

CHEPPING WYCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL
FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

AGENDA

TUESDAY 15 JUNE 2010

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

Members: -

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

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1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** At the time of the agenda despatch, apologies for absence have been received from J Eadon-Smith (Business) and Ms K Wood (Holiday).
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** (pages 3-4)
5. **COUNCIL REGULATIONS AND POLICIES** (page 5)
6. **ALLOWANCES AND EXPENSES** (page 6)
7. **GRANTS, SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS** (pages 7-8)
8. **NALC CONFERENCE** (pages 9-10)
9. **LAND REGISTRATION** (pages 11-13)
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12. **ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT** (page 18)
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H R O Jones
Clerk of the Parish
9 June 2010

CHEPPING WYCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL
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SUB-COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

Appointment of Representatives

At the Annual Council Meeting on 11 May 2010, 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 four 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.

AGENDA ITEM 4

CHEPPING WYCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE 15 JUNE 2010

AUDIT REPORTS

Audit Background Information - CONSIDERATION

(a) 'In House' Audit

At the Council meeting on 11 May 2010, J Eadon Smith and Mrs E Belcher 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 2010/11.

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

(b) Internal Audit

At the Council meeting on 4 May 2010 it was agreed that Auditing Solutions, the Council's Internal Auditors, be asked to provide Terms of Reference for approval.

A copy of S Pollard's (Auditing Solutions Ltd – Director) letter of 31 May 2010 together with terms is attached (**APPENDIX A**).

The next Internal Audit is scheduled to take place on 21 June 2010, following Close Down of Accounts on 9 June 2010 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 21 October 2010.

A verbal update report will be available at Council on 24 June 2010 in terms of any urgent actions required.

The completed Annual Return and Financial Statement for the Year ending 31 March 2010 must be completed at the Council meeting on 24 June 2010 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 2010/11 will be Mazars.

The statutory deadline by which the Council must approve the Annual Return is 30 June 2010

Members are asked to consider the contents of the report and to make any recommendations, as appropriate, to the 25 June 2009 Council.

Members are asked to:

- (a) verify the Council's satisfaction with the Terms of Reference of Auditing Solutions Ltd (the Council's Internal Auditors), as required;**
- (b) confirm the reappointment of Auditing Solutions Ltd as the Council's Internal Auditors for 2010/11 in light of (i) above;**

AGENDA ITEM 5

CHEPPING WYCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL
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COUNCIL REGULATIONS AND POLICIES

Review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations - CONSIDERATION

At the Committee meeting on 18 March 2010, a Regulations and Policies Working Group was set up to report to the Committee on any findings.

Members are asked to receive a verbal update report from the Committee Chairman in connection with progress in updating the Council Standing Orders and Financial Regulations together with Committee Terms of Reference.

It was previously agreed that no further hard copies of the old versions would be reprinted for the purposes of Appendices to Agendas.

Rather the details were available on the website in the previous meeting section and/or Members were asked to retain previously distributed hard copies.

A copy of the NALC model Standing Orders is also contained within previous agendas.

Members are asked to consider any action required to progress the review of the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and the Committee Terms of Reference and to make any recommendations, as appropriate.

AGENDA ITEM 6

CHEPPING WYCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL
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ALLOWANCES AND EXPENSES

Members Expenses and Allowances - CONSIDERATION

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 Committee Chairman has asked for consideration to be given to a new form of Expenses and Allowances sheet for Members and a draft copy is attached (**APPENDIX B**).

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.

Members are asked to consider the layout of the proposed revised Expenses and Allowances sheet and to consider any other factors relating to the publication of this information.

Mileage Rate - CONSIDERATION

It is recommended that the Council's mileage rate (currently linked to Wycombe District Council's rates) be altered to the lower rate of 40p per mile (the HMRC rate) for all cc types for both Members and Staff.

A copy of the document prepared by RBS Accounting on the VAT implications for such a change are attached (**APPENDIX C**).

Since the new Financial Year, Members and Staff have been voluntarily claiming mileage at the lower rate.

Members are asked to consider the reduction in the Council's Mileage rate to a standardised 40p per mile rate.

AGENDA ITEM 7

CHEPPING WYCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE 15 JUNE 2010

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 2010/11 is £2,500.

No grants have yet been awarded for this year.

Annual Donations and Subscriptions 2010/11 - 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
High Wycombe Society	27.00	28.00	28.00
Bucks Berks Oxon wildlife trust	27.00	28.00	28.00
Ramblers Association	27.00	0*	N/A
Citizen Advice Bureau	68.00	70.00	70.00
Council for Protection of Rural England	27.00	28.00	28.00
Wycombe wildlife trust	54.00	56.00	56.00
	304.00	286.00	286.00

Subscriptions

The repeat Subscriptions already obtained for 2010/11 are:

Organisation	£
BALC/NALC Membership	1,743.60
SLCC Membership	256.00
Chiltern Society	25.00

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

Organisation	£
WALC	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 2010/11 and advise accordingly, the subscriptions will be submitted for payment as and when they are received.

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NALC CONFERENCE

2010 NALC Conference – CONSIDERATION

Members have already been alerted to the need to consider the Council's delegate representation on the 2010 NALC Conference: 'Localism in Action'.

The Committee has previously agreed that up to two Member and one Clerk places are booked.

A copy of the Conference summary 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.

Last year, there were no attendees from the Parish. The arrangements are unusual this year as there are two one day conferences (same agenda) – either:

Friday 2 July 2010, Marriot Bristol City Centre Hotel, Bristol

or

Thursday 9 September 2010, The Royal York Hotel, York

The NALC website has stated:

"Local (parish and town) councils will face enormous challenges over the coming year as the implications of public sector spending cuts begin to take bite. All major political parties are talking about localism as potential solutions to the savage cuts in public sector funding. Now does this mean the Government and Principal Authorities plan to look to local community bodies like local councils to do more in service delivery and representation because they are unable to do so?"

These conferences will examine the practical implications of this and localism. It will look into the practical details of key areas that councils have to face on a day-to-day basis.

Attending the conference you will be able to be involved in the following workshop themes:

- *Local Environment*
- *Local Economy*
- *Grant Funding*
- *Planning*
- *Youth/Disconnected*
- *Financial Regulations*
- *Community Spaces*
- *Communications and the Media”*

Against this background, Members are asked to consider representation at the 2010 NALC Conference: ‘Localism in Action.

AGENDA ITEM 9

CHEPPING WYCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL
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LAND REGISTRATION

Land Registration Update - CONSIDERATION

The Council's Solicitors, Benhams, have commenced work on the comprehensive Land Registration of all Council owned land. The registrations currently being worked on are those relating to Kingswood and Tylers Green Common.

Members will find attached a copy of A Benham's letters of 7 June 2010 together with enclosures referred to therein (**APPENDIX E**).

Whilst some sites that the Council manages are not owned by it (e.g. Boundary Park), the Council may and should register its interest in that site (and/or perhaps encourage the relevant land owner (e.g. Wycombe District Council) to ensure that the land is registered if it has not already done so).

Similarly, land that is managed by others on behalf of this Authority (e.g. Totteridge Common which is managed by Wycombe District Council) should not be excluded from the registration process. To this end, great care is required to ensure that all its assets are protected.

Whilst the Council's web site could be improved, a map showing the major Council sites is contained within its pages:

<http://home.btconnect.com/CWPC/maps.htm>

The Council's owned/maintained sites (some jointly) are:

Flackwell Heath

Chapel Road Allotments

Chapel Road Amenity Area

Fennels Wood

Green Dragon Lane Sports Ground

Old School Site (School Green)

Oakwood

Orchard Green Amenity Area

Straight Bit Recreation Ground

Strip by Fennels Way/Oakland Way

Loudwater

Altona Road Cemetery and Grazing Land

Beechwood Gardens Amenity Area

Boundary Road Recreation Ground

Derehams Lane Recreation Ground

Hedley Amenity Area

Old Forge Road Amenity Area

Old Railway Land

Queensmead Road Amenity Area

St Peter's Churchyard

Strip by Rise/Robinson Road in Loudwater

Tylers Green

Ashley Drive Allotments

Ashley Drive Recreation Ground

Cock Lane Cemetery

Hammersley Lane Cemetery

Kingswood

Pistles Pond

Pond Wood Copse

St Margaret's Churchyard

The Common

Widmer Pond

Council Offices, Depot and Warden's House

Totteridge

Totteridge Common

Hazlemere

Queensway

In the last five years, the only major site to have been registered successfully has been Green Dragon Sports Ground in Flackwell Heath.

However, it is understood that a small area to the entrance of Fennels Wood was also registered as part of action against an encroachment by a bordering fence.

It is noted that the Flackwell Heath Scout Club has been unable to register its interest in the site adjacent to Chapel Road Allotments because of potential encroachment/prior registration by a bordering party.

Members are asked to:

- (a) consider priorities for registering Council owned/maintained land and to suggest any action to progress the issue so as to protect all Council assets; and**
- (b) consider instructing the Council's Solicitors to seek to secure the registration of the Flackwell Heath Scout Hut site as a priority together with any necessary action to resolve and disputed claims.**

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COUNCIL REPRESENTATION

Co-option of Tylers Green Member – CONSIDERATION

The Council has received formal notification of expiry of the period in which local electors may request an election to fill the current Tylers Green Councillor vacancy arising from C Harriss' decision to withdraw from the Council.

The vacancy was published on the Council's web site, notice boards, in *The Bucks Free Press* publication and formally by Wycombe District Council as part of its duty as relevant Election Authority.

The Council now has the authority to progress the filling of the vacancy by way of co-option.

Candidates for the post can be sought by way of notification to the Penn and Tylers Green Residents' Society (with a request for the inclusion of details in the "Village Voice" Magazine and by potential candidates being sought at the request of the Chairman of Council for advice from current Tylers Green Members). It is understood that one candidate has expressed an interest.

A Special Council Meeting can be convened to deal with the appointment (as has been the Council's practice, usually immediately prior to an already scheduled meeting) should that be necessary.

Applicants should submit their CV and covering letter setting out their reasons for wishing to join the Council.

Members are, therefore, asked to consider the timescale and process for considering applications to be put forward for the appointment of a co-opted Member in the Tylers Green Ward of the Parish Council arising from a casual vacancy.

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FINANCE REPORT

Summary of 2009/10 Position – INFORMATION

The Close Down of 2009/10 Accounts took place on 9 June 2010, taking into account all of the transfers made to Earmarked Reserves. A copy of the Summary Income and Expenditure by Budget Heading for 31 March 2010 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

It is suggested that all Committees conduct a comprehensive review of Earmarked Reserves in order to establish which projects are priority items and which, if any, should be suspended. It is also suggested that Committees indicate where expenditure should be allocated to future Earmarked reserve spending.

Recommendation from Leisure Facilities Committee - CONSIDERATION

At the Leisure Facilities Committee meeting on 20 May 2010 it was agreed that the Finance and General Purposes be recommended to approve a transfer of the amount to the Committee's maintenance vote for the Flackwell Heath Allotment site from the General Reserve fund in order that the work could be carried out to erect a new perimeter fence.

The Committee did not budget to replace/repair the fence at the Flackwell Heath site for 2010/11, however, it is clear that some remedial work is required, especially following work by the Community Payback Team.

Two additional quotations are being received (to be notified by verbal update if available by 15 June 2010), however, the price quoted by the council's preferred fencing contractor is £1,490 plus VAT.

Members are asked to consider the recommendation from the Leisure Facilities Committee to transfer covering monies to fund the erection of a new perimeter fence at Flackwell Heath Allotments.

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.

AGENDA ITEM 12

**CHEPPING WYCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL
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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

CHEPPING WYCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL
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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**