

CHEPPING WYCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL
FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

AGENDA

TUESDAY 16 JUNE 2009

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

Members: -

I Forbes **Chairman** (TG)
Ms K Wood **Vice-Chairman** (TG)
C Dodds (L)
J Eadon-Smith (FH)
J Herschel (TG)

J Savage (FH)
M Smith (L)
M Wilkes (FH)
L Willis (L)
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 C Dodds.
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. **STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS (page 4)**
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H R O Jones
Clerk of the Parish
10 June 2009

AGENDA ITEM 3

CHEPPING WYCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE 16 JUNE 2009

SUB-COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

Appointment of Representatives – CONSIDERATION

At the Annual Council Meeting on 12 May 2009, 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 – M Smith (Chairman), J Herschel, I Forbes, K Wood and D Johncock); and
- Staff Review Panel (Previously comprising of the Council and Committee Chairmen – or the Vice-Chairmen in their absence).

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

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AUDIT REPORTS

Internal Audit Report - CONSIDERATION

The Internal Audit took place on 1 June 2009, conducted by Auditing Solutions.

Members are asked to note that consideration of the Internal Audit Report is scheduled to take place at Council on 25 June 2009, if available, or at the next Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting on 29 October 2009.

For ease of reference, a copy of the part completed Annual Return and Financial Statement for the Year ending 31 March 2009 is attached (**APPENDIX A**), this must be completed at the Council meeting on 25 June 2009 together with the receipt of all other relevant documentation.

Members are reminded that at the Council meeting on 20 January 2009, it was agreed that Auditing Solutions Ltd would be reappointed as the Council's Internal Auditor for 2009/10.

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

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STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations - CONSIDERATION

Members will recall that when the Committee received the External Audit: Completion of Annual Return to 31 March 2008 together with any recommendations contained therein at its meeting on 8 January 2009, it was noted that both the Council Standing Orders and Financial Regulations would be reviewed by the Committee in 2009.

Subsequently, at the meeting on 15 July 2009, the Committee received the wording of the Council's Financial Regulations. It was also agreed that the Committee would be notified of any changes in Legislation or Good Practice in order that the appropriate amendments to this Authority's Regulations could be fully considered at any subsequent review.

The Review of Standing Orders is a wide-ranging exercise that will include the gambit of decision making processes and protocols currently employed by the Council. It is suggested by the Clerk of the Council that ideally this exercise should be undertaken in conjunction with a review of the Terms of Reference for each of the Committees (to ensure that there is a consistent and effective set of regulations in place). The Leisure Facilities Committee has already requested that this item be included on the agenda of its 24 September 2009 meeting, with any recommendations arising being submitted to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Whilst the Council has the authority to set its own Standing Orders, these must not be inconsistent with the requirements of Legislation (especially those as set down for Parish and Town Councils in the Local Government Act 1972).

In addition, it is recommended that the Council should once again be guided by "Good Practice" models put forward by organisations such as the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and Bucks Association of Local Councils (BALC). However, it is recognised that every Parish Council is different and that its own internal rules and regulations must be suited to the specific tasks that it undertakes and the services that it provides.

Copies of Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Committee Terms of Reference are available for inspection in the Members' Handbook files (circulated to all Members at the time of joining the Council and updated periodically, as appropriate – sometimes referred to as "The Purple Folder").

Members are asked to propose a suggested method and programme for undertaking the Council's review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

AGENDA ITEM 6

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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 2009/10 is £2,500.

No grants have yet been awarded for this year.

Annual Donations and Subscriptions 2009/10 - CONSIDERATION

The following payments were made in 2008/09. In previous years the donations have been increased in line with inflation. The amounts for 2008/09 have been increased by 3% and rounded to the nearest pound.

Annual Donations

	2008/09	2009/10
	£	£
Action4youth	74.00	76.00
High Wycombe Society	27.00	28.00
Bucks Berks Oxon wildlife trust	27.00	28.00
Ramblers Association	27.00	Discontinued*
Citizen Advice Bureau	68.00	70.00
Council for Protection of Rural England	27.00	28.00
Wycombe wildlife trust	54.00	56.00

	304.00	286.00

*The Ramblers Association notified the Council that it no longer sought to be included in the Council's list of Annual Donations as its finances were in a "relatively healthy position".

The Council continues to support the work of this organisation and has notified it of the improvements carried out at this Council's request at Sheepridge Lane in creating a circular walk.

Subscriptions

There are no significant changes to the Council's Subscriptions anticipated for 2009/10 (the precise figures for which have not all been collated at the time of Agenda dispatch) and Members are asked to approve these on that basis.

The 2008/09 Subscriptions were:

WALC due June	6.00
Fields in Trust (National playing fields)	25.00
Bucks Playing Field Ass due Feb	20.00
ROSPA due Nov	85.00
Chiltern Society due Feb	25.00
BALC due April	905.28
NALC due April	557.88
SLCC due Dec	210.00

	1,834.16

The sum of £2,270 has been allocated in the 2009/10 budget for donations and subscriptions.

Members are asked to consider the donations for 2009/10 and advise accordingly, the subscriptions will be submitted for payment as and when they are received.

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OFFICE COMPLEX - EQUIPMENT

Three Counties Business Machines Ltd quotation - CONSIDERATION

The Council has received a quote for upgrading the Office Photocopier from Three Counties Business Machines Ltd, attached (**APPENDIX B**).

Whilst the Council did not seek to improve the existing model, Members might be minded to consider carefully any potential advantages of an upgraded item with a “colour scanning” facility at the extra cost of £13.13 per month.

Members are asked to consider the quote from Three Counties Business Machines Ltd for an upgraded colour photocopier and to advise accordingly.

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CONVEYANCES, LEASES AND CONTRACTS

Fennels Wood Agreement 2000 - CONSIDERATION

Mrs Olsen, the owner of Fennels Wood, has sadly died with the result that the Council is notified of the interests of the Personal Representatives.

The Council's Solicitors have been alerted to this matter and asked to advise on any action for the Council to undertake, if necessary.

A copy of Allan Janes Solicitors' letter of 8 June 2009 and relevant Agreement is attached (**APPEDIX C**).

Members are asked to consider the terms of the Fennels Wood 2000 Agreement and to consider any future action, as appropriate.

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NALC CONFERENCE

2009 NALC Conference: London 4 – 5 September 2009 – CONSIDERATION

Members have already been alerted to the need to consider the Council's delegate representation on the 2009 NALC Conference: 'Putting People First'.

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**).

In view of the fact that the Conference is in London (and relatively close to Marylebone Station, at the Royal College of Physicians) it is presumed that overnight accommodation will not be required and therefore none has been booked at this stage. However, the Committee is best placed to reach a decision on these details.

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.

Members are asked to consider representation at the 2009 NALC Conference: 'Putting People First'.

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LAND REGISTRATION

Land Registration Update - INFORMATION

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.

It is anticipated that Kingswood registration will be completed by September 2009.

The Tylers Green Common registration is more problematic: as there are two cautions against first registration which need to be lifted. Benhams Solicitors are undertaking this task at the Council's request. The first relates to the property named 'Rozel' in Rays Lane, the owners of which put a caution on Rays Lane in 2004 to protect a deed of grant of right of way entered into with the Parish Council.

The second caution is in favour of Thames Water relates on a parcel of land on the corner of New Road and Elm Road by Potters Cross (sometimes referred to as 'The Pumping Station').

The Committee will be notified of substantive developments, as appropriate.

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PUBLICITY

Scout Enterprises (Western) Ltd – CONSIDERATION

The Council has received a request from Scout Enterprises (Western) Ltd as outlined in Mr M Kane's letter of 16 April 2009 (**APPENDIX E**), which is self explanatory. Scout Enterprises (Western) Ltd is a Registered Charity (No. 295242).

Historically, the Council has decided not to provide advertisements for local services and businesses that do not hold charitable status or those which are not directly linked with Council interests (e.g. the past two Newsletters have included advertisements of a sort for both Flackwell Heath and Loudwater Bowls Clubs). This policy applies equally in respect of posters published on the three Council Notice Boards.

Applications for advertisements with a charitable status (as per the organisation in question) fall within the remit of the Publicity Sub-Committee or its parent Committee, namely the Finance and General Purposes Committee (usually whichever is convened sooner) to determine.

Against this background, Members are asked to consider the request from Scout Enterprises (Western) Ltd to advertise in the Parish Newsletter.

AGENDA ITEM 12

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FINANCE REPORT & COMMITTEE BUDGETS

Attached are:

- The Income and Expenditure Detailed report (**APPENDIX F**)
- Budget analysis 2009/10 (**APPENDIX G**)
- Ear marked reserves (**APPENDIX H**)

2009/10 – Current Financial Year

Committee items identified on the Budget Analysis for 2009/10 include:

Contingency	3,000
Grants	2,500
Legal fees	3,000
	<u>8,500</u>

The only variance from the previous year's budget of exceptional items is the increase of legal fees (from £1,500 to £3,000).

This increase is to cover the cost of obtaining full registration for all of the Council's land with the Land Registry, costs associated with the status of Tylers Green Common and any costs involved in obtaining Employment Advice for Staffing Matters.

2008/09 – Previous Financial Year

The Committee Chairman has asked for Staff and Committee Chairmen to consider carefully Actual Expenditure against each exceptional item heading on the Budget Analysis for the 2008/09 Year. These can be found on the Income and Expenditure Reports submitted to each Committee in the current cycle of meetings.

It is important for Members to recognise that in some cases, where the expenditure did not occur in 2008/09 but is nevertheless anticipated, the budget amount has been transferred into a designated earmarked reserve.

The earmarked and general reserves sheet is appended which provides full details.

In the case of the Finance and General Purposes Committee in 2008/09, the Exceptional Item Actual Expenditure was (with reasons):

Item	Budget	Actual Spent
Contingency	£3,000	used to offset the cost of replacing the Office Boiler
Grants	£2,500	£1,275 of grants were made
Legal Fees	£1,500	£5,172 spent on various legal fees

Members are asked to note the contents of the reports.

AGENDA ITEM 13

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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.