MINUTES of the Finance Committee of Melksham Without Parish Council held on Monday 15th June 2026 at Melksham Without Parish Council Offices, Melksham Community Campus (First Floor), Market Place, Melksham, SN12 6ES at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors John Doel (Committee Vice-Chair), Chris Griffiths, Alan Baines, Anne Sullivan and Mark Blackham.

Officers: Teresa Strange (Clerk) and Marianne Rossi (Finance & Amenities Officer)

On Zoom: There were no members of the public present on Zoom.

It was noted that the meeting was quorate.

Housekeeping: It was noted that, in the absence of Councillor Glover, outgoing Chair of the Finance Committee, Councillor Doel, as outgoing Vice-Chair of the Committee, took the Chair and welcomed everyone to the meeting. As there were no members of the public present, the housekeeping announcement was not read out. Members were aware that the meeting was being recorded and would be published on the Parish Council's YouTube channel following the meeting.

042/26 Election of Chair and Vice Chair for 2026/27:

a) Election of Chair:

Councillor Doel invited nominations for the Chair of the Finance Committee for 2026/27. Councillor Glover was nominated; there were no other nominations.

Resolved: To appoint Councillor John Glover as Chair of the Finance Committee for 2026/27.

b) Election of Vice Chair:

Councillor Doel invited nominations for the Vice- Chair of the Finance Committee for 2026/27. Councillor Doel was nominated; there were no other nominations.

Resolved: To appoint Councillor Doel as Vice- Chair of the Finance Committee for 2026/27.

c) Scheme of Delegation:

The Clerk advised that the Scheme of Delegation & Terms of Reference had been included within the agenda pack to provide members with an overview of the Finance Committee's remit, delegated authority and responsibilities.

Members noted the information provided.

d) Banking Signatories:

The Clerk provided an update regarding amendments being made to the council's banking signatory arrangements following changes to the membership of the Finance Committee. It was noted that Councillor Wood was in the process of being removed as a signatory from all council bank accounts and that Councillor Sullivan was in the process of being added as a signatory. Members noted this update.

043/26 Apologies:

Apologies had been received from Councillors John Glover and David Pafford who were both on holiday. These reasons for absence were accepted.

044/26 Declarations of Interest

None.

045/26 Dispensation Requests for this Meeting

None.

046/26 To consider holding items in Closed Session due to confidential nature:

There were no items to hold in closed session.

The Clerk advised that, whilst individual staff salaries had been redacted from the financial reports, any discussion relating to individual members of staff would need to be held in closed session due to the confidential nature of the information. Members were also advised that any discussion relating to individual contracts or contractors may similarly require exclusion of the press and public.

047/26 Public Participation:

There were no members of the public present.

048/26 Financial Regulations:

a) Financial Regulations review:

The Clerk advised that officers had reviewed the Financial Regulations and proposed amendments where the existing regulations did not fully reflect the council's current practices. Members considered the amendments shown in track changes on the document and are detailed as follows:

Financial Reg 2.6: The addition of wording to confirm that bank reconciliations for all accounts shall be reviewed, signed and dated each month by two members of the Finance Committee, reflecting the council's existing practice.

Financial Reg 11.3: Clarification regarding staff salaries and pay award: The Clerk explained that whilst salary scale point increases are recommended by the Staffing Committee and approved by the Full Council, annual NJC national pay awards are incorporated within employees' contracts and therefore are only noted by the council. To reflect current practice, additional wording had been proposed to clarify this distinction within the regulations which is as follows:

‘11.3: Salary grades, scale points and any discretionary changes to an employee’s gross pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment shall be agreed by the council or a duly delegated committee, in accordance with the council’s staffing arrangements and any relevant terms of reference.

11.4: Nationally agreed pay awards, including NJC pay awards, and any contractual increments or changes arising automatically under an employee’s existing contract of employment, shall be implemented by the Clerk/RFO and reported to the council for noting. Such implementation shall not require further approval, provided it is in accordance with the employee’s contract and any budget provision agreed by the council.

11.5: No other change shall be made to any employee’s gross pay, emoluments, salary grade, scale point, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior approval of the council or the relevant duly delegated committee.’

The Clerk drew members' attention to Financial Regulation 4.2, which requires a hard copy schedule of the salaries and wages budget to be signed by the Clerk and the Chair of the Staffing Committee. It was noted that this action was still outstanding and would be completed in due course.

Members considered the revisions discussed and agreed that the amendments reflected the council's current procedures.

Recommendation: To approve financial regulations incorporating the amendments as detailed above.

b) Use of BACS for council payments:

The Clerk explained that, in accordance with Financial Regulation 7.9, the council is required to approve the use of BACS and online banking payments every two years. Although approval had been granted during the previous financial year, the item is included on the agenda annually to ensure that it does not get missed.

Members reviewed the continued use of BACS and online banking payments and were happy that the existing arrangements remained appropriate.

Recommendation: To approve the continued use of BACS and online banking payments in accordance with Financial Regulation 7.9.

049/26 SAPPP Practitioners' Guide:

Members reviewed the Smaller Authorities' Proper Practices Panel (SAPPP) Practitioners' Guide. The Clerk explained that the guide sets out the proper practices that parish councils must follow in relation to governance, accounting and the completion of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

The Clerk advised that officers had reviewed Sections 1–4 of the guide and had prepared annotations demonstrating how the council complied with each AGAR assertion, together with supporting evidence. Members were reminded that it would be Full Council, as the corporate body, that would be required to answer the assertions contained within section 1 of the AGAR and therefore members needed to be satisfied that the council met the requirements set out within the guide in order to answer "Yes" to each assertion.

The Clerk drew members to Assertion 10, the new digital and data compliance assertion. The Clerk advised that further clarification had been sought regarding the interpretation of this requirement and that it would be considered later in the meeting. Members reviewed the annotations and were satisfied that they accurately demonstrated how the council met each of the AGAR assertions.

050/26 Statement of Accounts and Accompanying Report 2025/26:

a) Annotated Finance Committee minutes 5th January 2026 with year-end actual figures:

The Clerk explained that officers had annotated the minutes from the Finance Committee meeting held on the 5th January 2026 to show the year end figures against the anticipated spend at budget setting.

It was explained that this was done to provide context to the year-end accounts by showing the budget assumptions made by members in January with the actual income and expenditure figures as at 31st March 2026. The annotations enabled members to identify where expenditure or income differed from original estimates and clearly showed where a project didn’t take place in the financial year. Members noted the additional information and agreed that it provided a useful explanation of the council's financial position at year end.

b) Draft Statement of Accounts and Accompanying Report:

Members reviewed the draft Statement of Accounts and Accompanying Report for the year ending 31st March 2026. The Clerk explained that whilst the Accounting Statements contained within the AGAR provide the financial figures for the year, they do not provide any background information or explanation regarding the figures reported. As such, officers had compiled a detailed accompanying report to provide transparency and context around the council's financial position. The report included information relating to council assets, leases, financial partnerships, VAT, reserves and other matters required to support the year-end accounts. In addition, the report included information published under the Local Government Transparency Code 2015, including expenditure over £500, grants awarded and senior staff salaries. The Clerk reminded members that the Internal Auditor had previously advised that the council was not legally required to comply with the Transparency Code and that publishing such information could potentially cause confusion for residents. It was noted that the council's adopted Standing Orders, based on the NALC Model Standing Orders, require the publication of information contained within the code as this information was shown in bold text within the model which identifies that it’s a statutory requirement. The council had reviewed this at the recent Annual Council meeting and members agreed to continue publishing this information in the interests of transparency and to ensure compliance with its own adopted Standing Orders. The Clerk drew members' attention to the General Fund balance at 31st March 2026 of £100,721. She explained that this represented the balance remaining after all year-end accounting adjustments had been completed, including debtors, creditors, accruals and reserve movements, and would form the brought-forward balance for the 2026/27 financial year. Members were reminded that the council's Reserves Policy states that the General Fund should be maintained at a level equivalent to between three and twelve months of net revenue expenditure. The Clerk advised that she had reviewed the higher than anticipated General Fund balance during the year-end closedown process and had established that the increase was due to some projects and items of expenditure that had not progressed during the financial year as originally anticipated. As a result, the associated funds had remained within the General Fund at year end rather than being spent as expected. Members confirmed that they were satisfied with the figures contained within the Statement of Accounts and agreed that the accompanying report provided a clear and explanation of the council's financial position and the figures reported within the year-end accounts.

c) Bank Reconciliations as at 31st March 2026:

Members reviewed the bank reconciliations as at 31st March 2026 for all of the council's bank accounts and agreed that the balances for all accounts reconciled correctly. The balances for each of the councils' cashbooks as of 31st March 2026 were as follows:

Lloyd's Current Account	£ 11,307.21
Fixed Term Deposit (Lloyds)	£ 0.00
Unity Trust Bank Current Account	£ 26,554.08
Unity Trust Bank Instant Access Account	£ 2,984.41
CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund Account	£739,000.00
Total	**£779,845.70**

Recommendation: The council accept the bank reconciliation as at 31st March 2026 as a true record with a closing balance of £779,845.70.

d) Reserves Breakdown as at 31st March 2026:

The Clerk explained that officers had looked at the reserves as at 31st March 2026 and had split them between committed, contingency, short-term and medium term. They had also indicated which reserves were ringfenced for specific purposes, such as the Davey Play Area maintenance fund and the Shurnhold Fields maintenance fund, with any figures that were detailed in the committed column being amounts that the council had budgeted to spend in the 26/27 financial year. Members were advised that auditors review the level of reserves held by councils to ensure that balances can be justified and that councils are not accumulating excessive reserves by collecting funds from residents significantly in advance of when they are required. The Clerk explained that there are exceptions to this principle, particularly where councils are planning for known future expenditure. As an example, the council had previously undertaken a number of play area refurbishments within a relatively short period and therefore maintained a sinking fund to ensure that sufficient resources would be available when those assets next required replacement.

Reviewing the Reserves, by looking at the breakdown, is a useful exercise for the parish council to undertake to ensure that they understand, and are happy with, the level of Reserves that the council hold.

The reserve breakdown is as follows:

PROPOSED AS AT 31 MARCH 2026	COUNCIL RESERVES	*COMMITTED 2026/27 (Refer to "spending from reserves"*	CONTINGENCY	SHORT TERM Up to 3 years	MEDIUM TERM CAPITAL REPLACEMENT Over 3 years	RINGFENCED for specific use due to legal agreement from funding source
£4,400.00	New Hall, Berryfield		£4,400.00			
£5,400.00	Shaw Village Hall		£5,400.00			
£37,497.97	B'hillSports Field & Pavilion maintenance. LONG TERM REPLACEMENT OF CAPITAL ITEMS	£6,000.00	£5,000.00	£16,000.00	£10,497.97	
£13,943.36	B'hillSports Field & Pavilion maintenance		£13,943.36			
£20,000.00	Replacement Play Area Safety Surfacing & Equipment LONG TERM CAPITAL REPLACEMENT	£13,250.00	£6,750.00			
£0.00	Shurnhold Fields (ex George Ward Playing Field) project CAPITAL					
£6,000.00	Recreation & Sports Facility Enhancement			£6,000.00		
£10,850.00	Defibrillator replacement			£10,850.00		
£4,000.00	General Highway & Footpath / Lighting			£4,000.00		
£5,558.71	Legal fees		£5,558.71			
£15,098.67	Community Projects/Match Funding		£5,000.00	£10,098.67		
£7,940.00	Elections		£7,000.00	£940.00		
£10,463.34	Contingency - staffing		£10,463.34			
£23,077.00	Contingency - replacement / renewal of council assets (including Wiltshire Council assets) and instead of insuring low value street furniture items TO BE RENAMED STREET FURNITURE RESERVE		£10,000.00	£13,077.00		

£24,531.68	General Contingency		£24,531.68			
£252,070.83	CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) ringfenced funding	£63,500.00	£40,000.00	£84,389.00	£64,181.83	£252,070.83
£0.00	New Reserve: CIL 10% SHARING POT WITH MTC SO RING FENCED					
£54,880.34	Sandridge Solar Farm Community Funding	£33,850.00	£10,000.00	£11,030.34		£54,880.34
£56,847.79	Shurnhold Fields Open Space Maintenance Contribution RINGFENCED	£2,502.00	£5,000.00	£20,000.00	£29,345.79	£56,847.79
£14,452.00	Bowerhill Sports Field Improvements (Football Foundation grant)	£14,452.00				£14,452.00
£64,683.52	Davey Play Area Maintenance	£1,278.00	£1,874.52	£15,000.00	£46,531.00	£64,683.52
£0.00	Berryfield Village Hall Public Art					
£0.00	Footbridge (between Buckley Gardens and Bowood View					
£15,000.00	Energy Production schemes community benefit	£15,000.00				£15,000.00
£0.00	Bowerhill Sports Field Upgrade (s106)					
£6,477.18	NEW RESERVE - To show SSEN reserve received for MCS in Emergency Plan mode as RINGFENCED	£692.00	£5,785.18			£6,477.18
£653,172.39		**£150,524.00**	**£160,706.79**	**£191,385.01**	**£150,556.59**	
				£653,172.39		
						Total ringfenced £464,411.66

Members confirmed that they were happy with the above reserves breakdown.

Recommendation: The Council approve the reserve breakdown as per above.

e) Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for 2025/26:

Members reviewed the income and expenditure from CIL for the 2025/26 financial year. The Clerk explained to members that spend from CIL would be submitted to Wiltshire Council as this was something the parish council needed to do on an annual basis. It was queried whether the council were restricted on what CIL funds could be spent on. The Clerk advised that CIL can be spent on a wide range of things as long as they were for infrastructure. For example, CIL couldn't be used for staff salaries or training. She further explained that the council had set principles on what CIL should be spend on due to it being one off funding for a particular development. As CIL could not be relied upon to be an ongoing stream of funding each year, the council normally use this funding on capital items, not for maintenance which is what the solar farm funding is much more suited for as this was an annual sum payable for the "operational life" of the farm.

It was noted that following the adoption of the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan, the parish council received an additional 10% of CIL which had been previously agreed to be allocated to a shared pot for joint projects with the town council. Due to no joint projects moving forward the parish council withdrew from the joint CIL arrangement and as at 31st March 2026 transferred the CIL back into the council's CIL reserve.

Recommendation: The parish council report the following CIL income and expenditure for 2025/26:

CIL spent in 2025/26		
LHFIG[1] Contributions		£1,723.48
Neighbourhood Plan		£2,760.92
Shurnhold Fields Capital		£5,000.00
Total spend from CIL		**£9,484.40**
Transfers to CIL reserve:		
10% CIL Sharing pot with Melksham Town Council		£71,314.77
		£71,314.77
CIL Reserve as at 1st April 2025		**£94,192.10**
CIL income received in 2025/26		£ 96,048.36
10% CIL transferred to CIL reserve 2025/26		£ 71,314.77
CIL spent in 2025/26	-	£ 9,484.40
CIL Reserve as at 31st March 2026		**£252,070.83**

f) Sandridge Solar Farm Funding expenditure for 2025/26:

Members reviewed the spend from the Sandridge Solar Farm Funding for 2025/26. It was noted that any spend from this fund had to benefit the community and had to be reported back to the solar farm owners each year.

The Sandridge Solar Farm funding received in 2025/26 was a one-off payment of £18,832.90.

[1] Wiltshire Council's Local Highways & Footpath Improvement Group

Recommendation: The parish council report the following Sandridge Solar Farm income and expenditure for the 2025/26 financial year

The fund was spent on the following for 2025/26:

Defibrillator maintenance	£1,423.90
Tree inspections on parish trees	£1,245.00
Parish weed spraying	£1,755.00
Speed Indicator Device deployment	£5,018.00
New street furniture	£1,829.67
Bus shelter cleaning	£1,600.00
TOTAL SPEND IN 2025/26	**£12,871.57**

g) **Supporting Statement of Accounts and Annual Report recommended approval for the year ending 31st March 2026:**

Recommendation: The Council approve the Supporting Statement of Accounts and Annual Report for the year ending 31st March 2026.

h) **ICO (Information Commissioner's Office) Model Publication Scheme and schedule of charges:**

The parish council must review the model publication scheme and the schedule of fees and charges on an annual basis. The Clerk explained that the scheme was published on the parish council website to ensure compliance with Freedom of Information legislation and for transparency. Members were taken through the document and were advised that the left-hand column identified the information that the council was required to publish, whilst the right-hand column detailed how the parish council made this information available to the public.

The Clerk drew Members' attention to the Schedule of Fees and Charges, which was at the bottom of the document and set out the costs associated with photocopying and printing information where applicable.

The Clerk further explained that, in accordance with best practice and in the interests of transparency, the council now publish details of Freedom of Information requests received together with the council's responses on their website. Members noted that any personal information, including the identity of the person making the request, was redacted in accordance with GDPR requirements.

Members were advised that only minor amendments had been made to the document when officers had reviewed it prior to the meeting and that these changes were made to ensure the publication scheme accurately reflected current council practices.

Members agreed that they were happy with the document.

Recommendation: The council approve the ICO Model Publication Scheme and schedule of charges.

051/26 Audit:

a) External Auditor report 2024/25:

Members reviewed the external audit report for 2024/25 which was included in the agenda pack for the meeting. Members noted that the auditor had not identified any matters giving cause for concern or given any recommendations or actions for the council to implement.

b) Internal Auditors Repot for 2025/26:

The Clerk explained that the internal auditor's reports was something that the Full Council had to review so would be on the agenda again for the Full Council meeting at the end of July. She reported that the internal auditor had undertaken two visits during the year, one just before Christmas and one in April for year end. Both reports from the two audit visits had been included in the agenda pack and members had already previously seen the observations from the interim audit with most of them being addressed.

The Clerk talked members through the observations made by the auditor at the year end audit and any items that are still outstanding from the interim audit. Officers had included comments in the agenda pack on how these were being addressed too:

- **Signing of bank reconciliations**: It was noted that although the two Finance Councillors reviewing and signing payments each month also reviewed the previous month's bank reconciliation, on some occasions the accompanying bank statement had not been signed. The auditor had advised that both the bank reconciliation and corresponding bank statement should be signed to demonstrate that both documents had been reviewed together.
- **Farm business tenancy agreements for Allotments:** This is something that will be put on the next Asset Management agenda for discussion. The council have previously reviewed this a few years ago, but the auditor has advised that this should be reviewed again.
- **Payroll calculations relating to a staff member working hours:** The Clerk advised that the National Joint Councils (NJC) who sets the pay scales had updated how pro rotas pay is calculated in the 2025/26 year which officers were not aware of. This has now been addressed.
- **Review of the asset register**: The council had a number of low value items on their asset register which was reviewed at the last finance meeting and it was agreed that any item under £250 would be removed and put on a separate inventory list.
- **Completion of a formal data audit:** The council have a data audit document; however, this has not been reviewed in some years. This is an action that is still to be undertaken.
- **Travel allowance in wrong AGAR (Annual Governance & Accountability Return) box:** Members were advised that the Caretaker received a taxable travel allowance which, in previous years, had been accounted for within Box 4 of the AGAR in accordance with guidance at the time. The Practitioners' Guide had since been updated and such payments should now be reported within Box 6. The Clerk confirmed that the adjustment had been made within the 2025/26 year-end

accounts and that the comparative figures for 2024/25 would be 'restated' accordingly.

Members were pleased to note that none of the observations identified any non-compliance and that appropriate actions had either been completed or were in progress.

Recommendation: To note the Internal Auditor's reports and the actions taken in response to the audit observations.

c) Internal Control:

i. **Internal Control Policy**:

Members reviewed the internal control policy; officers had shown any suggested amendments that needed to be made in track changes which were as follows:

- Under section 1 there was a typo in the date of the accounts and audit regulations legislation, which should be 2015.
- Under section 2 an additional sentence has been included to identify that the council maintains a risk register which is reviewed on an annual basis.
- Under section 4 an additional sentence has been added to show that the council will take into account the latest practitioners guide when reviewing the effectiveness of internal control.

All other amendments were correcting typos in the document. Members agreed that they were happy with the suggested changes to the policy.

Recommendation: The council readopt the internal control policy with the minor amendments as per the above.

ii. **Effectiveness of Internal Control**:

The Clerk advised that the council had to be satisfied that it had effective and robust internal control processes in place. The internal control policy which was reviewed under the above agenda item included information on what measures were in place. In addition, a councillor normally attends the office on an annual basis to have a look at the councils' controls with regard to how income is tracked and payroll etc. Councillor Griffiths agreed to undertake this visit.

Recommendation: The Council have reviewed their Internal Control measures and consider them effective

d) External Auditor guidance:

Members noted this.

e) Assertion 10 on the AGAR (Annual Governance & Accountability Return):

i. **Advice on assertion 10**:

The Clerk explained that the internal auditor had only received guidance on how he tests assertion 10 on the 27th March 26 which was as follows:

- Ensure local authority has up to date IT policy in place - the parish council has this in place.
- Local authority should have single generic email in the name of the council as minimum. (.gov/.org)- The parish council has this in place.
- Enquire as to when the council last conducted a web site accessibility test. This has been undertaken.
- Enquire as when the council last conducted a data audit in accordance with GDPR practices. This has been done some time ago but needs to be updated.

The Clerk advised that the reason she had taken guidance was because on the initial information she had seen, the council had to fully meet all of the accessibility requirements prior to the 31st March in order to answer "yes" on the AGAR. The Clerk advised that the council was mostly compliant as they had an IT policy in place and had a gov.uk domain, but the current website was not fully accessible. The council were in the process of creating a new website, but this is not currently in place. The Clerk had spoken to the internal auditor an as per the guidance detailed above, it was felt that the council could answer "yes" to this assertion.

Members agreed that further to the latest advice the parish council was in a position to answer "yes" on the AGAR under assertion 10.

Recommendation: The parish council answer "yes" under assertion 10.

ii. **Website accessibility statement**:

The Clerk explained that the council must have a website accessibility statement published on the website. The statement was published on the website; however, it needed to be approved by the council. The statement acknowledged that the current website wasn't fully accessible but has given details on how residents can get in touch with the council if they are unable to access the information. Members noted that further improvements would be incorporated as part of the planned website replacement project.

Recommendation: The council approve the website accessibility statement.

f) Section 1 (Annual Governance Statement) of External Audit documentation:

Members reviewed Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement. It was noted that Full Council, as the corporate body, would be required to consider and approve the assertions at its meeting on the 29th June 2026. Members were reminded that the Practitioners' Guide, considered earlier in the meeting, provided supporting evidence demonstrating how the Council complied with each assertion and enabled the Council to answer "Yes" to the statements contained within the Annual Governance Statement.

Recommendation: To recommend that Full Council approve Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement and answer “Yes” to all applicable assertions.

g) External Audit Annual Return and additional information requested:

Members reviewed Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), which was the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31st March 2026.

For background information, the Clerk explained that Section 2 comprised of the Accounting Statements and was required to be signed by the Clerk, as Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), prior to being presented to the Full Council on the 29th June 2026 for formal approval. Members were advised that the figures contained within the Accounting Statements corresponded with the financial reports, bank reconciliations, reserve breakdowns and supporting documentation considered throughout the meeting.

The Clerk explained that where any figure varied by more than 15% from the previous financial year, an explanation was required for the External Auditor. For the 2025/26 financial year, explanations had been provided for Box 3 (Other Receipts) and Box 6 (All Other Payments), reflecting the variances from the previous year and the factors contributing to those changes. The full explanations were included in the agenda pack and would need to be sent to the external auditor.

As explained during the meeting, the comparative figures for 2024/25 would require restatement in Boxes 4 (Staff Costs) and 6 (All Other Payments) to ensure accountancy consistency between years. Members noted that travel allowances, previously included within Box 4, would be reclassified to Box 6 in the comparative figures so that both years were presented on the same accounting basis. The overall financial position of the council remained unchanged, with the amendment affecting only the classification of expenditure between the two boxes.

Members reviewed the Accounting Statements and accompanying variance explanations and were satisfied that they accurately reflected the council's financial position.

Recommendation: To recommend approval of Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and the associated variance explanations to Full Council.

h) Exercise of Public Rights:

Members were aware that the public had a right to inspect the council's accounting records and supporting documentation following completion of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return. The Clerk advised that the council was required to provide a 30-working-day period for the public to exercise their public rights to inspect the accounts, which must include the first ten working days of July. It was agreed that the period would start from Wednesday 1st July 2026 and end on Tuesday 11th August 2026.

Recommendation: To approve the period for the exercise of public rights commencing on Wednesday 1st July 2026 and ending on Tuesday 11th August 2026.

052/26 Berryfield Village Hall Trust building insurance:

It was noted that as per the terms of the lease for Berryfield Village Hall, the parish council insure the building and recharge the cost back to the Village Hall Trust. Officers had now obtained the village hall element of the cost from the insurer which was £778.61 (Including IPT). Members discussed the recharge and it was suggested that, should the Village Hall Trust prefer not to make the payment in a single instalment, the council could offer a payment plan.

Recommendation 1: To recharge Berryfield Village Hall Trust £778.61 for building insurance.

Recommendation 2: To offer payment by instalments should the Trust wish to do so.

053/26 Beanacre Play Area Project:

The Clerk advised that the council had not yet set a budget for the Beanacre Play Area refurbishment project and had previously tasked the Beanacre Play Area Working Group with obtaining concept designs and indicative costings from play area providers to assist in developing a specification for the site. Members were informed that officers and members of the Working Group had undertaken a day of site visits with play area providers, with a further day scheduled later this week. The purpose of the visits was to enable providers to assess the site and prepare concept proposals for consideration.

The Clerk reported that concept proposals received to date exceeded £100,000, which may be significantly higher than the level of investment the council considered appropriate for the site. Members were reminded that previous discussions had concluded that Beanacre should not become a destination play area. The Clerk explained that it was very difficult for proposals to be made when there isn’t a budget costing in place for the provider to go from. Members discussed the difficulties in obtaining helpful concepts and costings without providing suppliers with an indication of the council's expectations and budget. It was recognised that suppliers may otherwise continue to develop schemes beyond the scope envisaged by the council.

After a discussion, members agreed that suppliers should be asked to provide a range of options, including a lower-cost, mid-range and higher-cost scheme, to enable the council to assess the level of provision available at different price points and determine the most appropriate approach for the site.

Resolved: To request that play area providers submit indicative low-cost, mid-range and higher-cost refurbishment options for Beanacre Play Area, together with associated cost estimates, in order for the council to understand what was available at different price points.

054/26 Allotment rent charges from 1st October 2027:

It was noted that due to allotment law, tenants needed to have 12 months’ notice of any allotment rent increase, which must be given outside of the growing season. It was noted that the rent charges had already been considered for the allotment year starting from 1st October 2026-30th September 2027, so members were now considering the rent charges from 1st October 2027 for the year 1st October 2027-30th September 2028.

The Finance & Amenities Officer had put together a report detailing information on the current rent charges and the council's financial position as at the 31st March 2026. It was noted that the allotment account was in a deficit of £1,262 which was primarily attributable to the purchase of a replacement noticeboard, together with a reduction in anticipated income resulting from several severely overgrown plots being re-let free of charge in order to bring them back into productive use. The report also showed the anticipated financial position for the 2026/27 financial year, with an estimated deficit of £3,039. It was noted that the expenditure included water costs, grass cutting, repairs and maintenance, Allotment Warden salary and pest control. Members were made aware that under allotment law, the council was unable to make a profit on the allotments but could reinvest any income into the allotments. In addition, it was further noted that there was no requirement for allotments to break even, in the same way that other facilities provided by the council, such as play areas, are funded through the precept and do not generate direct income.

Members considered whether an increase in allotment rents was appropriate, taking into account rising operating costs, particularly water charges, whilst also seeking to ensure that allotments remained affordable and accessible to residents. The Finance & Amenities Officer had provided examples of different percentage increases and the estimated additional income that each option would generate to give members a flavour of the estimated income the council may receive. Members discussed whether the rent should be increased taking everything discussed into account, with consideration for both 5% and 10% increases. After a discussion it was agreed that the rent should be increase by 5% for the allotment year starting 1st October 2027.For clarity the new charges will be as follows:

Residential rate:

2.5 perches	£ 22.00
3.75 perches	£ 34.00
5 perches	£ 44.00
10 perches	£ 88.00

Non-residential rate:

2.5 perches	£ 44.00
3.75 perches	£ 66.00
5 perches	£ 88.00
10 perches	£176.00

Recommendation: The council increase the allotment rent by 5% for the allotment year starting from 1st October 2027 as per the above charges.

055/26 RialtasWeb:

The Finance & Amenities Officer had prepared a report detailing information regarding RialtasWeb, the cloud-based version of the council's finance software package. Members noted that the council was currently using the desktop version of the software. The report outlined the key features and benefits of the web-based version, including the ability to access the system remotely from any desktop location, removing the reliance on officers being physically present in the office to access the finance system or the risk of not being able to access the system if there was an issue with the office desktop. Members noted that the Finance & Amenities Officer had submitted a host of questions to Rialtas regarding the practical advantages of RialtasWeb compared to the council's existing desktop version and that the responses had been included within the agenda pack for consideration.

The Finance & Amenities Officer advised that migration to RialtasWeb would result in an additional cost over and above the council's existing annual software subscription. It was noted that any additional charge for the current financial year would be pro-rated until 31 March 2027 and that the full annual additional cost for this would be £212 plus VAT (pro-rated from June 26 £176.66 + VAT).

Members considered the features and benefits of the web-based system. Whilst noting that the desktop version would continue to be supported, members were advised that no significant new features would be added in future as the software provider was now concentrating development on the web-based version. Members considered the benefits of improved accessibility, resilience and future software development and agreed that migration would be in the council's long-term interests. The Clerk advised that the additional cost for the current financial year had not been included within the approved budget and would therefore need to be met from reserves.

Recommendation: The parish council migrate over to the RialtasWeb, with the additional cost for the current year coming from reserves.

056/26 Council and staff subscriptions for 2026/27:

Members reviewed the annual list of subscriptions. The Clerk outlined the purpose and benefits of each subscription on the list, including professional support, training, planning advice, allotment support and community partnerships etc. It was noted that there was £2,100 in the budget with an estimated total of £2,359.04

The lists of subscriptions were as follows:

WALC & NALC	£1,505.54
SLCC (ILCM included)	£ 425.00
LCR	£ 47.00
Open Spaces	£ 45.00
CPRE	£ 36.00
Community First	£ 55.00
Fields In Trust	£ 55.00
Wilts & Berks Canal Trust	£ 35.00
Clerks & Councils Direct	£ 15.50
TransWilts	£ 20.00
Wiltshire Village Hall Association	£ 55.00
National Allotment Society	£ 65.00
Total	**£2,359.04**

Recommendation: The council and staff subscriptions for 2026/27 are approved as per the above.

057/26 Regular Payments 2026/27:

Members were aware that as financial regulation 6.6, members must review and approve the list of regular payments on an annual basis. Members reviewed the presented list and agreed that they were happy with it.

- Wiltshire Pension Fund
- HMRC
- Staff Salaries
- Aquasafe Environmental
- JH Jones
- Jens Cleaning
- Agilico (formerly Condor)
- Radcliffe Fire Protection
- Tollgate Security
- ROSPA (Play Safety)
- Rialtas
- Avon IT Systems
- Core Clean
- Amazon
- Trade UK (Screwfix)
- Toolstation
- Land Registry
- Melksham Town Council
- IAC Audit and Consultancy
- PKF Littlejohn LLP
- Wiltshire Publications Ltd
- Gallagher
- Zurich
- Community Heartbeat
- Atkinson Bookbinders
- Complete Weed Control
- JC Combustion Services
- Heating Associated Services Ltd
- Post Office
- Royal Mail
- Microsoft
- Kanconnections
- Zoom
- Fasthost
- Whitley Reading Rooms
- Giant Communication
- Wiltshire Age UK
- Woods Business Services Ltd (previously Office Right Business Solution)
- Wiltshire Council

Recommendation: The council to approve the list of regular payments for 2026/27, as per the above.

058/26 Direct Debits and Standing Orders 2026/27:

Members reviewed the schedule of Direct Debits and Standing Orders; it was explained that the council reviewed this on an annual basis. The Clerk drew members attention to the fact that attached to the list was the printout from the council's bank accounts, so that members could ensure that the list on the bank accounts matched the list being presented at the meeting. Members confirmed that both lists matched and were happy to approve the list of direct debits and standing orders. It was noted that there were no standing orders, only direct debits.

- EDF Energy – Bowerhill Electricity and Bowerhill Gas (Monthly)
- Information Commissioner's Office – Data Protection Registration (Annually)
- Grist Environmental – Trade waste removal, Bowerhill site (Monthly)
- Water2Business – Account 2377554202, Bowerhill Fields Allotments (Every 6 months)
- Water2Business – Account 237754201, Berryfield South Allotments (Every 6 months)
- Water2Business – Account 1049945401, Bowerhill site (Every 6 months)
- Lloyds Corporate Card – Lloyds Debit Card (Monthly)
- Daisy (Onebill) – Bowerhill Pavilion line and Wi-Fi (Monthly)
- Daisy (Onebill) – Campus line and Wi-Fi (Monthly)

Recommendation: The council approve the schedule of Direct Debits and Standing Orders for 2026/27.

Meeting closed at 8.57pm

Signed……………………………….
Chairman, Monday 29th June 2026