FERNHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Finance and Administration Committee Meeting Wednesday 22 October 2025 Minutes

Minutes of the Finance and Administration Committee meeting held at The Hub, Fernhurst, at 7pm on Wednesday 22 October 2025

Councillors Present: Mr B Black, Mr J Buchanan, Mr C Honeyman Brown (Chair), Mr G Inns, Mr G Williams

Also Present: Mrs E Ford (Clerk)

F/31/25 Apologies For Absence: Apologies were received from Cllr Bicknell, Cllr Lloyd and Cllr Jenkins.

F/32/25 Declarations of Interest: None

F/33/25 To approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 30 July 2025

Resolved: To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 30 July 2025

F/34/25 Review of Bank Mandate
Review of the bank mandate was deferred until the Council meeting on 19 November 2025.

F/35/25 Review of Six Month Accounts – 1 April to 30 September 2025
The 2025/2026 six month accounts reports for Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading, Nominal Ledger, Trial Balance and Earmarked Reserves had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. The six month accounts were discussed and there were no concerns. It was still projected that there would be a shortfall in income over expenditure for the end of the 2025/2026 financial year so any new plans for additional expenditure were limited. **ACTION: Clerk** to include a proposal to the November Council meeting for an increase in the staff costs budget from £36K to £38K. **ACTION: Clerk** to identify additional savings account(s) to achieve both a higher return and to ensure Council funds were covered under the FSCS.

F/36/25 Preparation of a proposal for the 2026/2027Budget and supporting precept
The Clerk had provided a proposed 2026/2027 budget to Councillors prior to the meeting. The September 2025 CPI inflation rate was 3.8% and the proposed budget generally included a provision for a 5% increase in costs above the projected 2025/2026 totals. The budget was discussed. It was confirmed that the £25K S106 funding for road safety improvements in the Parish was available until October 2030. **ACTION: Clerk** to check figures included in the proposed budget for the streetlight electricity costs. Comment was made that the proposed budget provision for the Council funded maintenance and restoration of memorials in the burial ground was low. A provision for increased cybersecurity for Councillor devices was also suggested by the Clerk. Changes to the proposed budget were decided to provide for a monthly Parish Council report in the Parish newsletter, to provide additional Cloud storage capacity, and to use different financial software with the accounts on a receipts & payments rather than income & expenditure basis. **ACTION: Clerk** to amend the proposed budget for discussion at the November Council meeting. The closing date for the precept request to Chichester District Council was 12th January 2026.

ACTION: Clerk to check access to Cloud back-up storage (both current email and Council laptop).

F/37/25 To consider proposed new Information Technology Policy
A draft new Information Technology Policy had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting and was discussed.

RESOLVED: To recommend the proposed new Information Technology Policy to Council for approval.

F/38/25 To consider proposed new Council Privacy Notice (Data Protection Policy)
A draft new Council Privacy Notice (which would be the Council data protection policy) had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting and was discussed.

RESOLVED: To recommend the proposed new Council Privacy Notice to Council for approval.

F/39/25 To consider change of accounting system from Income & Expenditure to Receipts and payments format
The Clerk had obtained a quote to transfer the Council accounts from an income & expenditure basis to a receipts & payments format from the current financial software provider Rialtas Business Solutions Ltd. This was £599 exc VAT with an ongoing annual software subscription of £203. A quote for a different financial software had also been obtained. The cost of setting up the accounts on the new software would be £129.50 with an ongoing annual charge of £423 (five year contract). The format of the accounts was discussed.

RESOLVED: To recommend that the Council changed to a receipts and payments accounting format with the financial software to be selected by the Clerk.

F/40/25 Dates of next meeting –29 January 2026

The meeting ended at 8.30pm

Chairman Signed:

Date: