

A meeting of the Finance Working Party was held in the Village Hall, Station Road, Countesthorpe, on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2026

Present: Cllrs S Turner, P Mount, K Pearce and M Smith.

Parish Council Manager: Miss J Leech

Assistant Parish Council Manager: Miss E Frost

1. Apologies for absence, if any

Apologies were received from Cllrs M Gillespie and W Read.

2. To receive disclosures of interest

Cllr M Smith declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 15a, Greenfield Primary School.

3. To verify accounts for payment

It was recommended to approve the accounts for payment for the Parish Council and the Village Hall.

4. Review budget and expenditure 2025/2026

The budget as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2026 was received. It was noted that some of the cost centre headings would be exceeding their budgeted amount. Information would be provided at the next meeting of the Finance Working Party on these cost centres.

It was reported that one of the fire doors in the main hall had swelled and had been difficult to open. This had been planed as a temporary measure but costings and timescales for the installation of a new door would be obtained and reported back to the Finance Working Party.

Recommended for approval

*To note the quote of £224 which had been received for the purchase and installation of a new battery for the John Deere mower, to be scheduled when it is required in the next grass cutting season.*

*To proceed with reupholstering between 30 and 40 village hall chairs at the new cost of £80 per chair, dependant on the financial contribution which would be made from monies received from the Countesthorpe Village Hall Charity. Details of costings would be made available at the Parish Council meeting.*

*To purchase back a burial plot from a resident at a cost of £300.*

*To proceed with the recommendation of the Estates Working Party, to remove the dominant grasses in the planters at The Square and relocate at Larchwood, rearranging the existing plants in the planters and purchasing new (including Azalea, Hebe, Weigelia, Tulips, Narcissus and Hyacinth) to refill them, along with the necessary compost, at an estimated cost of £440.*

*To not proceed with the recommendation of the Estates Working Party, to accept the quote from Secure-a-Field for the installation of a replacement hydraulic closer on one of the gates at Dale Acre, at a cost of £885, but to look at alternative options and bring back to a future meeting for consideration.*

*To support the recommendation of the Estates Working Party in arranging for an electrician to look at the faulty sensor on the floodlights at St Andrews Churchyard, and to delegate authority to the Parish Council manager to proceed with required works, at a maximum cost of £300.*

5. List of grounds maintenance equipment

The current list of grounds maintenance equipment was reviewed, along with those items which had been disposed of within the past 12 months.

Recommended for approval

*To obtain more information on statutory requirements for frequency of HAVs and Noise testing by an external assessor.*

*To combine the information relating to the HAVs testing and date of purchase of equipment for easier monitoring.*

*For any future requests for items of grounds equipment to be brought first to a meeting of the Finance Working Party for consideration and approval.*

6. Gov.uk domain name

Details of the costings to transfer the Parish Council's domain name to a gov.uk domain name was noted.

Recommended for approval

*To proceed with purchasing a gov.uk domain name for the Countesthorpe Parish Council website at a cost of £75 and £25 per annum thereafter.*

*To proceed with creating gov.uk email addresses for all staff members. To retain the existing domain name and email addresses on a temporary basis to allow the transition in terms of account log-ins etc.*

*To note the annual cost should email addresses be allocated to individual Councillors.*

7. Library doors

A quotation had been received for a replacement external library door and would be brought back for consideration at a future meeting once additional information had been obtained about the doors and security.

8. Hanging basket sponsorship

Recommended for approval

*To readvertise the possibility of sponsoring hanging baskets as well as planters located around the village, in The Herald and on noticeboards. This would be reconsidered at a future meeting of the Finance Working Party once residents had been given sufficient time to respond.*

9. ESPO – gas renewal contract

An alternative quotation and costings for the energy supplies were noted. In light of there not being a significant variance in the costings, and that by having the energy supply through ESPO, the Parish Council is complying with procurement processes, it was:-

Recommended for approval

*To proceed with renewing the gas and electricity contracts with ESPO for an additional four years from the current contract end date in 2027.*

10. To verify bank reconciliations against bank statements and payments – To note that Cllr K McGovern has verified the bank reconciliations against bank statements and payments for all accounts to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025

It was noted that Cllr K McGovern had verified the bank reconciliations against bank statements and payments for all accounts for the third quarter.

11. To verify online bank statements against bank reconciliations – To note that Cllr C Ibbotson has verified the bank statements against bank reconciliations for all accounts to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025

It was noted that Cllr C Ibbotson had verified the bank statements against bank reconciliations for all accounts for the third quarter.

12. Quotation for the internal audit for year end 2025/2026  
*Recommended for approval*  
*To accept the quote from Ireland and Company for the 2025/2026 internal audit at a cost of £785.*
13. Review Financial Regulations and Standing Orders  
*Recommended for approval*  
*For the amended Financial Regulations and Standing Orders to be adopted by the Parish Council, following their review.*
14. To review the Financial Risk Assessment  
*Recommended for approval*  
*For the amended Financial Risk Assessment to be adopted by the Parish Council, following its review.*
15. Grant aid
  - a. Greenfield Primary School PTFA  
*Recommended for approval*  
*To award a grant of £500 to the Greenfield Primary School PTFA towards the cost of a new Adventure Trail at Greenfield Primary School.*
  - b. Explorer Scout & Young Leader  
*Recommended for approval*  
*To respond to the request from a local scout to advise that, unfortunately, the Parish Council would not be offering a grant towards the World Scout Jamboree in Poland in 2027 as, because of the size of the grant budget, it gives priority to offering grants to organisations where there are a number of beneficiaries, rather than individual requests.*
16. S106 payment  
There was nothing to discuss.
17. To receive any correspondence  
There was no correspondence.
18. Matters arising for information purposes  
There was nothing to raise.
19. Date of next meeting  
The date of the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2026.