



PULBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

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**Minutes of the Finance and Governance Committee held at the United Reformed Church,
82 Lower Street, Pulborough, RH20 2DW on Monday 21st September 2026.**

Councillors present: Cllrs Lauren Bailey, Paul Clarke (Committee Chair), Jonathan Campbell (Committee Vice Chair), Sharon Curd (Chair of the Parish Council), Ruth Court, Andrada Labuschagne.

Officers: Oliver Last (Clerk)

Members of the Public: None

The Chair welcomed all present and read out the safety instructions.

FP001. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Sharon Curd.

FP002. Declarations of Interest and Changes to Register of Interests

Members noted the declarations of interest from Cllr Jonathan Campbell regarding agenda item FP0012 and Cllr Lauren Bailey regarding agenda item FP006.

FP003. Minutes

It was **resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on [Monday 15th June 2026](#)

FP004. Public Speaking

There were no public speakers.

FP005. Office EMR additional spend

The Clerk informed the committee of the current expenditure associated with the move into the new council office and meeting room. He explained that there had been unforeseen additional costs relating to the IT installation, and that further expenditure would be required to complete the new office.

Councillors discussed the additional expenditure required for the new office, including signage, mats, glassware, a hearing loop and IT installation.

It was **resolved** to approve the extra spend of £3,500 vired from the general reserves.

FP006. Allotment charges

Councillors discussed the report on allotment charges and noted the discrepancy between the charges previously agreed and those set out in the current report. It was agreed to approve the revised allotment charges for October 2026, together with the



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proposed increase in the water charge to £12.00 per plot, and to note the proposed increase for October 2027 in agreement with the associated report.

It was **resolved** to agree the additional costs for the water charges in 2026 and the increased charges for 2027.

FP007. Christmas trees

Councillors discussed the report on Christmas tree charges and the quote received for Festive Illuminations for the 2026 festive lighting in Lower Street, referencing the report submitted.

It was **resolved** to increase the charge per tree to £55.00 for 2026.

FP008. Tractor and Grass Cutting Contract

The Clerk updated the Committee on the condition of the mower/tractor and the implications for the grass cutting contract, explaining that the mower does not appear to be the correct equipment for what the council uses it for. Members noted that the tractor had required significant servicing and repair costs, with approximately £4,000 spent last year and just under £9,000 to spend this year. It was also noted that, taking into account the age and condition of the tractor, its approximate current value was around £10,000. The Committee considered the two grass cutting options: Option 1 – GreenServe supplies machinery at £12,960 + VAT, and Option 2 – using Parish Council machinery at £10,170 + VAT. After discussion, Members agreed that it was financially advantageous not to pay the current year's service cost and instead to transfer the tractor to the grass cutting company in its current condition, thereby retaining the reduced cost of Option 2 and the lower annual payment. Members noted that this would reduce the Council's liability in respect of the old equipment and avoid further expenditure on a machine of limited remaining value.

It was **resolved** to take the recommendation to Full Council to transfer the asset of the tractor to Greenserve and keep the reduced costs to the contract.

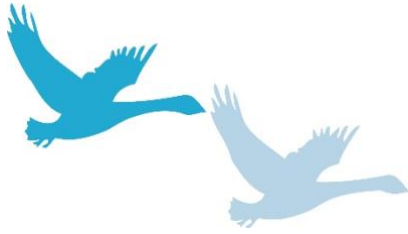
FP009. Bowls Club lease

The DRAFT lease was assessed and questions were raised about the annual charge. Questions were also asked about 20.4 and why there is such a strong control. It was asked that the Clerk go back to the solicitor and get clarification.

It was **resolved** that the lease be taken to the Bowls Club once the Clerk has confirmed the answer to point 20.4, and to add that any additional inter-club matches be included, subject to a request being made to the Council for approval of those additional matches.

FP0010. Draft Budget

The Committee considered the first draft of the budget and noted that the figures were based on a number of working assumptions, particularly around the pavilion project and



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the anticipated closure of the existing building from 1 April. Members discussed whether budgeted income targets, particularly from the MUGA, were realistic, and agreed that the current target was too high. It was suggested that the MUGA income budget be reduced to a more attainable figure, with further discussion to follow at the next meeting. Members also considered whether grants and donations should be increased, and it was agreed that the draft figure should be increased by £500 to £3,500 for further review. The Committee noted that staffing costs had been estimated with an average increase of 4%, that professional fees may increase due to the possible use of additional HR support, and that audit and legal fees had been adjusted to reflect expected costs. The pavilion-related budget assumptions were discussed, including reduced utility and maintenance costs once the existing building is closed, and the potential use of temporary welfare facilities or alternative arrangements. It was agreed that the budget would be reviewed again at the next meeting.

It was **resolved** that the first draft budget be noted and reviewed, and that the Clerk proceed with preparation of the next iteration of the budget for further consideration.

FP0011. Review new policies

Absent management policy

The Committee considered the Absence Management Policy and noted the clarification given by the Clerk regarding occupational sick pay, including that the provisions reflected the standard local government contractual arrangements. Members discussed the need for a formal sickness management process, including return-to-work meetings, monitoring of absence patterns, and the importance of having a consistent and structured approach rather than dealing with cases informally. It was agreed that the policy would provide the Council with a clearer framework for managing absence fairly and appropriately.

It was **resolved** to adopt the policy.

Staff Handbook

The Committee considered the Staff Handbook and supported the proposed updates, including clarification of the sickness management arrangements and the occupational sick pay provisions. Members noted that the handbook should reflect the current HMRC mileage rate, as amended from time to time, to allow flexibility if the rate changes in future. The Committee was satisfied that the handbook provided a clear framework for staff guidance and management, subject to the agreed amendments.

It was **resolved** to adopt the policy.

Social media Policy

The Committee considered the draft Social Media Policy and supported the proposed amendments. Members discussed the political neutrality section and agreed that reference should be made to the heightened sensitivity during election periods and the



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purdah period. It was also agreed that the policy should make clear that councillors' public comments on council matters may be subject to the Council's Code of Conduct and the Nolan Principles, without setting out each principle in full. The Committee was content with the inclusion of guidance on personal social media use and considered the policy fit for purpose subject to those minor amendments.

It was **resolved** to adopt the policy.

Tree Policy

Members considered the draft Tree Management Policy and suggested that it should be clearer on the circumstances in which the Council may act in relation to trees, particularly where there is a safety concern or where ownership is unclear. It was noted that if a tree has fallen and ownership cannot be readily established, the Clerk should make reasonable enquiries and, where necessary, arrange only temporary safeguarding measures pending clarification of responsibility.

Members agreed that the policy should specifically refer to tree work being carried out where trees are affecting power lines or cables, where there is an immediate or foreseeable safety risk, and where there is a fire risk. It was also agreed that the policy should clearly state the types of tree work the Council will not carry out, to avoid any misunderstanding and to ensure that unauthorised or unsafe work is not undertaken.

It was **resolved** to adopt the policy and take the policies to the next Full Council Meeting.

FP0012. Insurance update and view including Cyber cover

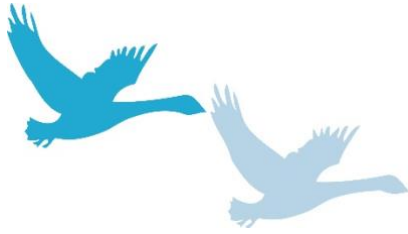
Following a review of the Council's insurance undertaken by the Chair, Clerk and Deputy Clerk, Members considered the changes made to the insurance cover and the revised premium. It was noted that the new annual cost would be £7,186.46, compared with the previous cost of £7,248.02. Members also considered whether to include cyber insurance cover and discussed the need for appropriate protection in light of the Council's use of digital systems and online communications.

It was **resolved** to approve the revised insurance premium of £7,186.46 and to authorise expenditure of up to £800 for cyber insurance cover.

FP0013. Staff 3.2% pay increase

Members considered the 3.2% pay award for staff and noted that the revised local government services pay agreement for 2025/26 reflects updated salary rates from 1 April 2026, with the pay spine increasing across the scales.

It was **resolved** to approve the 3.2% staff pay increase and to implement it in accordance with the Council's staffing arrangements and the national pay award.



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FP0014. Finance Reports

- i. Bank reconciliation
Members considered the bank reconciliation and noted that it had been completed and was in order.
- ii. General reserve and [Earmarked reserves](#)
Members considered the Council's general reserve and earmarked reserves and noted the current position.
- iii. [Investments](#)
Members considered the Council's investments and noted the current position.
- iv. Income and expenditure [summary](#)
Members considered the income and expenditure summary and noted the report.
- v. Receipts [and](#) Payments
Members considered the receipts and payments report and noted the information presented.
- vi. Budget monitoring [Quarter 2](#)
Members considered the Quarter 2 budget monitoring report and noted the Council's financial position against budget.
- vii. Payments for approval
There were no payments for approval.

There being no further business, 19:56.