



Appleton Parish Council

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

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Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee on Thursday 15th
January 2026 at 10 am

Present: -

Committee Members Cllr L Chapman (Chair), Cllr G Chapman, Cllr Ken Critchley
Cllrs: Cllr P Lewenz – Substituted for Cllr H Speed
Clerk: Karen Newton
Public: None Present

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, Cllr L. Chapman, welcomed all attendees to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received and noted as follows:

- Cllr H Speed – Prior engagement
- Cllr P. Walker – No apologies received
- Cllr J. Wheeler – Prior engagement

2. Members Code of Conduct

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

3. Public Participation

No members of the public were present.

4. Minutes

There were no minutes to approve.

5. Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED: That, under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of items 6–11, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, namely matters relating to the Council's budget and precept setting.

The resolution was proposed by Cllr Ghazala Chapman and seconded by Cllr Peter Lewenz.

6. Current Financial Position

The Committee reviewed the income and expenditure to date, discussed reserves and earmarked reserves (noting that amendments are required), and noted any significant variances. Further review of the reserves was deferred to a future meeting.

7. Draft Budget for 2026/27

The Committee considered the draft budget lines prepared by the Clerk/RFO, including a review of projected income streams and anticipated expenditures. Adjustments and prioritisation of spending areas were discussed, with the following changes noted:

- Addition of a £10,000 allocation for the Community Centre Study and £5,000 for the Medical Centre (Dudlow Green).
- Removal of election-related/contingencies lines, as these costs are already included in the earmarked reserves.

The Committee noted the proposed budget and agreed that it will continue to be refined in line with reserves and priorities.

8. Capital Projects and One-Off Expenditure

The Committee discussed ongoing and proposed capital projects, including their feasibility, funding, and timing.

9. Reserves and Financial Risk Management

The Committee discussed the review of general and earmarked reserves, and the consideration of financial risks and contingencies. It was agreed that this matter required further in-depth discussion.

RESOLVED: That the review of general and earmarked reserves, and the consideration of financial risks and contingencies, be deferred for further in-depth discussion at the next meeting.

Proposed: Cllr Ghazala Chapman
Seconded: Cllr Peter Lewenz

10. Precept Requirement for 26/27

The Committee discussed budget options, including percentage increase scenarios, the implications for the tax base, and parish priorities. Members noted a proposed precept of £204,872.22, representing an 8.44% increase over the previous year. This equates to an increase of £3.05 annually per Band D property, resulting in a Band D cost of £39.18 per household per year.

11. Recommendation to Full Council

RESOLVED: That the final draft budget and precept recommendation be agreed for presentation to Full Council at the meeting on 20th January 2026.

Proposed: Cllr Laurence Chapman
Seconded: Cllr Ghazala Chapman

A vote by show of hands was taken on the proposal to increase the precept.
Three members voted in favour and one against (Cllr Ken Critchley).

12. Date of Next Meeting

To confirm the date of the next Finance Committee meeting Thursday 5th February 2026
at 9:45 AM.

K Newton – Meeting Closed at 11:35am
Clerk of the Appleton Parish Council

Date of issue 15th January 2026

Dawn Beeth
26th January 2026.