

CHOLSEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting duly convened and held on Wednesday 12th November at 10am at The Pavilion, Station Road, Cholsey.

Members present: Cllr. D. Bamford (Chair), Cllr. P. Jenkins, Cllr. M. Smith

Officers present: C. Bird (Clerk), S. Smith (Assistant Clerk/RFO).

Start time: 10.00am. End time: 11.30am

F11. To receive apologies for absence.

Apologies were accepted from Cllr. J. Collins

F12. To receive Declarations of Personal and Pecuniary Interest for any agenda items.

There were none.

F13. To hear questions or comments from members of the public concerning topics on the agenda (limited to 10 mins).

There were none.

F14. To approve and sign the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 21st July 2025 (Appendix A).

It was **resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 21st July 2025 and they were signed by Cllr D. Bamford.

F15. To note outcomes of 2025-2026 Interim audit.

The 2025-2026 interim audit report was **noted**.

The Parish Office had a successful interim audit on Thursday 23rd October 2025.

Key recommended actions were as follows:

- A data audit should be undertaken.
- Transparency of authorising transactions between £500-£2500 could be improved.
- A diary list of policy review dates should be created so that they're not overlooked.
- All payroll related information should be sent via password protected emails and documents to prevent a data breach. The payroll provider should be contacted to provide assurance that they will affect the same for council data. A data cleanse should also be carried out. Note: the RFO has since cleansed their payroll data, set up password protection and contacted the payroll provider who shall do the same.
- An investment policy should be written.
- In line with requirements of assertion 10, the suitability of our website should be discussed by the council.

F16. To note 2025/2026 accounts to date, April – September (Appendix B).

It was **noted** that the accounts at the end of the first half of the current financial year show spending is on track.

Key items to note:

- Some annual subscriptions and grants for this year are still due to be paid.
- Burial/memorial fees received are far higher than predicted but this kind of income is unpredictable.
- £11.7k was recently received in interest due to a short-term investment of some CIL money. This will be put into Reserves and Council should discuss what to do with it next.
- Insurance costs may increase due to the need to add key worker cover and insure the new Springline artwork.

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F17. To note CIL balance and discuss investment options to be recommended to full Council.

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) balance was **noted**. We currently hold approximately £275k in CIL. It was agreed that Full Council needs to review anticipated projects in 2026 that may require CIL spend before committing to a new fixed term savings account for CIL money held.

F18 To note bank account balances and review general and ear marked reserves.

The bank account balances as at 30th September 2025 were **noted** and are approximately:

Current account: £155k

Reserves account: £94K (including ear marked reserves)

CIL current account: £ 269K (including £11.7k interest received)

CIL instant access savings account: £15k

F19. To review draft 2026/2027 budget.

The Clerk and Assistant Clerk have begun work on the 2026/27 budget. Amendments were discussed and it was agreed that the preliminary budget would be reported to and discussed by Full Council at the meeting on the 19th November 2025. The final version will be reviewed by Full Council on 17th December 2025, in preparation for the precept submission in January 2026.

F20. To discuss amendments to allotment rents, burial ground fees and vendor hire fees for 2026/2027 to be recommended to full council.

Amendments were **discussed** and recommendations will be taken to Full Council for approval at the meeting on 19th November 2025.

F21. To discuss and update the Council's Risk Management Policy and Risk Register (Appendix C).

The policy was discussed and the following additions should be considered by Full Council at a future meeting.

- **Business Continuity** – Key worker insurance cover to provide Clerk or RFO locum cover in the event of long-term absence. Note: The RFO has already contacted our current insurance provider who don't provide this cover but will look into the possibility further.
- **Data Protection, GDPR** - Payslips and payroll reports are sent and received using secure password protected documents and emails.

F22. To discuss continuing to receive grass cutting contributions from the NHS for Fairmile burials area within the Parish Council's burial ground.

This was **discussed** and Full Council shall consider and decide at the meeting on the 19th November 2025.

F23. To agree items to be reported to meeting of Full Council on 19th November 2025.

Interim audit 2025/26.

2025/26 accounts to date.

Preliminary 2026/27 budget and notes.

CIL balance.

2026/27 allotment rents and burial ground fees to be agreed.

NHS grass cutting contribution request.

F24. To agree next meeting date. TBC – May 2026.