

Minutes of a meeting of
Finance & General Purposes Committee
Held on Wednesday 10th December 2025
At School Green Centre commencing at 19.30

Present: Cllrs Boyer, James (Chair), Johnson, Matic, Montgomery & Peer

Attending: B Winton (Clerk), J Mason (Finance Manager)

25/FGP/67

Public Questions

67.1 There were no public questions.

25/FGP/68

Apologies and declarations of Members' Interest

68.1 There were apologies from Cllr Masseron for this meeting.

68.2 There were no declarations of members' interests.

25/FGP/69

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

69.1 The minutes of the committee meeting of 15th October 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed by Cllr James as Chairman of the Committee

Proposed: Cllr Peer
Seconded: Cllr Johnson
Approved: Unanimously

69.2

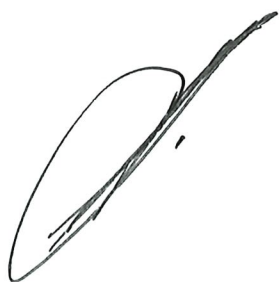
Actions and Matters Arising

25/FGP/45.1

Clerk to arrange a follow up meeting with WBC Finance Officers regarding S106 Funds

This had not yet been arranged

ACTION – Clerk to arrange a follow up meeting with WBC Finance Officers regarding S106 Funds



25/FGP/55.1 Clerk to amend the Risk Register to incorporate the additional risk items arising from running the café in-house

This had not yet been done.

25/FGP/57.3 Clerk to progress the list of major repair items with the Facilities Manager

The Facilities Manager was continuing to work on the Long-Term Maintenance Plan. The intention was to take the draft plan into consideration while setting the budget for 2026/27 and beyond.

25/FGP/57.4 Clerk to add the release of funds to remove sheds from Millworth Lane to the agenda for Full Council

This had been done

25/FGP/57.5 Clerk to add the release of funds in support of Ryeish Green Working Party to the agenda for Full Council

This had been done

25/FGP/59.3 Clerk to offer budget training/refresher to members who request it.

This had been done.

25/FGP/61.1.2 Clerk to follow up playing fields/orchards leases with SPC's solicitor

The Clerk advised that Wokingham Borough Council were now moving on this matter.

25/FGP/61.1.6 Clerk to follow up on Assets of Community Value

See 75.1.6 below

25/FGP/63.1 Clerk to add Grants to agenda for Full Council meeting on 22nd October

This had been done.

25/FGP/63.2 Clerk to add St Barnabas capital grant request to agenda for Full Council meeting on 22nd October

This had been done.

25/FGP/65.1 Clerk to follow up options for Microgeneration advice

This was on the agenda.

25/FGP/70

Corporate Risk Register

- 70.1 The Clerk advised that he had not yet included a reference to the café in the Council's Risk Register. He had no other proposed changes to the Risk Register.

ACTION – Clerk to amend the Risk Register to include reference to the Cafe

25/FGP/71

Financial Reports

- 71.1 Bank Reconciliations

The Chair of the Committee confirmed that he had reviewed the bank reconciliations as at the end of November 2025 on 8th December 2025 and that all was in order. A copy of the signed reconciliation was presented to members.

Members **NOTED** the report.

- 71.2 Current Year Financial Performance (2025/2026)

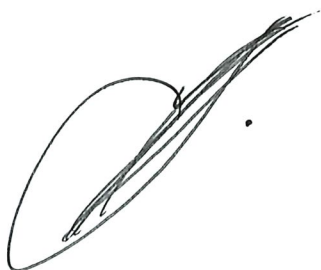
The Chair provided an update on the position for the current financial year. Excluding the café the forecast of outturn was now £31.8k adverse compared to a budgeted figure of £24.6k adverse. The position was therefore £6.7k worse than originally expected when approving the budget in January 2025.

The most significant variances were:

- Interest received from bank accounts was forecast to be £26.0k better than anticipated
- Additional payroll costs approved earlier in the Financial Year (£15.0k)
- Pitch maintenance at Manor Ground (£17.5k) and
- Lower income for High Copse due to delayed access to the pitches (£12.0k).

The café was however expected to result in an additional adverse outturn of £26.0k which was a result of one-off costs (e.g. buying equipment), frontloading of costs such as buying uniforms, consumables etc). In comparison the budget was anticipating a surplus from the café of £14.5k for 2026/27 (compared to the rental contribution of £8.0 that would have come from the previous caterer).

Members **NOTED** the report.



72.1 CIL update

The Chair and Clerk took members through the current position on CIL. The balance of CIL (Including known future receipts) not allocated to any specific project was £599.4k

Members **NOTED** the report.

72.2 Update on reserves

The Chair provided an update on reserves as at 30th November 2025. The General Reserve was currently £471.6k.

The specific election reserve of £8.0k would be emptied following the elections being held the following day and would need to be reinstated, and increased, in anticipation of parish-wide elections in 2027.

The Planning Reserve of £25.0k was expected to be at zero following a response to the Loddon Garden Village proposal and again would need to be rebuilt during the budget cycle.

Members **NOTED** the report.

72.3 Major Repairs Reserve

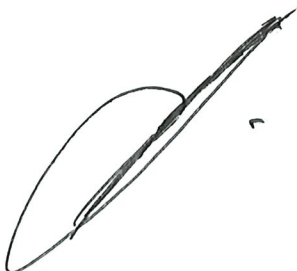
The Clerk advised that Facilities Manager had been asked to expedite the preparation of the Long-Term Maintenance Plan.

ACTION – Clerk progress the list of major repair items with the Facilities Manager

72.4 The Chair of the Council has traditionally been a signatory for Churches, Charities and Local Authorities (CCLA) investments

Members agreed Cllr Boyer becoming a signatory to this account to replace Andrew Grimes.

ACTION – Finance Manager to arrange for Cllr Boyer to become a signatory to CCLA

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72.5 Football Foundation grant application

The Chair of the Facilities Committee advised that it was intended to apply for grant funding (available up to £25,000) from the Football Foundation towards the cost of installing fencing to protect the playing surface at High Copse Pavilion.

Members **NOTED** the report.

ACTION – Clerk to make the application to the Football Foundation for a grant for fencing at High Copse

72.6 Repositioning of Recycling Bins at School Green

Members agreed to a request from the Facilities Committee to release funds from the CIL allocated to projects to improve the visual appearance of School Green (£10.0k from a remaining balance of £21.7k).

Proposed: Cllr Johnson
Seconded: Cllr Peer
Approved: Unanimously

ACTION – Clerk to proceed with relocation of recycling bins at School Green in conjunction with WBC

72.7 Appointing consultants to assist in responding to Planning Application 252498 (Loddon Garden Village)

ET Planning had confirmed they were available to assist on this with no conflict of interest. The indicative budget would be £20.0k (taken from the Planning Reserve) for a full response including making the case for S106 works that would reduce impacts for residents e.g. improvement to the Black Boy roundabout).

In addition £5.0k would be required for traffic consultancy support.

Proposed: Cllr Boyer
Seconded: Cllr Peer
Approved: Unanimously

ACTION – Clerk to arrange to proceed with both consultants to prepare a response to PA 252498



25/FGP/73

Corporate Governance Working Party

- 73.1 The Clerk advised that the Working Party had now considered the Financial Regulations in full. They would now refine the work into a formal proposal to the Committee for the next meeting including noting any significant variations from the existing Financial Regulations. If approved these would go forward to Full Council for Ratification.

ACTION – Clerk to arrange proposed new Financial Regulations to be on the agenda for next F&GP meeting

25/FGP/74

Budget Planning

- 74.1 Long-term Staffing Plan

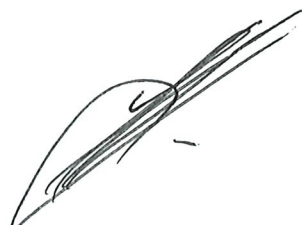
The Clerk advised that he and his management team had been developing proposals for the long-term staffing structure. Previous increases had “tweaked” existing structures and worked around existing staff whereas the newly developed structure considered what was required for the future needs of the council. Proposals included:

- Modifying the Customer Care Team between those that could deal with bookings while have a “Caretaking” team in the evenings where the emphasis was on setting up rooms etc. This would also enable additional Friday/Saturday support at School Green Centre and weekend cover for High Copse (the role would also include cleaning reducing the need for contract cleaners)
- Creation of a Finance & Admin Officer (with a view to succession planning for the Finance Manager)
- Creation of a Community Engagement & Events role (all one post). The former element would enhance the council’s engagement with residents while the second element (being able to deliver events) would free up time for the Clerk
- Teenage Youth Workers role. This would be aimed at older school children with an intended outcome being the reduction of ASB. The proposal was for 1 Full Time Equivalent split evenly between two people

It was agreed that the proposals should be included in the draft budgets as follows:

- Introducing Caretaking roles from April 2026
- Introducing the Finance & Admin and Community Engagement & Events roles from October 2026.
- Start one of the Teenage Youth Workers in October 2026 and the other from April 2027

The formal staffing recommendations will go to Staffing Committee in January 2026.



74.2 Provisional budget for 2026/27

The provisional budget currently stood at £40.7k Adverse compared to a projection in January 2025 of £1.9k Favourable.

This included the phased impact of addition staffing as set out above.

There was a discussion on the proposed increase precept. Traditionally the council has attempted to restrict the increase in Band D equivalent properties to no more than 5% (including when inflation was almost double that rate). It was proposed that 7% should be considered for the 2026/27 to help cover the additional staffing. The majority of members agreed with this although there was one dissenting member.

New IT software would need to be considered before the budget finalised as there was an opportunity to overhaul the software used by the council to improve workflows and reduce workloads. This would include the use of AI. Budget provision would need to be made for any new software acquired. Cllr James proposed a working party with Cllrs Boyer and Johnson to discuss further.

ACTION – Clerk to arrange IT Working Party Meeting

The potential impact of reduced Precept if Ryehill Way properties moved to become part of Earley Town Council as part of the WBC Corporate Governance Review (approximately £10.0k) would need to be included into the budget cycle.

The Clerk and Finance Manager would continue to refine the detailed budget figures in time for submission to Full Council in January.

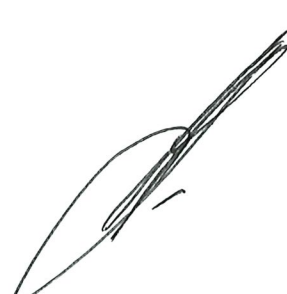
74.3 Band D Equivalent Properties

There had been no notification from WBC with regards to additional Band D properties to be considered in the budget proposals (these had not been notified to SPC until 19th December in 2024). The provisional budget therefore included an estimate of 50.0 new Band D equivalents until such time as the correct figure is notified by WBC.

74.4 Financial Projections for 2027/28, 2028/29 and 2029/30

Based on the assumptions made for 2026/27 budget, members also considered the provisional projections for the following three financial years.

Members **NOTED** the report.



74.5 WBC Budget proposals

The Clerk indicated a number of WBC budget proposals which may have a financial impact on Shinfield Parish Council if implemented. These included:

- Charging for School Green car park
- Reducing the number of cuts of grass (to 2 p.a.) and rights of way (1 p.a.)
- Removing WBC bins where there is duplication with bins provided by town and parish councils

Members **NOTED** the report.

25/FGP/75

Land Issues

75.1 The Clerk provide an update as follows:

75.1.1 – **Land Registrations.** There were no updates on the Land Registrations

75.1.2 – **Leases for Ryeish Playing Fields and Deardon Way Fields.** WBC solicitors were now in touch with SPC solicitor, and the matter was moving again, albeit slowly.

ACTION – Clerk to follow up with SPC's solicitor regarding reciprocal leases

75.1.3 – **Community Space in the North.** This would be covered by Item 12.1 on the agenda relating to St Barnabas Church grant application.

75.1.4 – **Ryeish Green Pavilion Working Party.** This was still on track to present proposals to the committee for the February 2026 meeting.

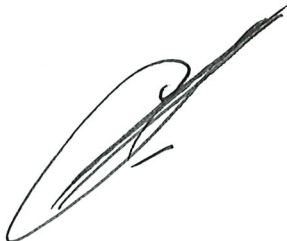
75.1.5 – **Extinguishing of Parish Hall Lease.** There was no update on this matter.

ACTION – Clerk to follow up with SPC's solicitor the extinguishing of the Parish Hall Lease

75.1.6 – **Assets of Community Value.** The Clerk has yet to progress Assets of Community Value

ACTION – Clerk to follow up on Assets of Community Value

75.1.7 – **Fitness Centre element at Millworth Lane.** The planning approval for this work requires an archaeological investigation of the site which is scheduled to take place in March 2026 after which the build could start.



25/FGP/76

Live Project Teams

76.1 The Clerk provided an updated list of the live project teams.

Members **NOTED** the report.

ACTION – Clerk to bring forward rationalisation of Working Parties to next meeting

25/FGP/77

Grants

77.1 Members received a report from Cllr Montgomery of a follow up visit to St Barnabas on 4th December with the Clerk. The project remained on track and represented a significant increase in potential community activity at the church (including for Shinfield parish residents). Members agreed to recommend the grant application of £25,000 (from CIL) to Full Council for formal approval.

Proposed: Cllr Johnson
Seconded: Cllr Peer
Approved: Unanimously

ACTION – Clerk to add to agenda for Full Council meeting on 17th December 2025.

77.2 Members noted the refund of an £8,000 payment made to Oakbank Secondary School in November 2023 for a bike rack which was not installed. This would be returned to the Traffic Improvements fund where the original payment had come from.

Members **NOTED** the report.

25/FGP/78

Public Art

78.1 There were no material updates and the closing dates for remained 23rd January 2026.

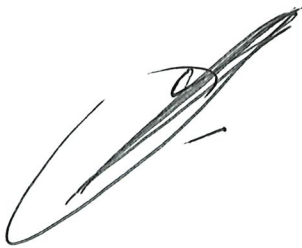
Members **NOTED** the update.

25/FGP/79

Microgeneration

79.1 The consultant from Reduce Energy had been appointed to commission reports on School Green Centre, Spencers Wood Pavilion, High Copse Pavilion and the Manor Ground. Millworth Lane Pavilion will be considered as the refurbishment project progresses and no decision will be made on Ryeish Green Pavilion until a decision had been taken on the future of the building. The first round of site inspections had taken place on the 8th December, and all will have been inspected by 19th December.

ACTION – Clerk to report back on the results of the inspections.

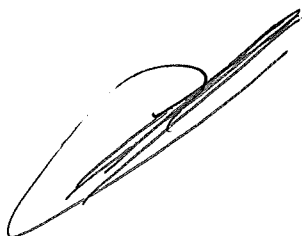


25/FGP/80

Date of Next Meeting

80.1 Next meeting was scheduled for 18th February 2026

The meeting ended at 21.10

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List of Actions

25/FGP/45.1	Clerk to arrange a follow up meeting with WBC Finance Officers regarding S106 Funds	Clerk
25/FGP/70.3	Clerk to amend the Risk Register to include reference to the Cafe	Clerk
25/FGP/72.3	Clerk to progress the list of major repair items with the Facilities Manager	Clerk
25/FGP/72.4	Finance Manager to arrange for Cllr Boyer to become a signatory to CCLA	Finance Manager
25/FGP/72.5	Clerk to make the application to the Football Foundation for a grant for fencing at High Copse	Clerk
25/FGP/72.6	Clerk to proceed with relocation of recycling bins at School Green in conjunction with WBC	Clerk
25/FGP/72.7	Clerk to arrange to proceed with both consultants to prepare a response to PA 252498	Clerk
25/FGP/73.1	Clerk to arrange proposed new Financial Regulations to be on the agenda for next F&GP meeting	Clerk
25/FGP/74.2	Clerk to arrange IT Working Party Meeting	Clerk
25/FGP/75.1.2	Clerk to follow up with SPC's solicitor regarding reciprocal leases	Clerk
25/FGP/75.1.5	Clerk to follow up with SPC's solicitor the extinguishing of the Parish Hall Lease	Clerk
25/FGP/75.1.6	Clerk to follow up on Assets of Community Value	Clerk
25/FGP/76.1	Clerk to bring forward rationalisation of Working Parties to next meeting	Clerk
25/FGP/77.1	Clerk to add to agenda for Full Council meeting on 17 th December 2025	Clerk
25/FGP/79.1	Clerk to report back on the results of the Microgeneration inspections	Clerk

