

DRAFT MINUTES TO BE AGREED ON 18TH NOVEMBER 2025

Date: Tuesday 11th November 2025

Present: Mr P Drummond (Finance Chairman) (PD), Mr A Jackson (AJ),
Mr M Watson (MW)

Apologies: None

Non-attendance: Mr M Foster (MF)

In attendance: Mrs L Davies, Parish Council Clerk

Members of Public: None

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.30 pm.

1. Apologies for Absence:
No apologies were received.
2. Declaration of Members' Interests:
As a Harsfold Lane resident, MW declared his interest in any budget discussion relating to the resurfacing of the top section of Harsfold Lane.
3. Public Participation:
There were no members of public present.
4. Management & Financial Risk Assessment:
The 2025/2065 assessment had been circulated in advance of the meeting; the risks were reviewed. The Clerk advised that she had reviewed and updated it with the amendments highlighted. AJ proposed that item 36 be updated to include reference to Councillors. No further changes were proposed, the document remains current.

Proposal to Full Council:

- **That the Management & Financial Risk Assessment be adopted as tabled.**

5. Objectives:
The 5-year Plan up to 2029 was circulated in advance of the meeting and reviewed. It was a working document, and new objectives could be added when identified. The Clerk highlighted items that had been added following Council discussion in July and the completed items, struck through, would now be removed. As a result of the last Parish Council newsletter, one improvement suggestion was made relating to the access from Carters Way to The Luth. It was noted that the Parish Council had improved this access path in the past and it was agreed this should be added as a possible future project. The Clerk also advised that the Objectives had been identified following previous Neighbourhood Plan (NP) consultations and suggested that this be included at the February consultation as projects linked to Community Infrastructure Levy expenditure.

Proposal to Full Council:

- **That the Objectives Plan for up to 2030 be adopted by Full Council, with the completed items removed and with the one proposed addition.**
- **To request input from residents at the NP consultation in February.**
- **Objectives to be reviewed again after the NP consultation.**

6. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):

The CIL and S106 expenditure allocations, as agreed in January 2021, were reviewed; the expenditure to date and balances were considered. The Clerk highlighted that the use of CIL funding was restricted. Chichester District Council (CDC) had previously advised that there was some flexibility for longer term projects, such as the Pavilion. The 5-year spending time restriction was to encourage parishes to spend funding. The Section 106 balances were noted. The Clerk confirmed that she was progressing the Village Hall door project and highlighted that the allocation to the Pavilion would need to be claimed from CDC and spent by 25th February 2030.

Proposal to Full Council:

- **Vire the current unspent funds from the 2021 allocation to the playground project, as well as the balance from the 2025 allocation.**
- **Use the 2025 allocation for the remaining 2021 projects.**
- **Full Council discussion after the NP consultation when further projects may have been identified.**

7. 2025/2026 Budget:

The budget and projected year-end position had been circulated in advance of the meeting and was also displayed. Individual budget headings were discussed, and the Clerk gave explanation to the items and anticipated income and expenditure for the remainder of the year; in some instances, the full budget had been included but small savings were anticipated. The Clerk highlighted that the NP costs would increase due to the need to fund a Strategic Environmental Assessment, approximately £4,500.00, and a Habitats Regulations Assessment at similar cost.

Proposal to Full Council:

- **Allotment rents: With water costs increasing, future rents to be considered by Full Council.**
- **New Website: To complete Assertion 10 on the next Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) it was necessary for the website to be updated. With underspends anticipated in the current budget, it was agreed that this update should be progressed; the General Reserve could also be used if necessary. Full details to be presented to the Council.**
- **New Accounts Software: Budget provision had been made but the Clerk had been unable to progress due to time. She was also concerned about the ongoing monthly charge for a small council. Information had recently been received from another provider which she would investigate. Even with the unbudgeted website cost, the Parish Council had a reserve to progress.**
- **Neighbourhood Plan: The grant funding through Locality was no longer available and as such it was necessary for the Council to fund the process. A reserve of £4,500 had been created but additional expenditure had been identified. An overspend on budget was anticipated.**
- **After year-end, final accounts to be reviewed and transfers made to the General and other reserves to balance the budget.**

8. 2026/2027 Budget:

A draft budget had been prepared and reviewed by the Clerk and Chairman. It was circulated in advance of the meeting and displayed. Additional information had been provided in supporting spreadsheets providing a breakdown for budget figures requiring more detailed calculation. Budget

figures had been included in line with the current year and, at this stage, percentage increases applied, however the Clerk would obtain fixed quotations for the toilet cleaning and grass cutting. The budget headings were reviewed: the Clerk's salary had been increased to reflect a national increase; the Clerk was asked to increase website fees to allow for the old email system to divert to new emails in the interim and to include IT support; legal and professional fees to be increased to retain a reserve for unanticipated expenditure.

Proposal to Full Council:

- **That the budget, as tabled and adjusted above, should be presented to the Parish Council on 18th November 2025 for further consideration.**
- **It was noted that the Clerk would need to use her time to progress the Neighbourhood Plan and as such, only the playground surface project to be progressed next year which would be funded by CIL.**
- **Precept to be confirmed at the January meeting when the taxbase was known and fixed costs for grass cutting and public toilets cleaning received.**

9. Bank and Investment Accounts:

It was noted that the Council's investment strategy was working well and that accrued interest was significant. The Clerk highlighted that the recent CIL receipt meant that all accounts were now at or slightly above the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) limit of £85,000. Options were discussed, to be agreed by Full Council:

- **Option 1: Invest in the CCLA Investment Management Public Sector Deposit Fund. It was a low volatility net asset value money market fund and was used by many Parish Councils but was not covered by FSCS.**
OR
Option 2: Increase balances in the existing accounts which would not be covered by FSCS.
- **The Cambridge and Counties Bond that matured in January 2026 to be reinvested in a further Bond, currently being advertised at 4.20%.**

10. Date of Next Meeting:

Full Parish Council Meeting on Tuesday 18th November 2025 at 7.45 pm.

11. Clerk's Annual Appraisal and Salary Review

The Clerk confirmed that she was happy in her work and that having monitored her hours over several years, 24 hours per week was still appropriate. Members expressed their appreciation. Members noted that the Clerk's salary had been set on SCP 32 and that this was increased by national awards. The National Pay Award, backdated to 1st April 2025, and potential increase for next year, were noted and accepted within the budget.

The Clerk was enrolled in NEST rather than the Local Government Pension Scheme, which had a significantly higher employer's contribution. The Parish Council was currently paying 3%. In agreement with the Clerk, rather than increase the Clerk's hourly rate, **it was proposed that budget provision should be made to increase this to 10% from April 2026. Members felt that this should have been reviewed previously. To be agreed by Full Council.**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.13 pm.

Signed by the Chairman: Date: