



Appleton Parish Council

Appleton Parish Hall, Dudlow Green Road, Appleton, WA4 5EQ

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Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee on Thursday 5th June 2025 at 9.45am

Present: - Councillor P Walker, Councillor L Chapman, Councillor G Chapman, Councillor P Lewenz up to 10.15am, Councillor K Critchley.

Clerk, Mrs J Monks and Assistant Clerk K Pepper.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, Councillor L Chapman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Members Code of Conduct

Councillor P Walker declared an interest in relation to any planning applications as he was a substitute member of the Development Control Committee.

3. Terms of Reference for the Finance and General Purposes Committee

Recommended that;

The following terms of reference for the Finance and General Purposes Committee were adopted as follows;

The following terms of reference were adopted for the Finance and General Purposes Committee;

1. The members of the Finance and General Purposes Committee are approved by the Parish Council.
2. The Committee will be elected annually at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.
3. The Chair will be elected annually by the Parish Council or at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.
4. The quorum of the Committee will be three Parish Councillors.
5. Only those appointed may vote at a meeting. In the case of an equal vote, the Chair shall have a second or casting vote. If any member of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting cannot be present, then the committee member may nominate a substitute in their absence. Confirmation of this substitute must be sent in writing to the clerk.

6. The Clerk/Assistant Clerk will call a meeting of the Committee and send out the agenda to all Parish Councillors.

7. The Clerk/Assistant Clerk will take Minutes of all meetings and the Minutes must be agreed by the Parish Council. These Minutes are a public document and will be published.

8. The main areas under the remit of the Finance and General Purposes Committee are as follows:

a) to monitor the budget and review the Finances of the Parish Council with the Responsible Financial Officer/Assistant Clerk on a quarterly basis;

b) to make recommendations on expenditure to the Parish Council;

Finance and General Purposes Committee members can approve expenditure as follows;

Revenue Items (any amount)

Capital Items (up to the value of £5,000).

All expenditure authorised by the Finance & General Purposes Committee will be advised to the full parish council meeting each month.

Any grant applications can only be recommended by the Finance and General Purposes Committee. Only the full Parish Council can approve grant applications.

c) to approve the banking reconciliation statements prior to submission to the Chair of the Parish Council and the Parish Council.

d) to review the budget annually in respect of budget setting for the following year and to make recommendations to the Parish Council;

e) to consider the parish precept annually;

f) to examine the internal and external auditors reports and make recommendations as appropriate;

g) to consider all financial requests to the Parish Council (including grant requests);

h) to consider ad hoc financial requests throughout the year;

g) to consider all matters relating to the Parish Hall maintenance;

i) to review the overall management of the Parish Hall and make decisions on the operational running of the hall.

j) to review the Parish Assets and make recommendations as appropriate.

9. The Clerk will be responsible for bringing any changes in legislation/good working practices to the attention of the Committee for consideration thus ensuring that the Parish Council procedures are up to date and relevant.

10. The Finance and General Purposes Committee cannot approve any expenditure for any other committee or working party. Any expenditure that needs to be approved for any other committee or working party must be made by the Parish Council.

10. The Finance and General Purposes Committee cannot approve any expenditure for training courses, all training requests must be approved by the Parish Council.

11. The Finance and General Purposes Committee can approve any banking matters or arrangements including authorised persons for banking and bank transfers.

4. Risk Assessments

The general risk assessment was deferred.

Recommended that;

the ranger risk assessment, subject to minor amendments to be approved by the Parish Council.

5. Review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

Error in Existing Standing order numbering sequence and the corresponding misalignment of references in standing orders to other standing orders is to be corrected.

The proposed inclusion of Working Party Meetings into Standing Order 11 was not approved. Three councillors voted against inclusion and one Councillor, Councillor Critchley voted for inclusion

Councillor L Chapman noted a possible solution is to change the impacted Working Group to a Committee subject to Council approval

Councillor Critchley objected to the Filial status of Councillor G Chapman and L Chapman in that voting would be predetermined. Councillor L Chapman stated that both he and Councillor G Chapman were elected councillors and had the same voting rights as other councillors.

Other amendment items were deferred

Councillor P Lewenz left the meeting at 10.15am.

Recommended that;

The Financial Regulations were to be adopted with the proposed amendments.

6. IT policy

Councillor K Critchley asked if a list of policies could be provided for the next Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting.

This item was deferred pending clarification from Cheshire Association of Local Councils.

7. Reserves Policy

This item was deferred, and the Clerk was asked to clarify a term with Cheshire Association of Local Councils.

8. Policy Reviews

Recommended that;

The following policies are to be confirmed by the Parish Council;

- (a) Health and Safety Policy
- (b) Lone Working Policy
- (c) Diversity Policy with amendments.
- (d) Data Protection Policy, documentation, and data schedule.
- (e) Publication Scheme
- (f) Complaint procedure
- (g) Social Media Policy

9. Gas incident at the Parish Hall on 9th May 2025

On Wednesday 9th May 2025 a hall hirer entered the hall for their booking and smelt gas. The gas hob was on but with no flame. They cancelled their booking and called the emergency gas company – Cadent.

Cadent attended the Parish Hall and they checked the hall and confirmed that everything was fine. The Cadent gas people advised a new cooker with a flame failure device would be advisable for the Parish Hall.

Prices for a new cooker with gas hob are up to £400 plus VAT but then it is up to £150 to install and £25 for recycling the old appliance. It would be up to £600 plus VAT for a new oven and gas hob.

RESOLVED that;

A new gas hob and oven would be/would not be purchased at the cost of up to £600 plus VAT.

The clerk has removed the hall hire charge for the affected booking on Wednesday 9th May 2025 however the hall hirer as requested additional financial compensation due to loss of earnings.

RESOLVED that;

The Parish Council could not provide any financial compensation due to loss of earnings as the cancellation was due to circumstances beyond the Parish Council's control as per the terms of the tenancy agreement for the hall.

10. Bank Transfers to cover future ongoing payments

RESOLVED that;

The amount of £80,000 was to be transferred from the Hanley Building Society to the NatWest current account on 14th August 2025.

RESOLVED that;

The expenditure of up to £100 was approved for any associated costs for the withdrawal, including proof of ID and bank transfer charges.

11. Replacement defibrillator cabinet at Appleton Parish Hall

RESOLVED that;

The expenditure of up to £900 plus VAT was approved for a replacement defibrillator cabinet and for an electrician to fit it.