

Minutes of a meeting of
Finance & General Purposes Committee
Held on Wednesday 15th April 2026
At School Green Centre commencing at 19.30

Present: Cllrs N Boyer, L James (Chair), B Johnson, N Masseron, Z Matic (to 19.9),
I Montgomery & A Pollock

Also attending:
C Bowler, H Pollock, & J Rance (to 19.4)

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

26/FGP/17

Public Questions

17.1 There were no public questions.

26/FGP/18

Apologies and declarations of Members' Interest

18.1 Approval of apologies for absence.

Apologies from committee members had been received from Cllr
Peer

Apologies were also received from Cllr Hoyle

2.2 There were no declarations of members' interests or related person
interests.

26/FGP/19

**Update on council financial position, context and future income
streams for sports venues**

19.1 **Update on the financial position for High Copse, Manor Ground
and Millworth Lane sports venues**

Cllr James set out the background and current position looking at
original budgets and forecasts of outturn. This included actual
outturn for 2025/26 including significant variations and looking
ahead to 2026/27 and beyond. Members were given time to ask all
questions they had, and these were answered as fully as possible.

Key points to note were as follows:

High Copse

- Pitch hire affected by the delay in having the pitches handed over to the council (reduced income and also expenditure)
- In addition to the dementia care group, we now have FOUR long-term evening hirers
- Overall Pitch Maintenance is exactly as projected when presented to Full Council in December 2024 when deciding to take on the lease
- Business Rates were initially modelled on what we were paying for The Manor Ground but are significantly higher than budgeted for 2025/26 9 (up £11.7k)
- Utilities were again based on the Manor Ground but (Electricity up £18k, Gas Up £5.2k and Water UP £3.5k - £25.7k in total). The energy audits have shown that the PV panels were not actually configured to feed into the building consumption – this is an expected £12.5k saving for this. Some energy savings were taken into the 2026/27 budgets but not the amounts that have been identified.

The Manor Ground

- Income is benefitting from one long-term hirer. The 2025/26 budget only expected a token amount of income as the venue does not lend itself to casual hirers due to manual shutters and we did not presume a long-term hirer. We are seeking information about how long we can expect the hire arrangement to continue.

Millworth Lane

- Income and expenditure hugely affected by what happens or doesn't happen with the refurbishment project. In January 2025 the budget approved assumed income for 2025/26 and 2026/27. The budget for 2026/27 set in January 2026 removed any elements for post refurbishment for that financial year.
- There is no football income as part of an agreement reached in 2020 with Shinfield Rangers that they would refurbish the pitches through part funding from Football Foundation. The Football Foundation funding tapered over the six years of the agreement reducing to £500 for 2026 (the last year) and SRFC cover the remainder of the costs.
- There is no cricket income as the cricket club have not played there since moving to the Manor Ground in 2024
- There has been no tennis club rent as this was awaiting the installation of the toilets, and any rent is expected to include an element for repaying the toilets. Negotiations are underway included for past years.
- The total spent on the toilets was £42.8k including the unit itself, underpinnings and delivery & installation
- To date we have spent £41.5k on professional fees including the preparation of drawings, detailed costings and planning application in respect of the refurbishment of the site.

Cllr Pollock asked if we could:

- Establish the finances relating to the 3G pitch at Ryeish Sports Hub
- Establish information regarding membership numbers of the Shinfield tennis club

There was also a need to continue to work on reducing utility costs and water bills.

19.2 **Current position regarding Millworth Lane refurbishment and High Copse future development**

Cllr Johnson provided a presentation on the overall sports strategy for the parish including plans for Millworth Lane. The presentation covered the need to identify alternative pitch provision for any football pitch lost at Millworth Lane and this is why a 3G alternative was being explored at High Copse.

The Clerk advised that the current approved budget for Millworth Lane including a contribution to 3G at High Copse was £1,500,000 approved in April 2025. This included £400,000 for 3G with the balance from a Football Foundation grant.

Members **NOTED** the update from Cllr Johnson.

19.3 **Update on Ryeish Green Pavilion Working Party**

Cllr Masseron gave an update on the progress of the Working Party and confirmed that it was still on track to present to F&GP in June and then to Full Council.

19.4 **CIL Update**

Cllr James led members through the current position regarding CIL including total receipts to date or anticipated, the projects completed and those projects which have had funds allocated to them. Currently we have overcommitted (in principle) by £363k.

A further £1.6m was the estimate of CIL from the two developments approved by WBC in March.

Members **NOTED** the report.

Cllr Rance left the meeting

19.5 **Reserves Update**

The General Reserve reduced by £80.5k during 2025/26 to cover shortfalls in the final outturn for the year

- Parish Council Admin +£13k
- Manor Ground (£14k)
- High Copse (£44k)
- Café (£38k)

Members **NOTED** the report which covered all earmarked reserves.

19.6 **Potential resurfacing of Millworth Lane roadway**

Cllr James advised that this has been an ongoing issue for many years with no-one claiming ownership of the lane. He advised that the council would try and find a way to resolve this in a manner that is affordable now and in the future. This would include discussions with the University of Reading.

19.7 **VAT advice on the treatment for High Copse Pavilion and Millworth Lane when refurbishment starts**

It was agreed that VAT advice would be sought on this subject. An initial quote for £500 had been received. Cllr A Pollock may be able to advise on suitable companies to provide the required advice.

ACTION – Finance Manager to source VAT advice on the treatment for High Copse Pavilion and Millworth Lane when refurbishment starts

19.8 **Specialist advice on whether to challenge the rateable value for High Copse**

It was agreed that a quote should be obtained for specialist advice on whether to challenge the rateable value for High Copse.

ACTION – Finance Manager to obtain a quote for specialist advice on whether to challenge the rateable value for High Copse

19.9 **Update on Long-Term Maintenance Plan**

The Clerk advised that this was a work in progress with the next phase to refine cost estimates and expected time scales. When completed the updated version will be presented to the committee.

ACTION – Clerk and Finance Manager to refine the Long-Term Maintenance Plan and report back to Finance & General Purposes Committee

Cllr Matic left the meeting

26/FGP/20

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

- 20.1 The minutes of the committee meeting of 18th February 2026 were approved as a correct record and signed by Cllr James as Chairman of the Committee

Proposed: Cllr Boyer
Seconded: Cllr Johnson
Approved: Unanimously

- 20.2 **Actions and Matters Arising**

- 25/FGP/45.1** Clerk to arrange a follow up meeting with WBC Finance Officers regarding parish council involvement in future S106 agreements

This had not yet been arranged.

ACTION – Clerk to arrange a follow up meeting with WBC Finance Officers regarding parish council involvement in future S106 agreements

- 25/FGP/72.6** Clerk to confirm arrangements for the relocation of recycling bins at School Green with WBC

The Clerk had a site visit today with WBC 's Recycling Officer to discuss the details of the relocation. The WBC officer would confirm the proposed arrangement worked for the waste company and then we would be able to progress with the work.

- 25/FGP/74.2** Clerk to arrange IT Working Party Meeting

This has not been progressed

ACTION – Clerk to arrange IT Working Party Meeting

- 25/FGP/75.1.2** Clerk to follow up with SPC's solicitor regarding reciprocal leases for Deardon Orchard and Ryeish Playing Fields

This was still with the various solicitors

ACTION – Clerk to expedite the reciprocal leases for Deardon Orchard and Ryeish Playing Fields

- 25/FGP/75.1.5** Clerk to follow up with SPC's solicitor the extinguishing of the Parish Hall Lease

This was still in progress

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

- 25/FGP/75.1.6** Clerk to follow up on Assets of Community Value
- Applications had been submitted for the Manor Ground and High Copse Pavilion, and the Clerk would advise when he was informed of the outcome of the applications.
- 26/FGP/2.2** Clerk to refer the potential breach of the code of conduct to WBC's Monitoring Officer
- This had been done and there would be no further action taken.
- 26/FGP/5.2** Finance Manager to include notice period and interest rates with future bank reconciliations
- This had been done.
- 26/FGP/5.2** Finance Manager to arrange funds £200,000 to a 95-day notice account to obtain a better rate of interest
- This had been done.
- 26/FGP/6.1** Clerk to include in CIL projection an element for renewal of the Neighbourhood Development Plan
- No provision has been made at this time pending a decision on the scope and scale of any renewal of the Neighbourhood Development Plan
- 26/FGP/6.3** Clerk and Facilities Manager to develop a more refined version of the Long-Term Maintenance Plan
- This had been discussed earlier in the meeting.
- 26/FGP/7.1** Clerk to add the draft Financial Regulations as an agenda item for the April Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting.
- This was on the agenda at Item 25.1
- 26/FGP/7.2** Clerk to strike out Recommendation 2 of proposed updates to Standing Orders
- This had been done.
- 26/FGP/7.2** Clerk to add the amended recommendations on updates to the Standing Orders to the agenda for Full Council.
- This has been done and the recommendations adopted.

26/FGP/7.2 Clerk to add the ratification of councillors to committees to the agenda for Full Council

This had been done and adopted.

26/FGP/8.2 Clerk to remove the recurring item “Any areas of land potentially suitable for acquisition” from the agenda for future meetings.

This had been done.

26/FGP/9.3 Clerk and Facilities Manager to follow up repairs to the School Green Fire Doors

The immediate concern regarding Pound Green corridor had been addressed subject to some final adjustment to the door. The Facilities Manager was still waiting for more information on the other fire doors within the School Green Centre and would report to Facilities with more information.

ACTION - Clerk and Facilities Manager to follow up repairs to the School Green Fire Doors

26/FGP/14.1 Clerk to report back on Energy inspections of council buildings

This was on the agenda at Item 30.1

26/FGP/21 Risk Register

21.1 An update on the Shinfield Parish Council Risk Register

The Clerk had circulated the current version of the Risk Register and invited any questions regarding its contents.

The Clerk reminded members that there was a standing item on the Annual (May) Council Meeting to ensure that the council met its obligation to formally review the risk register annually.

Members **NOTED** the update.

26/FGP/22 Cost Apportionment

22.1 The Finance Manager introduced an initial piece of work that apportioned the costs of support services to specific buildings or activities to attempt to identify their true costs.

Members thanked the Finance Manager for her work on this subject.

26/FGP/23**Interim Audit Report**

- 23.1 The Internal Audit report had highlighted that the notice of conclusion had been published after the required deadline. Some work was still required to complete the new assertion covering digital and data compliance.

Members **NOTED** the report.

26/FGP/24**Financial Reports**

- 24.1 Bookings Report

A Booking Report to 31st March 2026. This now includes pitch income, and this will be reported going forward as well as room hire at Manor and High Copse. The figures in the report at VAT Inclusive.

School Green Centre – Slightly up on its income target for the year at £145.1k (up £1.1k/0.8%)

Spencers Wood Pavilion – Up on its income target for the year at £54.4k (up £3.4k/6.7%)

High Copse Pavilion – Up on its income target for the year at £28.3k (up £2.5k/9.7%)

High Copse Pitches – Down on its income target for the year at £10.1 (down £20.7k/67.2%)

Manor Ground Pavilion – Up on its income target for the year at £7.4k (up £7.1k/2,466.7%)

Manor Ground Pitches – Up on its income target for the year at £12.3k (up £2.6k/26.8%)

Members **NOTED** the report.

- 24.2 Bank Reconciliations at 31st March 2026

The Chair of the committee confirmed that he had reviewed the bank reconciliations as at the end of March 2026 on 14th April 2026 and that all was in order. A copy of the signed reconciliation was presented to members. The Clerk advised that the interest rates and notice periods were included as had been requested at the last meeting.

Members **NOTED** the report.

- 24.3 Forecast of outturn position as at 31st March 2026

This had been covered under previous items on the agenda.

25.1 Financial Procedures

The draft procedures had been arrived at starting from the NALC Model and through various meetings of the Working Party. Cllr A Pollock had then subsequently reviewed the draft document.

Members agreed to recommend the draft document to Full Council subject to the following changes:

- 1.7 – This section should revert to the wording provided in the NALC Model
- 3.13 – The wording should be amended to read “Councillors should report matters of financial concern in the first instance to the RFO. If the RFO is implicated in any concern, the report should be to the Chair of Finance & General Purposes Committee or to the Chair of the Council. If none of the above are able to resolve the concern the matter should be raised with the internal or external auditors.”
- 13.9 – An additional sentence to be added to read “Any invoices in dispute for three months or more shall also be similarly reported.”

Proposed: Cllr A Pollock
Seconded: Cllr Boyer
Approved: Unanimously

ACTION – Cllr Masseron to update the draft document

ACTION – Clerk to include in agenda and papers for Full Council on 22nd April

25.2 Proposed Changes to Standing Orders

Cllr Boyer had proposed two amendments to the Standing Orders as follows:

25.2.1 – To revert to one Vice-Chair for the Council

Proposed: Cllr Boyer
Seconded: Cllr Johnson
Approved: Majority

ACTION – Clerk to add to Full Council Agenda

25.2.2 – To remove the Chair’s Allowance

Proposed: Cllr Boyer
Seconded: Cllr A Pollock
Approved: Unanimously

ACTION – Clerk to add to Full Council Agenda

25.3 Debit Card for the Finance Manager

The Finance Manager advised that the closure of the Lloyds branch in Woodley meant that there was no convenient bank branch to travel to and this created difficulty in drawing down petty cash. It was proposed that issuing the Finance Manager with a debit card would allow her to withdraw cash as required locally.

It was agreed that the Finance Manager should obtain a debit card

Proposed: Cllr A Pollock
Seconded: Cllr Johnson
Approved: Unanimously

ACTION – Finance Manager to obtain a debit card for the purposes of drawing petty cash

26/FGP/26

Land Issues

26.1 The Clerk provide an update as follows:

26.1.1 – Land Registration.

There were no updates on the Land Registrations

26.1.2 – Leases for Ryeish Playing Fields and Deardon Way Fields. The Clerk would expedite this matter

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

26.1.4 – Assets of Community Value. This had been covered earlier in the meeting.

26.1.5 – Millworth Lane Purchase. The Chair advised that the University of Reading had given an indication that they would be prepared to allow the council to buy the land at Millworth Lane.

26/FGP/27**Live Project Teams**

- 27.1 A summary of the current position of the live project teams. This reflected the rationalisation of Working Parties agreed at the previous meeting.

Members **NOTED** the update

26/FGP/28**Public Art**

- 28.1 The final presentations from artists would be taking place on Friday 17th March and all artists had confirmed that their proposed installations were within the approved amount for the project.

26/FGP/29**Capital Grant Request**

- 29.1 A request had been received from Oakbank Secondary School for a grant of £9,800. As this exceeds the limit for the annual grant scheme it is referred to Finance & General Purposes Committee for consideration.

It was agreed that one of the elements of the bid could be approved under the auspices of the Annual Grant Scheme.

Proposed: Cllr James
Seconded: Cllr Montgomery
Approved: Unanimously

ACTION – Clerk to advise Oakbank Secondary School of the funding of one element of their grant application

26/FGP/30**Microgeneration**

- 30.1 Reports had been received on School Green Centre, High Copse Pavilion, Spencers Wood Pavilion and the Manor Ground and these had been circulated to the Facilities Committee. One final report was due shortly to tie the various reports together and a meeting was arranged for Friday 24th April to discuss the reports in detail and the next steps. There were a lot of relatively easy to achieve items with the largest element of expenditure currently identified as renewing PV panels at the Manor Ground either with or without battery storage. This was £20k or £40k depending upon the selected option. CIL of up to £300,000 has been set aside for such projects.

26/FGP/31**Communication**

- 31.1 Following a question from a member of the public at Full Council on 25th March the issue of whether the political allegiance of councillors (if any) was publicly disclosed.

The Clerk advised that there was no legal requirement for parish councillors to declare a political party affiliation. However, if a councillor has stood for election with a political affiliation that will have appeared on the ballot paper for their election and be a matter of public record.

Similarly, there is no legal requirement to provide that information on the council's website and it is down to the council to decide whether to do so or not. Earley Town Council do not, while Wokingham and Woodley Town Councils do.

Councillor Masseron proposed that the council did NOT display political affiliations as parish council level business should be non-partisan

Proposed: Cllr Masseron
Seconded: Cllr Johnson
Approved: Six in favour, one abstention

ACTION – Clerk to add to the agenda for Full Council

26/FGP/32**Date of Next Meeting**

- 32.1 Next meeting was scheduled for 17th June 2026

The meeting ended at 21.55

List of Actions

ITEM	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
26/FGP/19.7	Source VAT advice on the treatment for High Copse Pavilion and Millworth Lane when refurbishment starts.	Finance Manager
26/FGP/19.8	Obtain a quote for specialist advice on whether to challenge the rateable value for High Copse.	Finance Manager
26/FGP/19.9	Refine the Long-Term Maintenance Plan and report back to Finance & General Purposes Committee.	Clerk / Finance Manager
25/FGP/45.1	Arrange a follow up meeting with WBC Finance Officers regarding parish council involvement in future S106 agreements.	Clerk
25/FGP/74.2	Arrange IT Working Party Meeting.	Clerk
25/FGP/75.1.2	Expedite the reciprocal leases for Deardon Orchard and Ryeish Playing Fields.	Clerk
25/FGP/75.1.5	Follow up with SPC's solicitor regarding the extinguishing of the Parish Hall Lease.	Clerk
26/FGP/9.3	Follow up repairs to the School Green fire doors.	Clerk / Facilities Manager
26/FGP/25.1	Update the draft financial procedures document.	Cllr Masseron
26/FGP/25.1	Include the draft financial procedures in the agenda and papers for Full Council on 22 April.	Clerk
26/FGP/25.2	Add the proposed changes to Standing Orders to the Full Council agenda.	Clerk
26/FGP/25.3	Obtain a debit card for the purposes of drawing petty cash.	Finance Manager
26/FGP/29.1	Advise Oakbank Secondary School of the funding of one element of their grant application.	Clerk