

A meeting of the Finance Working Party was held in the Village Hall, Station Road, Countesthorpe, on Wednesday 13th May 2026

Present: Cllrs M Gillespie, K Pearce, W Read (until item 7), M Smith and S Turner.

Parish Council Manager: Miss J Leech

Assistant Parish Council Manager: Miss E Frost

1. Apologies for absence, if any

Apologies were received from Cllr P Mount.

2. To receive disclosures of interest

There were no disclosures of interest.

3. To verify accounts for payment

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

4. Budget and expenditure 2026/2027

The budget as at 30th April 2026 was received and all was in order. It was noted that the council tax charges which had been received would be checked against headings.

The final balances for the 2025/2026 financial year were received and the variances between estimated and actual year end figures were noted.

It was noted that budget headings would be reviewed ahead of the 2027/2028 budget being considered.

An update on the national pay offer was received.

There was initial discussion regarding welding undertaken on site which was raised during the recent health and safety inspection. Further information would be brought back to a future meeting for discussion.

Recommended for approval

To purchase a bunch of flowers from the Parish Council for one of the members of the cleaning staff who was retiring after 20 years of service.

To support the following recommendations of the Estates Working Party:

- To begin accepting requests for plot purchases and interments in the new cemetery

- To limit the sale of remaining plots in the existing cemetery to residents of Countesthorpe and to offer plots within the new cemetery area to non-residents, however, to be flexible with this and assess each enquiry on a case by case basis

- To apply to the Woodland Trust for a total of 420 trees to be planted within the new cemetery area and to purchase the required tree stakes, guards and compost to support their growth from Tudor Environmental at a cost of £390.40

- To accept, in principle, the quote received from G Seller Funeral Directors for the repainting of the war memorial lettering, at a cost of £920.40, providing that satisfactory evidence of similar works having been completed was received

- To accept the quote of £324 received from Online Playgrounds for the annual play inspection. Also to accept their quote of £746 for the two yearly zipwire tension check (noting that there would be additional costs should any issues arise)

5. Renewal of insurance

The renewal quote from Hiscox was received with it being noted that comparison quotes would be obtained for consideration prior to the 2027 renewal. Additionally, quotes for cyber insurance would be obtained and brought back to a future meeting, given that the renewal with Hiscox contained exclusions related to cyber protection.

Recommended for approval

To proceed with the insurance renewal with Hiscox, at a cost of £7,057.

6. To consider and approve documents relating to the 2025/2026 AGAR

Recommended for approval

For the following documents to be adopted by the Parish Council for submission to the External Auditor, following them being received, reviewed and noted:

- a. The effectiveness of internal control of financial systems in informing the responses to Section 1 of the AGAR
- b. The Annual Internal Auditor's Report 2025/2026, including any recommendations
- c. The Annual Governance Statement 2025-2026 (Section 1), to be signed by the Chair and Parish Council Manager
- d. The Accounting Statements 2025/26 (Section 2), to be signed by the RFO
- e. The Accounting Statements 2025-2026 (Section 2), to be signed by the Chair
- f. The additional information to be submitted to the External Auditor
 - i. The bank reconciliation Year Ended 31st March 2026
 - ii. The explanation of variances
 - iii. The reconciliation between Box 7 and Box 8 of Section 2
 - iv. A breakdown of reserves held
- g. The additional information requested by the External Auditor
 - i. To receive an explanation of answer 'no' to assertion 6 of the AGAR.
- h. The dates for the period of public rights

7. To verify bank reconciliations against bank statements and payments – to note that Cllr K McGovern had verified the bank reconciliations against bank statements and payments for all accounts to 31st March 2026

It was noted that Cllr K McGovern had verified the bank reconciliations against bank statements and payments for all accounts for the final quarter of the 2025/26 financial year, to 31st March 2026.

8. To verify online bank statements against bank reconciliations – to note that Cllr C Ibbotson had verified the bank statements against bank reconciliations for all accounts to 31st March 2026

It was noted that Cllr C Ibbotson had verified the bank statements against bank reconciliations for all accounts for the final quarter of the 2025/26 financial year, to 31st March 2026.

9. Energy performance certificate

Recommended for approval

To accept the quote from FEP Energy for the energy performance certificate renewal, at a cost of £225.

10. Memorial inspections

Recommended for approval

To accept the quote from Memsafe for undertaking memorial inspections on four areas of the cemetery, containing 602 memorials, at a cost of £2,257, supporting also the recommendation of the Estates Working Party.

11. Grant aid

It was noted that Countesthorpe Parish Council was mentioned in an article in The Herald, from Greenfield Primary School PTFA, giving thanks to those who contributed to the cost of a new adventure trail within the school grounds.

12. S106 payment

There was nothing to discuss.

13. To receive any correspondence

There was no correspondence.

14. Matters arising for information purposes

There was nothing to raise.

15. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 10th June 2026.