



Coxheath Parish Council

**Minutes of a Finance Committee Meeting held on
Thursday 9 April 2026 at 7pm in the Parish Office, Stockett Lane, Coxheath**

Present: Cllr. I. Laponder (Chairman), Cllr. N. Gardner and Cllr. H. Weaver

In attendance: Louise Goldsmith (Parish Clerk).

MINUTES

01/26 Administration

Fire Exits, Fire Meeting Point, Mobile Phones. There were no intentions to record the meeting.

02/26 Apologies for Absence, Declarations and Dispensations

- a) Apologies for absence: **An apology for absence was given by Cllr. Parker and the reason for absence was accepted.**
- b) To receive Declarations of Interest in respect of matters contained in the agenda.
Disclosable Interests: Under the Localism Act 2011.
Other Significant Interests: **None received.**
Other Interests: **None received.**
- c) Requests for Dispensations: **None received.**
- d) Declarations of Lobbying: **None received.**

03/26 Minutes of the last meeting

Resolved: That the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on the 12 February 2026 be approved and confirmed as a true and accurate record

04/26 Open Session

No members of the public present.

05/26 Insurance Cover

a) Renewal Date and LTA Agreement

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council entered into a 3 year Long Term Agreement with Clear Councils last year. The policy was taken out on the 11 June 2026 with Clear Councils for a premium of £1706.56.

b) To review the Policy Schedule

Members reviewed the policy schedule. The Clerk was asked to find out whether the policy covers the cost of any data breach or data recovery. The Clerk suggested that the Parish Council considers appointing an external Data Processing Officer. The Clerk was asked to obtain some information and quotes from outside providers. It was noted that the policy offers some event insurance.

Signed:

- c) To review the cover for the tablets

It was noted that there is currently £33,000 of cover for office contents and that there is declared value of £27,500 under this section of the policy which would be sufficient to cover the ten tablets. However, the Clerk was asked to check if the fact that tablets are used by Councillors in their own homes as well at meetings is included in the cover.

06/26 Investment of Reserves

It was noted that the Clerk has completed and submitted an application to the CCLA to invest £80,000 into the Public Sector Deposit Fund. The Clerk has also completed an online application to open a 95 day notice account with Hampshire Trust. The Clerk reported that the account is now open and will arrange for £100,000.00 of reserves to be transferred from the NatWest Account. An application to add Cllr. I. Laponder to the Unity Trust mandate has also been submitted. When Cllr. I. Laponder has been added to the account the Clerk will open at third Unity Trust 30 day notice account which will be used to hold some of the remaining reserves.

07/26 Review of expenditure versus budget 2025-2026

Members considered the accounts for 2025-2026 and noted that the total expenditure for the year was £120,797.22 compared to £94,829.87 the previous year. The increase is due to the cost of employing a Locum Clerk for 4 months the purchase of tablets and IT support for all Councillors. The total income for the year was £132,056.13 compared to £119,329.11 the previous year. The increase in income is due to the fact that two years of VAT, a total of £17,089, was claimed.

08/26 Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025-2026

- a) To receive the Internal Auditor Report

Members noted that the internal auditor, Lionel Robbins, attended on the 7 April 2026 and completed the review of the accounts for the period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026. It was noted that the internal auditor has completed and signed page 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

- b) To discuss any recommendations

The Clerk advised that the Internal Auditor will send a more detailed report for Full Council to consider but that overall the Internal Auditor was satisfied.

- c) To receive the Annual Governance Statements

The Clerk advised that it is good practice for the Annual Governance Statements to be read out at a Full Council Meeting. The Clerk explained the significance of some of the statements. It was noted that the AGAR will be presented to the next Full Council meeting for authorisation.

- d) To receive the Accounting Statements

The Accounts Statements were received and will be presented to Full Council.

09/26 Finance

- a) Planning application fees:

It was noted that the Clerk has had to incur extra fees for the services of an architect and tree surgeon to provide the information required by MBC for the planning application for the replacement container. The architect fee will be £775.00 (excluding VAT) and the Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan will cost £680.00 (excluding VAT).

Signed:

b) Replacement Container:

It was noted that in line with the Financial Regulations the Clerk has strived to seek more than one quote for the replacement container but that most contractors insist on a fee to just to carry out site visit and provide a quote. It was agreed, in principle, to accept a quote from the local provider, Lawrence Containers, of £8,450.00 for a replacement 40 foot container in green and with a steel partition wall and high security personnel door. The quote includes the removal of one container but not both. The Clerk was asked to obtain an amended quote and to find out if sleepers are required to go beneath the proposed container.

c) To consider an application for grant funding from the Village Hall Committee

Members considered an application for grant funding of £10,000.00 from the Village Hall Committee to assist with a project of installing an external disabled toilet facility. Members noted that a quote for just under £40,000.00 has been accepted by the Village Hall Committee and that planning permission has been granted. Members were in agreement that the project qualifies for S137 funding as the facility will be of benefit to many users of the recreation ground.

Recommendation to Full Council: To approve a grant of £10,000.00 towards the cost of installing a external disabled toilet.

d) To consider an application for grant funding from the Coxheath Community Coffee Group

Members considered an application for grant funding of £2,000.00 from the Coxheath Community Coffee Group. The group was operating under the support of the Charity 'Involve Kent' who have unfortunately withdrawn funding. Members agreed that the weekly coffee morning offers support for local residents who are socially isolated, vulnerable or have long term health conditions and that the project qualifies for S137 funding. Members agreed that as attendees pay £1.00 a week and the operational costs are less than £2000.00 per year that a grant of £2,000.00 was not required.

Recommendation to Full Council: To approve a grant of £1,000.00 to the Coxheath Community Coffee Group.

e) To discuss self-funding a community warden

Members discussed some information circulated by the Clerk on an initiative for Parish Councils to self-fund a Community Warden. The Clerk advised that in 2024 following a £1m budget reduction for the service the number of wardens was reduced from 70 to 32 and that many communities including Coxheath lost the service. Several Parish Councils approached KCC about opportunities to fund, or part fund a warden. The Clerk explained that Parish Councils could employ their own Community Warden or part-fund a Community Warden employed by KCC. The cost of a full time Community Warden is estimated to be in the region of £50,000.00 per annum. Members agreed that the previous Community Warden had provided an invaluable service. The Clerk was asked to find out if the Parish Council could still self-fund a Community Warden through KCC for 2 days a week.

f) Tree Survey and cost implications of remedial and future works

Members considered the tree condition reports prepared by Down to Earth following a site visit to the recreation ground and Huntingdon Village Green on the 27 March 2026. The reports have identified a number of trees at risk. The arborologist has also recommended that the Parish Council invests in a Woodland Management Plan given the number of woodland areas on the recreation ground that have not been managed in the past and are in need of coppicing. The Clerk was asked to obtain quotes for the urgent remedial works and to ask Down to Earth to quote for preparing a Woodland Management Plan.

Signed:

10/26 Budget Requirements/Reserve Allocation

- a) To review the allocation of reserves.

Members noted that the reserves remain quite high. Reserves have again been retained untouched in the last financial year. It was noted that each Committee/Working Group has been allocated earmarked reserves as tabled below, which will be carried forwards each year to pay for both ongoing and future projects. Cllr. I. Laponder has requested that each Committee and Working Group identifies projects to utilise the allocated reserves.

Recreation and Open Spaces Maintenance/Replacement equipment	40,000.00
Traffic and Community Safety Project	25,084.43
Events Reserves	40,000.00
Operational Reserves	85,000.00
Replacement Containers/Pavilion Project	20,000.00
Tree Management	20,000.00

11/26 Confidential Items: There were none.

12/26 Date of the next meeting: Thursday 20 August 2026 at 7pm in the Parish Office.

With no further business to transact the meeting closed at 8.52pm

Signed:

Date:

Signed: