



RESERVES POLICY

Title	Reserves policy
Owner	Chairman
Version number	0.1
Primary audience	General public, councillors and staff
Document location	Shared drive
Objective	
This policy sets out the council’s position on dealing with its level of reserves.	

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Local Government Act 2003 requires all Councils to maintain adequate balances, reserves and provisions to help ensure that their activities are sustainable. The purpose of this policy is to set out how the Council will determine and review the level of reserves.
- 1.2 Parish Councils are required to maintain adequate financial reserves to meet the needs of the organisation but have no legal powers to hold reserves other than those for reasonable working capital needs or for specifically earmarked purposes.
- 1.3 Reserves can be used for long term planned or exceptional (unbudgeted or higher than expected) expenditure on the following conditions:
- The expenditure must not be recurring.
 - Income in reserves from the sale of fixed assets (‘capital receipts’) such as the sale of land, can only be used for capital projects, such as the acquisition and enhancement of land, building, vehicles, plant and equipment.

2. TYPES OF RESERVES

- 2.1 Reserves can be categorised as earmarked, ring fenced or general.

3. EARMARKED RESERVES

- 3.1 Earmarked reserves are a means of building up funds over several years to deliver a defined project, predicted liabilities or for known significant expenditure.
- 3.2 Earmarked reserves must be reviewed and/or established by the Council at the annual budget setting meeting. Every earmarked reserve proposal must include a costed project plan.
- 3.3 Any changes to the proposed use of reserves must be agreed by Council.
- 3.4 The RFO will note earmarked reserves movements at the end of the financial year.
- 3.5 Earmarked reserves can be held for:
- Renewals – to enable the Council to plan and finance an effective programme of equipment replacement and planned property maintenance. These reserves are a mechanism to smooth expenditure so that a sensible replacement programme can be achieved without the need to vary budgets.
 - Carry forward of under spend – the Council commits expenditure to projects but cannot spend the budget in year. Reserves are used as a mechanism to carry forward these resources.

4. RING FENCED

4.1 Ring fenced reserves are money or grants allocated for a specific project only.

5. GENERAL RESERVES

5.1 General reserves are funds which do not have any restrictions as to their use. These reserves can be used to smooth the impact of uneven cash flows, offset the budget requirement if necessary, or can be held in case of unexpected events or emergencies.

5.2 Stoke Mandeville Parish Council considers the prudent level of general reserves to be 50% of its precept.

5.3 If in extreme circumstances general reserves were exhausted due to major unforeseen spending pressures within a particular financial year, the Council would be able to draw down from its earmarked reserves to provide short term resources.

5.4 Even at times when extreme pressure is put on the Council’s finances, the Council must always keep a minimum balance sufficient to pay three months’ salaries to staff in general reserves.

Reserves will be reviewed each year as part of the budget process to confirm that they are still required and that the level is still appropriate.

Supporting Materials

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following supporting materials:

- TBA

Review and approval

Sign off dates	Review Date	Review Date
Finance & Governance C’tee	08/12/2020	03/09/2024
Full Parish Council	16/02/2021	19/09/2024

Next review date

This policy should be reviewed every two years or when significant change occurs to the subject matter.

The next review date for this policy is **September 2026**.

Version Control / History

Version no.	Author	Date	Status/Comments
0.1	GWS	28.11.2020	Policy put into new template with minor amendments