

Minutes of a Meeting of Comberbach Parish Council's Finance Committee held on Tuesday 8 July 2025

Present

Councillor S Cameron (in the Chair)

Councillors:

W Briggs

J Johnston

J Ryder

V McDermott

Stephen Penwill (RFO)

The Meeting started at 4.00pm.

1. Appointment of Chairman

RESOLVED: That Councillor Cameron be appointed Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year.

2. Appointment of Vice Chairman

RESOLVED: That Councillor Ryder be appointed Vice Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year.

3. Apologies for absence

An apology for absence was received from the Clerk Denise French due to family reasons.

4. To receive Members' Declarations of Interest

Councillor Briggs advised he was now treasurer of Tatton Conservatives, which was noted.

5. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance Committee held on 15 April 2025 be approved as a correct record.

6. Q1 25 - 26 Budget Review

The Committee considered the Q1 budget review. It was noted that the budget for the replacement defib was missing compared to the Budget 25-26 column in the 'Projects Forward Look' sheet.

It was agreed that future versions of the report would include a comments column to highlight any particular reasons for variances.

RESOLVED: that the Q1 budget be received and noted.

7. Review of reserves

The Committee reviewed the reserves. The 'Projects Forward Look' was considered and the following was recommended:

- (a) The Zip wire projects to be moved from 27/28 to 28/29
- (b) The Multiplay unit replacement be deferred from 26/27 to 27/28
- (c) The car park resurfacing be deferred from 27/28 to "Later"
- (d) The infant slide gross cost be increased from £10k to £20k now that space existed for a larger unit. It was noted that grant funding options would be explored and sought.

The balances of the reserves were reviewed. The RFO advised that reserves normally reflected the savings account balance which now stood at around £37k.

It was recommended that:

- (a) the general reserve be increased from £6k to £7k, which reflected 3 months of precept.
- (b) The replacement for street furniture be increased from £600 to £1k
- (c) The Recreation Area replacement equipment be increased from £17.5k to £25k

This would result in the total earmarked reserves being £30k, plus £7k general reserve.

RESOLVED: that the above recommendations be submitted to the Parish Council for consideration.

8. Review of policies

The following policies were considered for recommendation to the Council on 15 July 2025:

- (a) Financial Regulations – the RFO explained that the template had been reissued by NALC following more recent procurement legislation, but this had not fundamentally changed the document. However, there was the opportunity to tailor the regulations in line with CPC practices.

Item 2.2 referred to a Risk Management Policy. The Council's policy on risk was in the Risk Assessment.

- (b) Risk Assessment – it was noted that some content needed to be updated including dates and the increase to £85k financial protection. An updated version would be presented to the council.
- (c) Internal Control Procedures – this was reviewed and recommended for approval without amendment.
- (d) Internet Banking Policy – the RFO stated that the council's bank Santander was no longer issuing the weekly transactions email and was moving to paperless statements. This would impact the audit controls in paragraph one of the policy. It was agreed to replace this control with an agenda item that each meeting of Finance Committee would review a recent bank statement.

It was also suggested that all policy documents should in future incorporate version control and latest review dates.

RESOLVED: the Financial Regulations, Risk Assessment, Internal Control Procedures and Internet Banking Policy be recommended to council with the updates as stated above and that future versions incorporate version control and review dates.

9. Managing Parish Council savings

The Committee considered a report from the RFO on Savings Account Options.

RESOLVED: that the Council be recommended to open a dormant current account with Unity Trust Bank and utilise their savings products in preference to Santander's. This would then facilitate any future move to Unity Trust for current account banking.

10. Advertising in the Comberbach Village News (CVN)

The Committee considered the current advertising fees for the CVN and whether to offer a discount. Members felt the current charges were reasonable.

RESOLVED: that the Council be recommended to retain the current charge to local advertisers of £10 per issue for a 1/6 page advert and all advertisers should be requested to pay if they wanted to continue to advertise in the CVN. The RFO would liaise with the CVN editor to establish a process to ensure advertisers were aware prior to placing an advert, and any non-payers would have adverts removed from future editions.

11. Infant slide at the Recreation Area

Cllr Johnston briefed on the options potentially available for grant funding to help towards the replacement infant multi-play unit. She offered to prepare an outline plan to prepare a Spacehive bid in time for the deadline for the October panel, including the identification of sponsors and those who may offer letters of support. The RFO would check whether SynchroPrint would be able to print and insert a flyer to the July CVN. It was also noted that the Comberbach Fete Committee had indicated it

may be able to offer a grant as part of community support for the project. The learning from this project would inform future bids eg for the larger multi-play unit.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted and will be considered at the Parish Council meeting on 15 July.

12. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 7 October at 4.00pm.

Part 2 – EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS – none

The meeting closed at 5.37pm

Cllr S Cameron (in the Chair)