

Minutes of a meeting of
Finance & General Purposes Committee
Held on Wednesday 15th October 2025
At School Green Centre commencing at 19.30

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

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

25/FGP/52

Public Questions

52.1 There were no public questions.

25/FGP/53

Apologies and declarations of Members' Interest

53.1 Following his election as Chair of Shinfield Parish Council, Cllr Boyer, in accordance with Standing Orders, was now Vice-Chair of the committee.

53.2 There were apologies from Cllrs Boyer, Masseron & Montgomery for this meeting.

53.3 There were no declarations of members' interests.

25/FGP/54

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

54.1 The minutes of the committee meeting of 18th June 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed by Cllr James as Chairman of the Committee

Proposed: Cllr Johnson
Seconded: Cllr Matic
Approved: Unanimously

54.2

Actions and Matters Arising

15.1 Clerk to ensure draft list of potential invitees to a business breakfast event was available for the Public Art meeting on 27th June

This had been done.

- 39.1 Clerk to amend the terms of reference for ratification by Full Council
- This had been done.
- 42.3 Clerk to progress the list of major repair items with the Facilities Manager
- This was on the agenda at Item 6.3
- 43.1 Clerk to add the draft revised Standing Orders to the agenda for Full Council
- This had been done.
- 44.1 Clerk to take draft fraud policy to corporate governance working party
- This will be included in the work programme for the working party.
- 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**
- 46.1 Clerk to refer the Shinfield North Consultation process to the Children & Young Adults Committee
- This had been done.
- 46.1 Clerk to discuss the consultation in advance with WBC officers
- This will be arranged under the auspices of the Children & Young Adults Committee
- 50.1 Clerk to follow up options for Microgeneration advice
- This was on the agenda at item 14

25/FGP/55**Corporate Risk Register**

- 55.1 The Clerk advised that he would add in the relevant points regarding the café to the Council's Risk Register as had been covered at the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 13th October.

ACTION – Clerk to amend the Risk Register to incorporate the additional risk items arising from running the café in-house

25/FGP/56**Financial Reports**

- 56.1 Completion of Audit in respect of 2024/25

Cllr James advised that formal notification had been received from the external auditor that their audit of 2024/25 accounts had now been completed. There were no comments recorded other than those approved for the AGAR return.

Members **NOTED** receipt

- 56.2 Bank Reconciliations

The Chair of the Committee confirmed that he had reviewed the bank reconciliations as at the end of September 2025 on 14th October 2025 and that all was in order. A copy of the signed reconciliation was presented to members.

Members **NOTED** the report.

- 56.3 Current Year Financial Performance (2025/2026)

The Chair and Finance Manager provided an update on the initial performance for the current financial year. There were no items of concern at this time. While there were positive and negative variances, the net projection was a positive variance of £25,800 of which £25,000 related to interest income due to lower capital expenditure than had been budgeted.

Members **NOTED** the report.

25/FGP/57**Financial Reserves & CIL**

- 57.1 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 a project was £587.6k

Members **NOTED** the report.

57.2 Update on reserves

The Chair provided an update on reserves as at 30th September 2025. There were no significant changes to the previous report. The Clerk had been advised that the expected total cost of elections (if all three vacancies proceeded to contested elections) would be approximately £8k which was the amount of the election reserve. If required, then provision would need to be made to store and possibly increase the reserve in the budget planning for 2026/27. If there were no contested elections, then there would only be a fee of £75 for each vacancy.

Members **NOTED** the report.

57.3 Major Repairs Reserve

The Clerk advised that he has arranged a meeting with the Facilities Manager to restore momentum on this project

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

57.4 Request to release funds from the Millworth Lane Refurbishment budget for early removal of two wooden sheds at Millworth Lane

The Facilities Committee has requested the early release of £5,000 from the budget already approved for the refurbishment of Millworth Lane recreation Ground. This is work required for the overall project being brought forward to reduce the potential for Anti-Social Behaviour as was experienced on the site during the summer.

Members agreed to **RECOMMEND** the release of the funds to Full Council

Proposed: Cllr Johnson
Seconded: Cllr Matic
Approved: Unanimously

ACTION – Clerk to add to the agenda for Full Council

- 57.5 Request to make funds available to the Ryeish Green Working Party
- The Facilities Committee has requested the release of funds to enable the Working Party to appoint professional support as required to progress the project.
- Members agreed to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council releasing £4,000 from General Reserves to assist in progressing the project.

Proposed: Cllr Johnson
Seconded: Cllr Matic
Approved: Unanimously

ACTION – Clerk to add to the agenda for Full Council

25/FGP/58

Corporate Governance Working Party

- 58.1 Progress has been steady but there has been no meeting since 11th August and the next meeting is scheduled for 20th October.

25/FGP/59

Budget Planning

- 59.1 Initial Planning Assumptions for 2026/27 budget

Members agreed to apply the following planning assumptions for the setting of 2026/27 budgets

Inflation 3.5%
Payroll 4.0%

The café would be shown as a separate element and not be subsumed into the overall figures pending the decision of Council on whether to retain the café in-house or otherwise.

- 59.2 Initial inputs from committees regarding budget requirements for 2026/27

Members considered the list of revenue and capital items received from committees and these will be taken into account during the planning process.

Councillor Johnson advised on discussions with the University of Reading regarding the potential 3G pitch at High Copse so that could also be considered in the budget process.

- 59.3 Budget Briefing Session

It was agreed that the Clerk would offer 1-2-1 sessions with any members who wanted an update or refresher on the budget process.

ACTION – Clerk to offer budget training/refresher to members who request it

25/FGP/60**S106 Funds**

- 60.1 SPC involvement in development of major S106 agreements

This was ongoing.

- 60.2 WBC move to allow S106 records to be viewed by a portal

The Clerk reported that WBC had informed him regarding delays in the implementation of an on-line portal for all S106 agreements within the borough. It had been proposed that the portal would have been available in September. There was no revised date for implementation.

25/FGP/61**Land Issues**

- 61.1 The Clerk provide an update as follows:

61.1.1 - There were no updates on the Land Registrations

61.1.2 – The Clerk had asked the council’s solicitor to establish why WBC had not progressed the reciprocal leases for Ryeish Playing Fields and Deardon Way Fields.

ACTION – Clerk to follow up with SPC’s solicitor

61.1.3 – Community Space in the North – This would be covered by Item 12.2 on the agenda

61.1.4 – Ryeish Green Pavilion Working Party

Cllr Johnson provided an update on the conversations held to date with interested parties. The questionnaire that had been issued was showing considerable support for the idea of having the pavilion as a community asset, but any proposals must be able to demonstrate that they had long-term viability.

61.1.5 – The Clerk had advised the council’s solicitor to progress extinguishing the parish hall lease following the meeting in June. The Clerk has chased the solicitor for an update.

ACTION – Clerk to follow up with SPC’s solicitor

61.1.6 – Assets of Community Value

The Clerk has yet to progress Assets of Community Value

ACTION – Clerk to follow up on Assets of Community Value

61.1.7 – Fitness Centre element at Millworth Lane

The Clerk advised that no objections had been received to the Planning application for the Fitness Centre and this will be signed off at the relevant WBC meeting on Friday 17th October. We can then carry out the works and notify the fitness provider so they can order their equipment.

25/FGP/62

Live Project Teams

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

Members **NOTED** the report.

25/FGP/63

Grants

- 63.1 Members considered the recommendations received from the Grants Working Party and agreed to refer them, without modification, to Full Council for formal approval.

ACTION – Clerk to add to agenda for Full Council meeting on 22nd October

- 63.2 Members considered the Capital grant application from Reading Gateway Church (St Barnabas). The proposed works would result in additional community space availability in the church and neighbouring hall. It was agreed to recommend to Full Council that further discussions were held with the church to consider the application further.

ACTION – Clerk to add to agenda for Full Council meeting on 22nd October

25/FGP/64

Public Art

- 64.1 At their most recent meeting the working party had agreed to defer the closing dates for applications to be deferred until January 2026 to allow the project to be communicated to students at art schools. The next meeting of the Public Art Working Party was scheduled for Friday 27th June at 2.30 p.m.

Members **NOTED** the update.

25/FGP/65

Microgeneration

- 65.1 There had been no significant progress on this item

ACTION – Clerk to follow up options for Microgeneration advice

25/FGP/66

Date of Next Meeting

66.1

Next meeting was scheduled for 10th December 2025

The meeting ended at 20.50

List of Actions

25/FGP/45.1	Clerk to arrange a follow up meeting with WBC Finance Officers regarding S106 Funds	Clerk
25/FGP/55.1	Clerk to amend the Risk Register to incorporate the additional risk items arising from running the café in-house	Clerk
25/FGP/57.3	Clerk progress the list of major repair items with the Facilities Manager	Clerk
25/FGP/57.4	Clerk to add the release of funds to remove sheds from Millworth Lane to the agenda for Full Council	Clerk
25/FGP/57.5	Clerk to add the release of funds in support of Ryeish Green Working Party to the agenda for Full Council	Clerk
25/FGP/59.3	Clerk to offer budget training/refresher to members who request it	Clerk
25/FGP/61.1.2	Clerk to follow up playing fields/orchards leases with SPC's solicitor	Clerk
25/FGP/61.1.6	Clerk to follow up on Assets of Community Value	Clerk
25/FGP/63.1	Clerk to add Grants to agenda for Full Council meeting on 22nd October	Clerk
25/FGP/63.2	Clerk to add St Barnabas capital grant request to agenda for Full Council meeting on 22nd October	Clerk
25/FGP/65.1	Clerk to follow up options for Microgeneration advice	Clerk