton St Margaret Parish currently consist of approximately 23,000 residents and is one of the largest Parish Councils in England when based on financial annual turnover.

About the Parish Council

Stratton St Margaret Parish Council has been in existence in its present form since 1974 following the Local Government reorganisation in 1972. However, there has been a parish council serving Stratton St Margaret since 1891.

Stratton St Margaret Parish Council is a corporate body, a legal entity separates from that of its members. The Council has been granted powers by Parliament including the important authority to raise money through taxation (the precept) and a range of powers to spend public money.

Stratton St Margaret Parish Council is separated into five Parish Wards:

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■ Lower Stratton ■ Upper Stratton ■ Coleview ■ Lower Coleview ■ Merton
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The Parish Council has 19 democratically elected councillors. The last full election was in May 2019, for the period 2019-2022.

The Council also has a workforce of 21 employed staff (full and part time) who deliver a wide range of local services, including:

- Open Spaces
- Democratic Services
- Library
- Caretaking

The Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on the 9 December 2020 made a recommendation for the Full Council to accept a proposed budget for the 2021/22 Financial year and to set the level of Precept the same as 2020/21 at £1.4M.

This budget is financed by setting an annual charge for each household within the Parish. The current annual charge of the average Band D property of £187.98 forms part of the overall Council Tax Bill for each residential property.

In receipt of this annual charge per household, the Council provides a wide range of locally managed services, which include:

- Meadowcroft Community Hall
- Managing £20K of Community Grants
- Maintaining two local cemeteries and burial services
- Providing various community events such as The Stratton Festival, Remembrance Service and the Christmas Market, Carol Service
- Peace memorial and Flag Pole
- Landscaping improvement projects
- Parks and play equipment and three multi use games areas
- A youth provision
- Football pitches
- Two local allotments
- Fishing ponds
- Library
- Litter picking throughout the Parish

Stratton St Margaret Parish Council is recognised as an effective council under the nationally recognised scheme called The Local Council Award Scheme. It currently holds the Foundation Award that enables it to benchmark its performance and to provide a rigorous challenge to the Council's ongoing improvement and development.

How the Parish Council is managed

The Council is a legal body that makes decisions which are normally delivered through a number of committees and sub-committees that have delegated authority in line with the Council's Committee Terms of Reference, Standing Orders and Delegation of Authority to members and specific officers. (Please see the Council's website www.strattonstmargaret.gov.uk for further details).

Councillors have a number of responsibilities including making key policy decisions, agreeing the budget and precept every financial year ahead of monitoring the performance of all council services throughout the year.

The Council is chaired by the Chairman of the Council who is elected on an annual basis at the Annual Council Meeting which is normally held in May each year.

The Council has five main committees that govern and oversee the strategic direction of the Council. They also have oversight of the day to day business of the Council. The Full Council and Committees meetings meet on a regular basis, usually on a Wednesday. The main committees are:

- Finance & General Purposes Committee
- Property Management Committee
- Planning & Highways Committee
- Open Spaces Committee
- Personnel Committee

Supporting the elected members of the council is an officer structure that is employed to undertake the agreed or delegated services and to also ensure all decisions are carried in a lawful and transparent way. The council officer structure is headed by the Clerk and Proper Officer to the Council who acts as the Statutory Head of Paid Service.

The Council functions are split into three main areas:

- Democratic Services
- Community Services
- Open Spaces and Environmental Services

The Parish Council's vision and priorities

Since 1974, Stratton St Margaret Parish Council has been serving residents by providing an increasing range of services. The Council's Vision was first developed during the UK Government's Best Value regime which was first publicised in its first Corporate Plan in 2010/11.

The Vision guides the Council's Core Values and Priorities. It is reviewed and updated periodically to reflect:

- The changing ambitions of national and local government
- Local and national economic, health and environmental pressures
- The changing aspirations of residents and local business and the changing pressure on the way of life on those people who live, work and study here and local business ambitions

The Parish Council's Vision is:

To work together with all sectors of the community to enhance the social and economic wellbeing of the people of Stratton St Margaret so that it is an even better place to live, work and visit.

The Parish Council's Mission Statement is:

Stratton St Margaret Parish Council is committed to improving and enhancing the Parish of Stratton St Margaret in an environmentally sustainable manner, having regard to the identified needs and wishes of all sections of the community.

Local authorities have a duty to promote the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of their areas and this will enable Stratton St Margaret Parish Council to become much more responsive to the community's priorities.

In endeavouring to promote civic pride, improve the quality of life and help to make Stratton St Margaret a vibrant community for residents Stratton St Margaret Parish Council currently delivers a wide range of different functions and services.

Stratton St Margaret Parish Council has adopted the following four **key objectives** which it will seek to achieve over the next three years. Each of the priorities will be achieved under the general aim of continuing to improve the organisational management and efficiency of Stratton St Margaret Parish Council.

- To represent all residents, businesses and community groups on key strategic issues facing the parish
- To improve and further develop the provision of green and open spaces in the parish
- To help improve, enhance, protect and deliver local government services for all sectors of the community
- To continue to develop, improve and enhance local community and leisure amenities
- To ensure that the parish Council operates in an environmentally sustainable manner

The Parish Council's core values and competency

To underpin the **Vision**, the Parish Council has a set of core values for those services and functions it aims to deliver:

Stratton St Margaret Parish Council will deliver services:

- That meets the needs of residents.
- Of the highest quality.
- Targeted to meet specific requirements where possible.
- In a fair, consistent and non-discriminatory manner, fully embracing equal opportunities.
- Through a regime of continuous improvement.
- Within properly managed capacity and resources.
- In short, to provide the best services.
- In the best interest of its community.
- In line with all relevant guidance and legislation with relation to public procurement to ensure value for money and affordability. At the best price – within Financial Regulations.

Stratton St Margaret Parish Council recognises that:

- The legitimacy and integrity of the Council's functions is derived from understanding the needs of the Parish, socially, economically and environmentally as well as the needs, requirements and aspirations of its residents, customers and service users.
- Consultation, participation and engagement in partnerships are at the heart of understanding the parish area and community needs.
- Having direction and an infrastructure will help the Council to achieve all its aims and objectives.
- The importance of having defined roles and responsibilities for Councillors and Officers and appropriate structures in place will: make use of limited resources, allow for challenge and change to take place and to promote a strong and sustainable relationship between Councillors and Officers.

Stratton St Margaret Parish Council values the work undertaken by its Civic Partners:

- Stratton St Margaret Parish Council and Swindon Borough Council increasingly recognise the added value that better partnership working can bring to local people and businesses.
- The need for cooperation between tiers of local government as well as the Health Authority, Police and Voluntary Sector has never been greater. Budgets are smaller, creating pressure on councils to be more efficient, provide preventative measures and also to encourage residents to become more involved in their local area. It is more important than ever that the Council empower local people, reflect the principle that it is their community.

Stratton St Margaret Parish Council will measure its competency by:

- Successful delivery of Council projects and services.
- Regular and focused reviews of all its services on an annual basis.
- Regular resident consultation and feedback.
- Regular service user feedback.

- Regular reviews of performance and management of progress against targets and achievements by officers.
- Regular monitoring and resolution of complaints.

The issues that impact the Parish Council's Vision

Covid-19 hit the country at the beginning of 2020 and like all organisations this has meant that new ways of working were put into place very quickly. The Council's main priority at this time was to work alongside other organisations to ensure the most vulnerable residents received the support they needed.

As the lockdown is beginning to ease, the Council continues to follow the rules and guidance from Central and Local Government. Its corporate risk registers and corporate policies also remain under continual review and change. Furthermore, new methods and styles of working have been implemented at a sharp pace to ensure staff remain safe and can remain supporting and serving the residents and local business within the Parish.

In addition to the demands placed on the Council as a result of the Pandemic, other known pressures on resources and finances are already known and need to be considered as part of this plan:

- Open spaces and play parks devolved from Swindon Borough Council in 2014 with no transitional funding.
- Streetsmart devolved to the Parish Council in April 2017, the Council agreed that the budgeted cost to run this service was £100,000 per year. 50% funding was provided in the first year and 25% in the second year.
- The Parish Council took over the lease of Beechcroft Community Library in 2017. This is a 99 year lease but reviewed periodically. This was originally supported with £90,000 of transitional funding.
- The Grange Leisure Centre entered into partnership with Parkwood Leisure in July 2019 with a 15-year lease. The Parish Council provided a management fee in year 1.
- Covid-19 has cost the Council £64,983 during 2020/21 to support the losses of the Leisure Centre.

A list of the Council's assets and known issues is set out in **Appendix B** of this plan.

How to comment on this document

Stratton St Margaret Parish Council very much welcomes the views and suggestions concerning the contents of this plan from residents and those work or study in or who visit the Parish.

Stratton St Margaret Parish Council also welcomes suggestions regarding the individual services it provides and the assets and buildings it manages.

If you wish to comment, you can do so by contacting the Parish Council in one of the following ways:

■ Telephone: 01793 823761

• Email: clerk@strattonstmargaret.gov.uk

Facebook: @SSMPCSwindon

Strategic Plan 2021-26

Stratton St Margaret Parish Council - Strategic Plan 2021-26 | Appendix A

Stratton St Margaret Parish Council has an objective to represent residents, businesses and community groups on key strategic issues facing the parish key strategic

| Stratton St Margaret Parish Council will deliver this objective by working towards the following | It will evidence its work by using the following indicators | and our performance will be measured by | When | Success of the outcome will be the responsibility of |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| Remaining financially stable. | Preparation of the annual precept. Annual financial statement. Annual audit report. | A balanced budget (Precept). Reserves that are in line with the Council's Reserves policy. Actual expenditure that is within 5% of the council's agreed budget at year end. An annual internal audit report that shows there are no matters of concern. | Annually reviewed during budget setting | Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer and Finance & General Purposes Committee |
| Maintaining local government services by creating working groups to support emergency services, schools and neighbourhood watch. | The creation of relevant working groups. | Examples of outcomes from the working groups being implemented in council services. | When appropriate | Parish Clerk and Full Council |
| Hosting community events, a Christmas Carol Service and a Remembrance Day Ceremony.? Is Stratton festival going to happen going forward, Christmas market? | Christmas Carol Service Remembrance Day Ceremony. | All planned community events are organised. | Reviewed annually | Parish Clerk and Council Officers |



Stratton St Margaret Parish Council has enhance, enhance, to help improve, enhance, an Objective to help improve for all sectors of the community. Services for all sectors of the community.

| Stratton St Margaret Parish Council will deliver this objective by working towards the following | It will evidence its work by using the following indicators | and our performance will be measured by | When | Success of the outcome will be the responsibility of |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| Developing an environmental policy and a bio-diversity action plan. | An Environmental Policy approved by Councillors. | An approved Environmental Policy made available to everyone who live and work in the Parish. | 2021 | Senior Open Spaces Officer and Open Spaces Committee |
| Improving Green Spaces. | A plan to improve green spaces in the parish and approved by Councillors. A tree planting programme to be established. | Endorsement from the residents that the Parish's Green spaces are improving. Trees being planted or replaced each year through an annual tree planting event. | Begun in 2017 when Streetsmart adoption began and is on going | Senior Open Spaces Officer and Open Spaces Committee |
| Reducing waste and increasing recycling in all council buildings and services. | A reduction in paper and printing usage. Working towards becoming a plastic free council. | Recycling and waste reduction rates being met. | Ongoing | Parish Clerk and Council Officers |
| Giving consideration to renewable energy sources for the Council's buildings and vehicles. | Ensuring the Council purchases energy from Utility companies that support renewable energy. | Increase in council vehicles and machinery to be powered by renewable energy. | Ongoing | Parish Clerk and Council Officers |



| Stratton St Margaret Parish Council will deliver this objective by working towards the following | It will evidence its work by using the following indicators | and our performance will be measured by | When | Success of the outcome will be the responsibility of |
|--|--|---|-----------|---|
| Development of a Neighbourhood Plan. | The basic conditions that a draft neighbourhood plan must meet if it is to proceed through the Referendum Process. | The implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan through consultation and referendum. | Completed | Parish Clerk and Planning & Highways Committee |
| Implementing a young persons' support scheme. | By engaging the youth within the parish and local community. | The investment in youth services such as a Youth Worker provision, volunteering and apprenticeship scheme. | 2021 | Parish Clerk and Full Council |
| Supporting deprived areas. | Allocating housing development contributions to parish projects. | The allocation of S106 and CIL monies throughout the parish. | Ongoing | Senior Open Spaces Officer Finance Team with Open Spaces and Finance & General Purposes Committee |



| Stratton St Margaret Parish Council will deliver this objective by working towards the following | It will evidence its work by using the following indicators | and our performance will be measured by | When | Success of the outcome will be the responsibility of |
|---|---|---|---------|---|
| Working with the Highways Department to resolve traffic, parking and road maintenance issues. | Reported parking and highway complaints. | A reduction in reported parking and traffic complaints by residents. A reduction in highway maintenance complaints by residents. | Ongoing | Council Officers and Planning and Highways Committee |
| Local Council Award Scheme – Gold Award | Currently Foundation Level | Will achieve Gold Award | 2021/22 | Parish Council, Parish Clerk and Deputy Clerk |



| Stratton St Margaret Parish Council will deliver this objective by working towards the following | It will evidence its work by using the following indicators | and our performance will be measured by | When | Success of the outcome will be the responsibility of |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| Beechcroft Library | Consideration given to renting out unused library space. Added value by the input from Beechcroft friends | Improved feedback from residents and library users. Increased book lending. A reduction in net running costs. | Currently using Facebook for volunteers to operate a home library service, by end of Council Year 2021/22 | Council Officers Property Management Committee |
| Maintaining the sports pavilions and football pitches. | Ensuring the pavilions and football pitches which are under the responsibility of the Parish Council are maintained. | Resident and local user feedback | Ongoing | Senior Open Spaces Officer and Open Spaces Committee |
| Continuing to work with Parkwood Leisure on overseeing the Grange Leisure Centre. | Sustainable contract and agreement.Financial issues being agreed. | A reduced financial impact to the council. Internal contract monitoring. | Reviewed quarterly | Parish Clerk and Full Council |
| Supporting educational projects relating to community arts and local heritage. | A programme of self-funded educational projects geared towards the ongoing benefit of the Parish. | Positive feedback from participants. Evidence that all projects are well attended. | 2023 | Council Officers and Full Council |



| Stratton St Margaret Parish Council will deliver this objective by working towards the following | It will evidence its work by using the following indicators | and our performance will be measured by | When | Success of the outcome will be the responsibility of |
|---|---|--|------|--|
| | | All projects met their aims. | | |

List of council assets and their known issues | Appendix B

List of council assets and their known issues

| Description of asset | Background | Known issues | Known financial implication | Timeline | Level of concern |
|---|--|---|--|---|------------------|
| Description of asset Beechcroft Community Library | Background The building is leased on a full repairing lease. £90,000 transitional funding was provided to the Parish Council. | ■ Professional advice will need to be sought on the scope and cost of necessary remedial works. | Running costs expected in next 24 months Lighting. Need to change to LED est. £1.5 - £2.5K. Lighting in the foyer is no longer available for parts and also will cost approx. £1K to replace. Required completed by 2021-year end Flooring needs replacing. Very large area est £4K. completion required 2021-year end Windows are coil leaver opening system. These are old and broken and hard to replace. New windows may be required in the next 3 years Heating system is old and boiler has many repairs. Complete heating overhaul may be required in next 3 year | Ear Marked Reserves for Transitional Funding at £36,942 in 2021. | High |
| | | | Rear parking area needs resurfacing. £1K est. Ideally completed in next 12 months | | |

| Description of asset | Background | Known issues | Known financial implication | Timeline | Level of concern |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|----------|------------------|
| Grounds Department - Shenton Close | This large depot is located to the rear of Grange Leisure and serves as a work and rest area and storage of agricultural equipment and vehicle lease for the Grounds team. In 2019 large water bunds were installed to help maximise rain water collection. In 2020 an electric charger was installed as the Council begins to change its leased vehicles across to electric. Red Diesel is used for Agricultural vehicles. | The building is in need of updating to improve the wash room areas. Professional advice will need to be sought on the scope and cost of necessary remedial works. The area is covered by CCTV but is not alarmed to a monitoring office, this is a risk due to valuable equipment stored at this site. The agricultural equipment does not currently have identifiers on them. A conditions survey is now due. | Alarm system est £2-5K. Further annual costs of £250-500 per annum to connect to monitoring system and annual maintenance/service Washroom. Redesign of toilet facilities to accommodate showers and may require removal and relocation of dividing walls. New windows/drainage/heating system to be included in costs est £50-60K | 2023 | Medium |
| Meadowcroft Community Centre | Meadowcroft Community Centre has two public halls and is also used as the Parish Council meeting place. Council offices and as an outreach for the Police. The Parish Council staff moved into | Improvements are required to the car park which often floods in winter. The police have advised on additional lighting, CCTV and lowering of hedges for employee welfare. Lighting improved in 2020 | Upgrade CCTV £1-2K New lighting in office required. Old light system that cannot be replaced and is now faulty. Est £2K | 2023 | Medium |

| Description of asset | Background | Known issues | Known financial implication | Timeline | Level of concern |
|---|---|---|--|----------|------------------|
| | Meadowcroft in July 2019. The building is in good repair and has recently been decorated. A conditions survey was undertaken in 2013. | | | | |
| Grange Leisure Centre - Grange Drive - Lower Stratton | Grange Leisure and car park is owned by the Parish Council and is leased on a full repair basis to Parkwood Leisure. The lease runs from July 2019 – June 2034. | ■ None | N/A | Ongoing | Low |
| Meadowcroft Sport Pavilion | The sports pavilion is located adjacent to the Community rooms. The building was redecorated in 2019. | The building does not meet Disability Discrimination Act Regulations. Professional advice will need to be sought on the scope and cost of necessary remedial works. | An extension to the building needed to accommodate a disabled shower and changing area. Est £50k | 2022 | High |
| Merton Fields Ground – Football Pitches and St Luke's. Jutland Road – Football Pitch | Currently leased from Swindon Borough Council and sub-leased by Stratton Junior Football Club. | Flooding | Not yet known | Ongoing | Low |
| Grange Recreation Ground | Currently leased by Upper Stratton Football Club. | ■ None | None | Ongoing | Low |
| Dorcan Pavilion | Council resolved to demolish Doran Pavilion in 2019. | This work is not yet complete. | Demolition of building to slab level £5,650.00, Asbestos removal £3,875.00, Slab removal | 2022 | Medium |

| Description of asset | Background | Known issues | Known financial implication | Timeline | Level of concern |
|---------------------------------|--|---|--|---|------------------|
| | | | £365.00, Tarmac removal £5,915.00. Total: approx. £16k | | |
| Open Spaces and Play Areas | The Open Spaces Committee has delegated authority to oversee play equipment improvements. \$106 monies have been utilised to upgrade some play equipment in 2019. | An Outdoor Play Strategy is required. There have been a number of requests from residents for play equipment improvements and a skate park. An outdoor furniture strategy is required. i.e. dog/litter bins, notice boards, benches. Financial plan for Play Park renovations There are no management plans in place. These are recommended to help guide the future work on each site. There is no Biodiversity Action Plan. | Skate park has been to council and cost implications identified and £30k is in Ear Marked Reserves. Renovation of Meadowcroft Play Park to cost approximately £55k, to take place in 2021. Total expected expenditure annually should be around the £25,000 mark. Strategic Play Park plan to slot into this to plan future expenditure, this will be completed for annual budget setting. | Play park to complete by mid September 2021 | Medium |
| Planters and Hanging Baskets | The street planters and flowers beds are maintained by the grounds team. | ■ None | The plants and hanging baskets are purchased from an external supplier each year. Average outlay - £1,500 annually plus labour for planting and maintenance Christmas trees are purchased each year. Average Outlay £450 annually for | Ongoing | Low |

| Description of asset | Background | Known issues | Known financial implication | Timeline | Level of concern |
|--|---|---|--|-----------------|------------------|
| | | | several trees around the parish | | |
| Street Lighting | The Council is responsible for the provision and maintenance of street lighting at Meadowcroft Community Centre and the Car Park at Grange Leisure (currently on lease to Parkwood). | ■ None. | Not yet known. | 2022 | Medium |
| Allotments | The provision of allotments is a statutory requirement of the Parish Council. The council has 2 Allotment sites: White Hart Allotment. St Phillips Allotment. | Lack of security on sites. | £80k plus Ear Marked Reserves for Allotments in 2021 is £1,236.91 | 2021 | Low |
| Outdoor Furniture and Flag Pole and Peace memorial | There are a number of dual purpose litter and dog bin and benches throughout the Parish. There is also a flag pole located at Ermin Street Peace Memorial. | Some electrical works and services are proposed at the peace memorial | £3,133.50 for these works | October 2021 | Low |

| Description of asset | Background | Known issues | Known financial implication | Timeline | Level of concern |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|--|-----------------------------|----------|------------------|
| Churchyards at St | The Parish Council owns | Headstone safety – needs | Not yet known. | 2022 | |
| Margaret's Church and | and manages two burial | identifying as a cost | | | Low |
| Green Road Cemetery | grounds within the parish. | | | | |