

Minutes of a Meeting of Comberbach Parish Council's Finance Committee held on Tuesday 21 April 2026

Present

Councillor S Cameron (in the Chair)

Councillors:

J Johnston

V McDermott

J Ryder

Denise French (Parish Clerk)

Stephen Penwill (RFO)

The Meeting started at 4.00pm.

1. Apologies for absence

An apology for absence was received and approved from Councillor W Briggs.

2. To receive Members' Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance Committee held on 6 January 2026 be approved as a correct record.

4. Q4 25-26 Budget Review

The RFO presented the Quarter 4 budget review.

He explained that the insurance cover with Zurich was now in year 4 of a 5-year deal; the premium had increased compared to the previous year – the previous year's premium was £710, but the premium for 26/27 was £923. Members asked whether the council was tied into the deal and the RFO agreed to check.

In relation to IT Costs, software & services - costs were invoiced annually or biannually for some items. Q4 included Scribe for 26/27 which was 28% higher than the previous year at £444, the costs were based on the precept and as the council's precept had increased, it meant falling into a higher band. The Scribe system had been recommended by the RFO after researching other options. The Scribe system included preparation of the year end documents.

The RFO explained that regarding 'Other Payments including S137' – the only spend under this category was the Christmas Tree with other projects coded to Village

Community projects. The RFO and Clerk explained that S137 was a power to spend a set amount each year per elector.

The figures relating to the Infant Play Unit included income of £10,920 which represented all grants and donations received, the payments of £1,391 included the fees and charges for Spacehive and £463 for wetpour. The majority of Kompan costs would be paid in 26/27.

RESOLVED: that the Quarter 4 budget be received and noted.

5. End of year Internal Audit and Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

The Committee considered the AGAR documents including the Internal Audit report of JDH Business Services.

The Internal Audit report made one recommendation that the parish council adopt an IT policy. A draft policy was later on the agenda.

Members thanked the RFO for his excellent work.

RESOLVED: that the committee recommends to the parish council that the AGAR forms be approved for submission to the External Auditor.

6. IT Policy

The committee considered a draft IT policy.

Members recommended the amendment of the below sentence to refer to software installation being prohibited without prior permission of the council:

“Unauthorised installation of software on Council owned devices, including personal software, is strictly prohibited.”

Members queried data back-up and the RFO explained that council data from both the Clerk and RFO's laptops was stored in the cloud.

Members felt training under Section 11 should refer to councillors availing themselves of any training offered.

The Clerk advised that all councillors now had the recommended 'gov.uk' email addresses and the council paid for anti-virus software on both her and the RFO's laptops. The retention of emails and documents was covered in the Data Retention Section of the Data Protection policy.

RESOLVED:

That the IT policy be amended as discussed at the meeting and the advice of Chalc be sought.

7. Village Christmas Tree

Councillor Warburton had carried out research on potential options for a second Christmas Tree for the village including costings.

Members felt the option of a tree on the triangle of land between The Avenue and Budworth Lane would be impressive but was expensive particularly as it would only be a place for a few weeks each year. The parish council would consider the matter at the next meeting.

RESOLVED: that the additional Christmas Tree be considered at the next meeting.

8. Payment for new infant play unit

The RFO explained that funding would be transferred from the savings account to the current account to pay Kompan for the infant play unit. The Clerk explained that a post installation inspection was scheduled for that day. It was noted that a completion notice had also been received from Kompan.

Members noted that a handover meeting was part of the Kompan process and requested the Clerk explain to Kompan that the results of the post installation inspection were awaited and clarify the details of the handover meeting as the council would like to discuss feedback.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

9. Bank statement

The Internet Banking Policy included a provision that the committee consider a recent bank statement and the March statements for Santander and Unity Trust bank accounts had been circulated.

RESOLVED: that the bank statements be received and approved.

10. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 7 July 2026 at 4.00pm.

Part 2 – EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS – none

The meeting closed at 4.54pm

Cllr S Cameron (in the Chair)