Coxheath Parish Council

Minutes of a Finance Committee Meeting held on
Thursday 20 August 2026 at 7pm in the Parish Office, Stockett Lane, Coxheath

Present: Cllr. I. Laponder (Chairman), Cllr. D. Carpenter, Cllr. C. Parker and Cllr. H. Weaver
In attendance: Louise Goldsmith (Parish Clerk).

MINUTES

13/26 Administration

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

14/26 Apologies for Absence, Declarations and Dispensations

a) Apologies for absence: **None received.**
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**.

15/26 Minutes of the last meeting

Resolved: That the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on the 9 April 2026 be approved and confirmed as a true and accurate record

16/26 Open Session

No members of the public present.

17/26 Grounds Maintenance Contract 2027-2030

a) To approve the grounds maintenance schedule
Cllr. Weaver suggested some minor amendments to the schedule which were agreed.
b) To consider the following recommendation from the Open Spaces and Recreation Ground Working Group: To invite specific firms and therefore not open up to wider competition nor advertise the opportunity but to follow the requirements of the Legislation regarding the publication of invitations and notices.
Resolved: To approve the recommendation.
c) To agree a list of firms to approach
Resolved: To invite three local companies, Capel Groundcare, Kent Grasslands and Paul Waring Ltd to quote for a three year contract.

Signed: .....

18/26 Proposal to refurbish the Stockett Lane Playground

a) To receive an update on the possible financing of the proposal
It was noted that the Clerk had contacted the S106 team again who have advised that a proposal to refurbish the Stockett Lane playground could be covered under the agreed use of the funding 'towards the cost of improvements refurbishment and replacement of facilities (including pavilions play equipment and play areas ground works and facilities} at Stockett Lane Recreation Ground'. The S106 team has suggested that the Parish Council obtains quotes and submits a proforma requesting that the remaining monies are used for this purpose.

d) To consider the following recommendation from the Open Spaces and Recreation Ground Working Group: To invite specific firms and therefore not open up to wider competition nor advertise the opportunity but to follow the requirements of the Legislation regarding the publication of invitations and notices.

b) Resolved: To approve the recommendation.

c) To agree a list of firms to approach
Resolved: The Clerk to invite fixed quotes from a list of agreed contractors to refurbish the Stockett Lane playground for a maximum sum of £90,000.00 subject to S106 funding approval.

19/26 To review the annual fee for hiring the football pitches
Members discussed increasing the current hire fee for the football pitches of £100.00 per annum. Cllr. Weaver suggested increasing the fee per annum stating that the pitch is currently used by Juniors and that families will need to fund any increase. Cllr. I. Laponder discussed increasing the fee to £300.00 per annum given the number of sessions held.
Resolved: To set the annual fee for hiring the football pitches for the season 2026-2027 at £300.00. The Clerk to send the application form and invoice to the football team.

20/26 Tree Survey: Proposal to accept a quote for the moderate works required.
Members considered quotes for the works required to trees identified as a moderate risk in the recent tree survey.
Resolved: To accept a quote of £6,320.00 (excluding VAT) from Down to Earth for the works required to trees identified as a moderate risk in the recent tree survey.

21/26 Grant Applications: To consider any applications for grant funding: None to consider.

22/26 Projects and Reserve Allocation:
Members considered a list of projects and possible allocation of reserves prepared and circulated by the Clerk. The Clerk explained that the Council has been very proactive in developing a list of projects with a number of new initiatives which of course come with a cost. The Clerk explained that the payments will exceed the receipts this financial year and that the total bank balance is forecasted to be in the region of £280,000 -£300,000 at the end of March 2027. It was noted that a number of projects have already been completed to include the purchase of tablets, a new website, upgrade to the CCTV, donation to the village hall, kissing gates, tree works and the purchase of items for events. Cllr. Parker expressed his concern about some of the recent purchases. The Clerk explained that the purchases were part of the ongoing project list and that unallocated reserves that had been set aside for each committee and working group were being finally utilised. The Clerk reminded Members that the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) Practitioners' Guide states that a Parish Council should maintain a general (un-earmarked) reserve of 3 to 12

months of expenditure. It was agreed that the Parish Council should retain at all times £75-100,000 as an un-earmarked reserve. The Clerk advised that this will leave £180-200,000 as unallocated reserves. Members considered the current list of possible projects and the potential cost. **Agreed by Full Council and currently going ahead**

Recreation ground and Open Spaces Projects		
Container (offset by S106 contribution of 8550) 2026-2027		£2,000.00
Adoption recreation ground 2026-2027		£6,500.00
Recreation ground post adoption works/signs/replacement gate		£4,000.00
Purchase of village green (purchase + legal)		See below
Adoption of Whitebeam and Fairhurst (legal fees and signage)		£8,000.00
Replacement centrepiece noticeboard		£5,000.00
Improvements to village green		£25,000.00
Scout Car Park lease legal fees		Agreed to defer
Scout Car Park repairs		Agreed to defer
Village Hall Playround refurbishment	S106	
New equipment/repairs Whitebeam and Fairhurst		£5,000.00
Surface improvements to Whitebeam	S106	
Improvements to Linden Road car park	S106	
Footpath improvements to Beacon Field and Middle Field	S106	
Community Warden Project		
Proposal for one year trial community warden for 2 days a week		£18,684.00
Events and Communication		
Stage purchase		£2,000.00
Parish Office Refurbishment		£2,000.00

The following recommendations to be considered by Full Council were agreed:

- Full Council to approve a recommendation to fund the services of a KCC Community Warden for 2 days a week for one year as a trial. The estimated cost of the service, £18,684.00, to be funded from reserves.
- Proposal to lease the Scout Hut Car Park: Full Council to agree to not progress a proposal from MBC to lease the car park and wait until the Unitary Authorities are in place when adoption of the area may be possible.

Purchase of the village green: It was noted that the Clerk has obtained a quote of £2,000.00 for an independent valuation of the village green. Members agreed that this cost is prohibitive. The Clerk was therefore asked to contact Golding Homes and advise them that the Parish Council considers a valuation of £25,000.00 for either the freehold or long leasehold, (125 years), seems excessive given that the area is a registered village green and is protected by ancient statutes. The Clerk was asked to advise Golding Homes them that the Parish Council is committed to ensuring this area remains as an open space for residents and would be willing to accept a condition in any contract regarding this and that the Parish Council would like to install some benches and more trees to improve the area. The Clerk will advise Golding Homes that the Parish Council cannot justify spending £25,000.00 of public money on the purchase and that as a starting point advise that the Parish Council would be willing to pay £9,000.00 to adopt the area or lease the area for 125 years. The Clerk was also asked to find out when any payment would be due i.e. would it be upfront or payable pro-rata annually if the Parish Council were to lease the land.

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23/26 Budget 2027-2028

a) To review a draft budget for 2027-2028

Members considered a draft budget for 2027-2028. The Clerk explained that the operational costs of each committee/working group have now been brought into the main budget. The Clerk advised that the Parish Council should budget for payments net of VAT payments. Cllr. Parker disputed this fact, Cllr. I. Laponder supported the Clerk and it was agreed that the budget should be prepared net of VAT payments. A couple of minor amendments were suggested and it was agreed to reconsider the budget for 2027-2028 at the next meeting at which point more should be known about the possible transfer of assets from MBC and associated ongoing costs.

b) To review the precept requirements and call on reserves.

The Clerk explained that the total forecasted payments for 2027-2028 should be calculated and then the precept is assessed and a transfer from reserves is then considered to supplement the precept and/or the precept is increased or decreased. The Clerk reminded Members that the Parish Council resolved to not to reduce the precept last year so that a number of long-standing projects could be progressed. The Clerk stated that the current list of possible projects could absorb the current reserves meaning that the precept will need to increase either next year or the following year to support the ongoing forecasted annual payments. The Clerk reminded Members that the precept has not been increased for many years and that an increase in the precept can easily be justified by the fact that the Parish Council is taking ownership of various assets. Members agreed that the precept will need to increase and a figure of £110,000.00 for the financial year 2027-2028 was discussed and will be reviewed at the next meeting.

24/26 Finances

a) VAT Refund update
The Clerk advised that there has been no communication from HMRC regarding the recent claim for a refund of VAT for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. The Clerk will try and contact HMRC to find out how to change the contact details for the Parish Council so that the claim can be processed.

b) To receive the accounts as at the 31 July 2026
The accounts as at the 31 July 2026 were received.

c) To receive a bank reconciliation as at the 31 July 2026
A bank reconciliation as the 31 July 2026 was received and checked and signed by Cllr. I. Laponder in line with the adopted Financial Regulations.

d) To receive a payments list for approval (to be ratified at the next Full Council meeting)
The payment schedule appended to the minutes and a copy of the invoices had been circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr. I. Laponder checked the invoices on the payment schedule.
Resolved: Cllrs. I. Laponder and Weaver to authorise the payments online. Cllr. I. Lapnder,as the Chair, initialled the payments list in accordance with the adopted Financial Regulations.

25/26 Confidential Items: There were none.

26/26 Date of the next meeting: The Clerk to arrange an interim meeting.

With no further business to transact the meeting closed at 9.15pm

Signed: …… Date: ……

Signed: .....