

CHAPEL-EN-LE-FRITH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & Assets Committee held on 5th December 2025 at 4pm at the Town Hall, Chapel-en-le-Frith

Present: Cllrs M Chantler, Miss M Daniels, T Gilfillan, P Ockenden & S Young (Chair)
and C Williams

In Attendance: Ms G Turner, Clerk

26/361 Apologies for absence – were received from Councillor Adshead who had requested and was granted a leave of absence until the New Year and Councillor Perkins who was unable to attend due to illness.

26/362 Declarations of Interests - None.

26/363 To agree any variation of order of business – None.

26/364 Matters to be discussed following the exclusion of press and public - It was **resolved** to exclude members of the press and public under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s1 to agenda items 26/280 and 9.

26/365 Public Speaking - There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

26/366 To approve the minutes of the previous meeting – All **agreed** that the Chair be authorised to sign, as being a true and correct record, the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 3rd October 2025. The Chair signed the minutes.

To receive updates on Action from previous Minutes

26/280 To receive and consider feedback from the Bowling Club Working Group – Councillor Chantler proposed and Councillor Williams seconded that the amended draft document, which was collectively agreed upon, is adopted as a negotiating point with the Bowling Club. All **agreed**.

It was also agreed that the Bowling Club will be offered 2 options for annual rent. One with the Park Manager's costs for time included and one without.

It was further agreed that the Bowling Club rent would not be increased for the 2025 season, whilst negotiations took place.

26/367 To consider any changes to current reserves - It was **agreed** to move the Neighbourhood Plan Reserves to Planning Consultant advice, in order that the Parish Council can effectively oppose the housing development proposed at Crossings Road.

It was also agreed to move the £4,000 allocated in the 2025/26 budget for election costs to reserves.

26/368 To consider the budget for 2026/27 - Councillor Young proposed and Councillor Chantler seconded that the Parish Council reinstates the Community Awards. All **agreed**.

Councillor Ockenden proposed and Councillor Gilfillan seconded that staff should be paid the Real Living Wage of £13.45 per hour (2026/27), rather than the National Minimum Wage. All **agreed**.

Following discussion, changes to the following budget lines were also agreed, subject to ratification at the full Council Meeting in January:

- Reduce Members Travel (NC1109) to £500 – reason: court case finished.
- Reduce IT systems & Support (NC1129) to £500 – reason: no equipment renewal scheduled for 2026.
- Increase recruitment advertising (NC1130) to £500 – reason: prudence.
- Decrease Publicity (NC1132) to £1,500 – reason: actual 2025/26 costs. lower than anticipated and not expected to increase in 2026/27.
- Increase Community Awards (NC1141) to £1,000 – reason: benefits community.
- Decrease Legal/Professional fees (NC1156) to £50,000 – reason: complaint has now been resolved.
- Increase Neighbourhood Plan (NC1161) to £5,000 – reason: commencement of process to renew the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Increase Special Projects (NC1165) to £2,000 – reason: planned increase in community events.
- Increase 47-49 Market Street Repairs/Maintenance (NC1168) to £25,000 – reason: improvements planned to flat
- Increase Health and safety (NC12169) to £5,000 - reason: actual spend during 2025/26 higher than anticipated and likely to remain the same in 2026/27.
- Increase the remaining budget lines by the previous 12 months average CPI.
- Increase seasonal Park Keeper's hours (NC1302) to 1 day per week all year with hours increased between 1 April and 30 September as currently.

Once other Parish Council Committees have completed their draft budgets, the figures will be combined and a precept demand determined by full Council. This may result in adjustments to the above figures.

Councillor Ockenden left the meeting at this point.

26/369 Motion from Councillor Ms Daniels - Review of Staff Payment and Reimbursement Practices - That this Council requests a full review of the current arrangements whereby Council staff make purchases using their personal bank accounts and subsequently reimburse themselves. The review should include:

- why personal accounts are being used;
- a summary of all occurrences this financial year;
- clarification of authorisation and internal controls;
- confirmation of compliance with Financial Regulations and audit requirements;
- recommendations for a formal and compliant purchasing procedure going forward.

A written report is to be provided to the next relevant Finance Committee

It was noted that the parish Council does not currently have a debit card and therefore staff have to use their personal cards to make online purchases or at shops where the Parish Council does not have an account.

Councillor Williams seconded the motion, and it was agreed to investigate whether a debit card can be obtained for the Parish Council's bank account. It was also agreed that The Responsible Finance Officer and the Parish Council Chair should be the authorised to hold the card(s).

It was also agreed to amend the Financial Regulations to reflect the new card(s).

26/370 To consider the date for the next meeting – to be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 6.30pm.

CHAIR