

CHEPPING WYCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Finance and General Purposes Committee

TUESDAY 17 JANUARY 2012

The meeting which is open to the press and public will commence at 7.30pm in the Council Chamber, Cock Lane, Tylers Green, High Wycombe, Bucks HP10 8DS

Members of the Committee are summoned to attend the meeting:

I Forbes Chairman (TG)	D Johncock (FH)
J Gurney Vice-Chairman (L)	M Wilkes (FH)
C Dodds (L)	L Willis (L)
S Herron (TG)	Ms K Wood (TG)
J Herschel (FH)	

AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for absence.**
- 2. Declarations of members' interests in agenda items**
- 3. Grants, subscriptions and donations**
- 4. Calendar of meetings**
- 5. Revision of fees, charges and allowances**
- 6. Investment of general and ear-marked reserves**
- 7. Audits: in-house and internal**
- 8. Precept setting**
- 9. Report on committee expenditures**
- 10. Accounts for payment**
- 11. Confidential items – exclusion of public and press**
 - Discussion on 2012 salaries**
 - Grounds team staffing levels**

Jeff Herschel
Clerk and Proper Officer (pro-tem)
10 January 2012

GRANTS, SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS

Application for grants

Christ Church, Flackwell Heath: Request for a grant – CONSIDERATION

A copy of the letter of application for help towards the replacement of 30 folding chairs for the church's community hall at a cost of £1,548 (£43+VAT each) is attached.

Members are asked to consider the request for a grant towards the cost and to make any recommendation to the Council meeting on 24 January 2012.

Penn & Tylers Green Cricket Club – CONSIDERATION

A copy is attached of the email recently received by the council asking for a grant to help fund the refurbishment of the old cricket pavilion. The total cost of the works is estimated at £1,500 and they are asking for a grant of £500. The club pavilion and playing pitches are in the parish of Penn, but the club draws its membership from a wider area, including Tylers Green and Hazlemere.

Members are asked to consider the request for a grant towards the cost and to make any recommendation to the Council meeting on 24 January 2012.

Penn & Tylers Green Queen's Diamond Jubilee Committee - CONSIDERATION

A copy of the letter from Adrian Cooper on behalf of the committee is attached asking for a grant or a loan of £1,000 to help offset the costs of the events planned on The Common during the period 2-5 June 2012.

Members are asked to consider the request for a grant towards the cost and to make any recommendation to the Council meeting on 24 January 2012.

Flackwell Heath Cherry Fair Committee - TO NOTE

The organising committee have written to the council thanking them for the offer a loan to provide working capital for the 2012 Queen's Diamond Jubilee Fair, but advise that they have through a combination of personal loans and pre-selling some space been able to secure the necessary funding previously asked for as a loan from the council.

AGENDA ITEM 4

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

Proposed Calendar of Meetings 2012/13 - CONSIDERATION

The proposed calendar of meeting for 2012/2013 endeavours to provide a meeting of the council or one of its standing committees about every two weeks.

The calendar recognises the need to allow time between meetings for the clerk to:

- complete minutes from one meeting and prepare the agenda for a following meeting
- the precept setting process which requires we advise WDC of the amount no later than the end of January
- the requirement to sign-off the Council's audit no later than the end of June
- the requirement for the Council to organise an Annual Parish meeting between 1 March and 1 June
- The requirement for an Annual Council meeting in early May

The dates are listed up to the last council meeting of the council year, Tuesday 16 April 2013.

Members are asked to consider the attached list of proposed calendar meetings for the forthcoming council year (2012/13) attached.

AGENDA ITEM 5

REVISION OF FEES, CHARGES AND ALLOWANCES 2012/13

Proposal for the 2012/13 financial year - CONSIDERATION:

The Council has traditionally considered increases to fees, charges and allowances in the light of charges being made by other local councils and the September Retail Prices Index (RPI) figures. The RPI figure in 2011 was 5.6%. We have used 5% as the base, with some rounding up and down.

The items for consideration are set out in the attached appendices and would come into effect on 1 April, except for allotments which would come into effect in October 2012 at the start of the 2012/13 Tenancy Agreements.

Members are asked to consider fees, charges and allowances for the forthcoming year (2012/13) and to make any recommendations, as appropriate, for consideration by Council on Tuesday 24 January 2012.

AGENDA ITEM 6

INVESTMENT OF BALANCES

Fixed investment of General and Ear-marked Reserves - CONSIDERATION

Through its bankers Barclay's the Council has in the past kept most of its reserves invested in Government Bonds, rolling them over on a monthly basis once sufficient funds had been transferred to the council's current account to meet anticipated expenditures. However since the general fall in interest rates this practice has lapsed and our reserves have been left in the council's Savers Account at Barclays, earning just 0.05%. We have now arranged for these balances to be kept in an Active Savers Account at Barclays, earning 0.375% which offers identical terms in respect of ease of access.

Following a new review of alternative opportunities to earn a better rate of interest the chairman and vice-chairman of the committee have considered the Guaranteed Investment Account offered by the Co-operative Bank. This offers tiered rates of interest depending upon the deposit period, from 1 month to 12 months:

Current interest rates are:

1 month	0.84%
3 months	1.59%
6 months	1.65%
12 months	2.21%

It is anticipated that this initiative will provide an income of at least £2,500 pa compared to an income of £203 in the past year.

Consideration and approval is sought from the committee for the council to invest part of the General and Ear-marked Reserves for periods of up to 12 months with the Co-

operative Bank through a recommendation by the clerk to the chairman and vice-chairman of the committee.

AGENDA ITEM 7

AUDITS: IN-HOUSE and INTERNAL

TO NOTE: The council's own in-house audit team of Mike Wilkes and Les Willis have with minimum notice recently undertaken an audit of some of the council's accounts and procedures. The committee is asked to receive a verbal report of their findings and recommendations.

The clerk has been in touch with the council-appointed, but independent, outside auditor and asked that he undertake the planned interim-audit of the council's accounts and procedures at the earliest opportunity. The support and advice the auditor can provide will provide members and our residents with re-assurance that in spite of the current situation the council is operating in an appropriate way; or that we are able to immediately put in place alternative procedures that satisfy the Audit Commission's accounting and governance guidelines for town and parish councils.

AGENDA ITEM 8

PRECEPT SETTING

2012/13 Budget - CONSIDERATION

This year the council is required to advise the district council no later than 28 January of our demand for the 2012/13 precept.

Attached are copies of the draft budgets considered by each of the three service committees, together with a proposal for the F&GP committee to consider. Some small amendments to the budgets may be made to take into account planned projects and any changes to costs (insurances, rates, etc.) before they are re-presented at the next meeting of the committee on Tuesday 27 March 2012.

The proposed Budget figures for 2012/131 for Finance and General Purposes Committee include

Contingency	2,000
Grants and donations	2,500

Legal fees	5,000
Audit fees	1,600
Insurances for all assets	9,500

As set out in the report, if there is a zero percent increase in precept the budgeted expenditure is £13,796 over budgeted income. The proposed budget includes the exceptional items as shown on the budget analysis sheet.

A 1% precept increase equates to about £3,300: **so that as things stand and before consideration of the draft budgets**, to balance the budget the precept would need to increase by about 4.1%.

Against this background the committee is asked to consider the overall council position and make recommendations for the precept to the Tuesday 24 January 2012 Council meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 9

REPORT ON COMMITTEE EXPENDITURES

Committee finance reports to end November 2011 – TO NOTE

Attached is a consolidated report for all the council's committees and the ear-marked reserves.

AGENDA ITEM 10

ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

The accounts for payment are to be circulated at the meeting for the approval of members. Members are reminded to declare any personal or personal and prejudicial interests in any items submitted for payment.

Confidential items – exclusion of public and press

In view of the confidential nature of the business to be considered it is **RECOMMENDED** that that the committee resolve to exclude the public and press from the remainder of the meeting as permitted under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960

AGENDA ITEM 11

Salaries 2012 and Grounds Team Staffing levels

Open discussion led by the chairman of the committee prior to consideration of both topics by the Council on Tuesday 24 January 2012