

Those present:

Cllr Page (Chair)
Cllr Bell
Cllr Clare
Cllr Gilbert
Cllr Hawes (7.11pm)
Michelle Curtis (Parish Clerk/RFO)
1 Member of the public

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence; all Members were present.

2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Gilbert declared interests as follows:

- Personal interest in respect of agenda item 7, as her husband had made a suggestion for the Council to consider.

3. Minutes

Resolved: The minutes of the Finance and Policy Committee Meeting held on 24th March 2026 be approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting. Proposed Cllr Bell, seconded by Cllr Clare and unanimously agreed by those who attended.

4. Year-End Accounts

Cllr Hawes arrived at the meeting.

The Committee reviewed the year-end accounts for the year ending 31st March 2025. This included the Annual Governance Accountability Return (AGAR) sections 1 and 2.

The accounts and AGAR will be submitted to the Full Council for approval.

The Clerk advised that the Internal Audit had been completed and the report would be available for review in due course.

The Committee thanked the Clerk for their hard work in managing the council's finances.

5. Unbudgeted Work 2026/27

- 5.1** Cllr Hawes reported that documentation from Brights & Sons indicated the Parish Council would be responsible for covering the Crown Estate's costs. The Chair, Cllrs Bell and Hawes, and the Clerk attended an online meeting earlier that day with a representative of Morley Riches, the managers responsible for the Crown Estate's tidal land across Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Kent, and the River Thames.
- Cllr Hawes reported that due to legislative changes coming into effect in 2025, the Crown Estate has been cancelling a number of projects. Morley Riches acknowledged the Parish Council's concern that the quoted legal fees of £4,850 were a significant burden, particularly given that the land registry error relating to Woodup Pool was not caused by the Parish Council.

Morley Riches agreed to approach the Crown Estate to explore whether any negotiation on the legal fees is possible.

If the Crown Estate maintains its current position, the Parish Council could apply directly to the Land Registry to correct the error. However, this would be a lengthy process and would still require the Crown Estate's agreement.

Action: Clerk to diarise follow-up in one month to request an update from Morley Riches.

Action: Committee to review next steps once a response from Morley Riches has been received.

5.2 Unbudgeted Works/Services

The Chair reported that the Parish Council had committed to several works and services that were not included in the 2026/27 budget. The Committee reviewed each item and discussed potential funding sources.

It was agreed to recommend to Full Council that the following allocations be made:

- Green Space Games (GSGs) — £1,320 Cllr Chambers confirmed to the Clerk that day, the Hangout funds are available to cover 2 sessions of the GSGs. The remaining two sessions (£660) are to be funded from the EMR Community Support/Minor Projects.
- Repairs to Lock-Up Roof — £300 To be funded from the EMR Community Support/Minor Projects.
- Repairs to Lock-Up Hinges - To be considered further once the quotation has been received.
- Community Land Trust Grant — £500 To be funded from donations, which will clear this budget heading for the year.
- Cemetery Fencing, Pothole and Signage - £1,900 is available in the EMR Amenities. Quotations are being obtained; costs are likely to exceed available funds. To be reviewed once quotations are received.
- Potential Allotment Work (Water Issue) - To be reviewed once it is confirmed whether the issue persists after the ground dries. If the problem is identified as a spring, the Environment Agency will be contacted.
- Woodup Pool Transfer (legal fees) – If there is no alternative but to pay all or part of the legal fees to transfer Woodup Pool from the Crown Estate, the funds currently held in the EMR Toilet Project could be used. If these funds were used, they would be replenished in the 2027/28 budget.

6. Policies and Procedures

6.1 Standing Orders

There were no amendments to the Standing Orders V10.0.

6.2 Financial Regulations

The Committee agreed to the proposed changes to the Financial Regulations. The updated Financial Regulations V9.0 will be presented to the Full Council for adoption.

6.3 Reserves Policy

The Committee agreed to the proposed changes to the Reserves Policy. The updated Reserves Policy V3.0 will be presented to the Full Council for adoption.

6.4 Compliments, Feedback and Complaints Policy

The Committee agreed to the proposed changes to the Compliments, Feedback and Complaints Policy. The updated Compliments, Feedback and Complaints Policy V6.0 will be presented to the Full Council for adoption.

6.5 Social Media and Email Policy

The Committee agreed to the proposed changes to the Social Media and Email Policy. The updated Social Media and Email Policy V2.0 will be presented to the Full Council for adoption.

7. Publication of Minutes

Cllr Gilbert left the meeting table and sat with the public.

A suggestion was received from a resident asking whether the Parish Council could publish the draft minutes of Full Council meetings prior to the next meeting, so residents have earlier access to a fuller account of discussions. The resident noted that this already occurs for some Committee meetings.

The Clerk outlined the current process:

- Minutes of Full Council meetings are published on the website once approved at the following Full Council meeting. As the Council meets monthly, these are uploaded monthly.
- Committee minutes are published as Draft Minutes after they have been received by Full Council. This approach is used due to the longer intervals between Committee meetings.

The Committee considered the resident’s suggestion and agreed that, now that the Council meets monthly, the Clerk will publish the draft minutes of Full Council meetings as soon as feasible after each meeting. The process for Committee minutes will remain unchanged.

Cllr Gilbert returned to the meeting table.

8. Public Forum

The Clerk advised that there were no requests from residents to address the Parish Council.

9. Other Matters

Cllr Hawes reported that it had recently been noted that some Councillors are not responding to emails. The Committee acknowledged that Councillors receive a high volume of correspondence and agreed to explore ways to streamline the information circulated and to highlight emails that require a response.

10. Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on:
Monday 27th July 2026 at 7.00pm – Pavilion

The Chair closed the meeting at 8.42pm.

Signed:..... Date:.....