

CHEPPING WYCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL
FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

AGENDA

TUESDAY 21 JUNE 2011

The meeting will commence at 7.30 pm at the Council Office, Cock Lane, Tylers Green, High Wycombe, Bucks.

Members: -

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

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- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** At the time of the agenda despatch, no apologies for absence have been received.
- 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** To receive any declarations of interest by Members pertaining to Agenda Items.
- 3. SUB-COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS** (page 2)
- 4. AUDIT REPORTS** (page 3)
- 5. COUNCIL REGULATIONS AND POLICIES** (page 4)
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SUB-COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

Appointment of Representatives

At the Annual Council Meeting on 10 May 2011, it was agreed that all Sub-Committee and Working Party appointments be referred to the first Committee Meeting of the Council Year.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee has the following current Sub-Committee and Working Party memberships:

- Publicity Sub-Committee - Previously five Members –

J Herschel
I Forbes
Ms K Wood
L Willis
D Johncock

- Staff Review Panel (Previously comprising of the Council and Committee Chairmen – or the Vice-Chairmen in their absence); and
- Regulations and Policies Working Group (Previously four Members

I Forbes (Chairman)
J Herschel
D Johncock
J Eadon-Smith

Members are asked to consider the appointment of representatives on the above Sub-Committee and Panel and the formulation, if necessary, of any new Sub-Committees or Working Groups.

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AUDIT REPORTS

Audit Background Information - CONSIDERATION

(a) 'In House' Audit

At the Council meeting on 10 May 2011, M Wilkes and L Willis were appointed the Council's 'In House' Auditors.

When convenient, these Members are kindly asked to liaise and agree two suitable dates to conduct the Council's In House Audit during the course of the new Financial and Council Year 2011/12.

The Committee will be notified of the outcome of each In House Audit with any recommended actions being referred, as appropriate.

(b) Internal Audit

The next Internal Audit is scheduled to take place on 14 June 2011, following Close Down of Accounts and in preparation for the submission of Annual Return.

Members are asked to note that consideration of the Internal Audit Report is scheduled to take place at the next Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting on 20 October 2011.

A verbal update report will be available at this meeting in terms of any urgent actions required.

The completed Annual Return and Financial Statement for the Year ending 31 March 2011 must be completed at the Council meeting on 30 June 2011 together with the receipt of all other relevant documentation.

(c) External Audit

The External Auditors are appointed for the Council by the Audit Commission and for 2011/12 will be Mazars. ????

The statutory deadline by which the Council must approve the Annual Return is 30 June 2011.

Members are asked to consider the contents of the report and to make any recommendations, as appropriate, to the next Council.

Members are asked to:

- (b) consider the reappointment of Auditing Solutions Ltd as the Council's Internal Auditors for 2011/12.;**

AGENDA ITEM 5

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COUNCIL REGULATIONS AND POLICIES

Review of Financial Regulations

This committee has been tasked with reviewing the council's financial regulations in the light of any changes required or suggested by our national guidelines.

Copies of the current regulations are attached.

The committee is asked to make definitive proposals for the tabling of a revised set for the next F&GP meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 6

ALLOWANCES AND EXPENSES

Members Expenses and Allowances – To Note

The Council has a duty to declare all expenses and allowances claimed by Members during the course of any year. This is normally done by way of publication on the Council's notice boards and web site together with a record in the Clerk's Annual Report for Year End which is appended to the Minutes of the relevant Council Meeting.

The intention is for the Council to do all that it can to ensure that it fully adheres to the relevant Regulations and acts both transparently and openly in all its dealings. All payments during the course of a year to individual Members are approved by at least two other Members, normally (but not always) at Committee or Council meetings. These approved transactions are available for public inspection and form part of the Council's audited set of accounts.

The level of Allowances and any variation to Expenses are usually determined by the October Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Mileage Rate – To Note

It is recommended that the Council's mileage rate be kept in line with the HMRC rate (currently 45p per mile) for all cc types for both Members and Staff.

AGENDA ITEM 7

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The Council adopted a formal Grants Policy in 2008, copies of which now form part of the Financial Regulations and Standing Orders.

GRANTS, SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS

Grants Background - INFORMATION

Members will note that the Budgeted vote for grants for 2011/12 is £2,500.

No grants have yet been awarded for this year.

Annual Donations and Subscriptions 2011/12 - CONSIDERATION

The following payments were made in 2008/09 and 2009/10. In previous years the donations have been increased in line with inflation. The amounts for 2009/10 have been increased by 0%.

Annual Donations

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
	£	£	£
Action4youth	74.00	76.00	76.00
Ramblers Association	27.00	0*	N/A
Citizen Advice Bureau	68.00	70.00	70.00
Wycombe wildlife trust	54.00	56.00	56.00
	304.00	286.00	286.00

Subscriptions

The repeat Subscriptions already obtained for 2011/12 are:

Organisation	£
BALC/NALC Membership	1,743.60
SLCC Membership	256.00
Chiltern Society	25.00
M40 Chiltern Environmental Group	200.00
NAG (new item)	250.00

In 2009/10 Subscriptions for the other repeat organisations were:

Organisation	£
WDALC	6.00
Fields in Trust (National playing fields)	25.00
Bucks Playing Field Ass due Feb	20.00
ROSPA due Nov	91.00

Members are asked to consider the donations for 2011/12 and advise accordingly, the subscriptions will be submitted for payment as and when they are received.

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NALC CONFERENCE

2011 NALC Conference – CONSIDERATION

NALC has a programme of conferences this summer

Delivering more for local people

Wednesday 15 June, The Grand Thistle - Bristol

Tuesday 19 July, St Paul's Mercure – Sheffield

Thursday 22 September, Holiday Inn Camden Lock - London.

A copy of the Conference draft programme is attached for information (**APPENDIX D**).

Attendance at the Conference is, of course, not restricted to Finance and General Purposes Committee Members, but is open to the Council as a whole.

It is also suggested that Members who will not be attending the Conference consider any questions that might be asked or advice sought from other delegates or representative groups (including NALC) at the event.

In previous years, useful legal and financial questions have been answered, e.g. on the status of Tylers Green Common, the requirement of Play Equipment inspections or with regard to the amount of General Reserve kept by the Council.

The NALC website has stated:

- Do you want your local (parish or town) council to deliver effective services in response to local needs and aspirations
- Do you want to improve how your community or local council influences and helps shape service delivery in your area?
- Do you want to find out what the new era of localism and Big Society means to very local government?

By using existing and forthcoming new strengthened powers, communities and local councils can get in the driving seat to make places better. Find out more at the Communities in Action Conference.

Against this background, Members are asked to consider representation at the 2011 NALC event: ‘Communities in Action Conference.

AGENDA ITEM 9

LAND REGISTRATION

Land Registration Update – To Note

The Council's Solicitors, Benhams, have commenced work on the comprehensive Land Registration of all Council owned land.

The Clerk and Chair of the Council will give a verbal update for the benefit of new members.

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STAFF TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The council is able to set its own terms and conditions of employment, provided they meet statutory requirements.

Our terms of employment are consistent with statute, but there are areas where we need to ensure that optional terms are acceptable to current practice and can be justified to residents, the ultimate employers of our staff.

At one time terms of employment in the public service, particularly in respect of wages, were significantly lower than those in private industry. This was compensated for in better sickness payment, holiday entitlement and in the universal provision of final-salary pension schemes.

However times change and there is rightly or wrongly a perception that employees currently enjoy higher salaries than those in private industry, better holiday provision than the average, sickness schemes that provide few disincentives to attend work and gold-plated pension schemes no longer available to most employees in private industry.

The council has recently appointed staff at salaries that are competitive in the market place.

We have also re-set holiday entitlements for new employees at 28 days a year, including public holidays (a benefit that was unclear in our previous term of employment). Question: should we offer new employees additional days after a period of service...say an extra day after 5 years service, increasing annually until they reach an additional 5 days of holiday after 10 years service?

Sickness benefit....while wishing to protect staff from the consequences of serious illness should we continue to offer pay for the first three days of absence from work? This might discourage the taking of occasional days?

And pensions...we have for new employees moved away from automatic enrolment in the Bucks Local Government Pension scheme with its current premium of 22.1% of salary and threats of future significantly higher rates.

AGENDA ITEM 11

CHEPPING WYCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE - 21 JUNE 2011

FINANCE REPORT

Summary of 2010/11 Position – INFORMATION

The Close Down of 2010/11 Accounts took place on 25th May 2011. A copy of the Summary Income and Expenditure by Budget Heading for 31 March 2011 is attached (**APPENDIX F**). A copy of the Reserves Sheet is also attached (**APPENDIX G**).

The overall result is as follows:

Total Income: £370,183

Total Expenditure: £338,921

General Reserve Level: £92,263 to £78,471

Total Reserve Level: £237,050 to £268,313

The level of the General Reserve is overstated as not all of the planned transfers at year end took place.

The committee is asked to note that

- The General Reserve was used as a source of funding for the ride on mower in 2009/10 and this mistake has been corrected as the reserve was below our target range.
- Last Years planned transfers will take place as soon as is practicable
- Transfers to the EMR to also take place for any incomplete projects due in 2010/11 that will definitely proceed
- A revised General Reserve Level will then be reported
- A further review of cost codes will take place with the new Clerk
- Forecasting to be improved with the new Clerk
- Accruals reporting to be improved with a simple order book for all orders over £500 (suggested value)

Data Protection Items of Expenditure – CONSIDERATION

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Works, Services and Planning Committee have agreed (together with the Clerk) for two external hard drives to be purchased to back up all Council data with off site storage of this compatible with Data Protection requirements.

Further research is required to investigate the costs of a fire safe for documentation. The Cemetery Records are currently 80cm x 50cm x 50cm. Consideration should also be given to Minute archives and original title Deeds, Leases and other legal paperwork.

The Committee is also asked to consider the possibility of obtaining quotes to digitally store all of the above information by way of professional scanning.

Members are asked to consider any actions required to ensure that the Council continues to meet its objectives of securing its data.

Income and Expenditure – INFORMATION

Members will find attached a copy of the Detailed Income and Expenditure Report for the Committee (**APPENDIX H**).

Members are asked to note the contents of the reports and to be updated by the Clerk, as appropriate.

Where questions arise on the Committee's finances, it is extremely helpful if these can be put to the Office at least two days before the date of the Committee meeting in order to allow any research using the Finance Package or external advice to be obtained.

Exceptional Item Expenditure Review – CONSIDERATION

Members are asked to receive an update report on progress in carrying out works agreed by the Council in its 2010/11 Budget as Exceptional Expenditure within the Budget for the year ahead (to be considered on a Committee basis):

Amenity Land

Benches and signs	1,000
Railway land tree surgery	1,000
TG Common management	2,000
	4,000

Leisure Facilities

Benches and signs	2,000
Play area Bark	1,500
Play Equipment Reserve	3,000
	6,500

Works, Services and Planning

Depot Door & Roof	5,000
Altona Cem Rd Extension	3,000
Cock Lane Cem Extension	5,000
Benches, signs, gates	4,000
Street Light replacement	7,000
Partnership Working	4,000
Vehicle/Plant/Equipment Reserve	14,145
	42,145

Finance and General Purposes

Contingency	2,000
Grants	2,500
Legal Fees	3,000
Fire Proof Safe	2,000
Off Site Server	2,000
	11,500

Members are asked to consider any recommendations to vary exceptional item expenditure.

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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.

Members of the Press and Public are asked to be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of any Confidential Payments, such as payments to members of the Council Staff.

AGENDA ITEM 13

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Confidential Reports and Exclusion of Press and Public - CONSIDERATION

The following item is considered as a Confidential Report as it concerns staffing matters:

14. STAFF APPRAISAL PROTOCOL AND PROCEDURE

The Power to exclude the Press and Public from the meeting and to treat the reports presented as confidential is provided under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and the Local Government Act 1972, s.100 and s.102 and includes the following type of business:

- (a) engagement, terms of service, conduct and dismissal of employees;
- (b) terms of tenders, and proposals and counter-proposals in negotiations for contracts;
- (c) preparation of cases in legal proceedings; and
- (d) the early stages of any dispute.

In view of the confidential reports it is RECOMMENDED that the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting