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MINUTES of the Meeting of the FINANCE, GOVERNANCE & ESTATES COMMITTEE held at 7.30pm on Thursday 19 March 2026 at the Hurstpierpoint Village Centre.

Members Present: Cllr Duncan Ranger (Chair) Cllr Shaun Hole Cllr Rodney Jackson Cllr Annette Street

Also present: Sarah Groom, Clerk to the Council & Responsible Finance Officer and Stephen Witchell, Estates & Facilities Manager.

F25/26.117: Apologies for absence: Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Malcolm Llewellyn, Cllr Claire Majsai and Cllr Julia Shorrocks, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee ACCEPTS the apologies for absence from Cllrs Llewellyn, Majsai, and Shorrocks.

F25/26.118: Declarations of Interest: There were no declarations of interest.

F25/26.119: Previous Minutes: The Committee considered the minutes of the Finance, Governance & Estates Committee meeting on 19 February 2026, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED the minutes of the Finance, Governance & Estates Committee meeting held on 19 February 2026.

F25/26.120: Adjournment for questions from the public: There were no members of the public present.

F25/26.121: Parish Council Financial Monitoring for Month 11 (February 2026): The Committee noted:

(i) Payments of £37,599.13 (Ex VAT). Payments did not include the January 2026 salaries but did include £24,215.58 to Sovereign towards the Reeds Lane Play Equipment and £4,310 (excl VAT) to Terrain Surveys for the Cemetery Ground Penetrating Radar, both to be funded by Section 106.
(ii) Receipts of £16,873.07 (VAT N/A). Receipts include £4,310 Section 106 funds for the Cemetery Survey and the Q4 Management Fee paid by the Village Centre of £4,379.
(iii) Bank Reconciliations. These were signed by Cllr Street.
(iv) Balance Sheet.
(v) Nominal Ledger.
(vi) Income and Expenditure.
(vii) The funds held in CCLA shares on 28 February 2026 were £115,747.89.
(viii) The deposits and investments accounts on 28 February 2026 were noted as follows, and it was:

Financial Institution/(Credit Rating)	Account Type	Interest AER %	Maturity Date
Unity Trust (BBB)	Current Account	0	N/A
Unity Trust (BBB)	Savings Account	2.25	N/A
Nationwide (A/A1)	95 Day Savings Account	3.25	95 Days notice
Cambridge & Counties (Not Published)	1 Year Fixed Term	4.35	24/06/2026
Cambridge & Counties (Not Published)	1 Year Fixed Term	4.35	30/11/2026
United Trust Bank (Not Published)	1 Year Fixed Term	4.11	19/12/2026
Hampshire Trust Bank (Not Published)	1 Year Fixed Term	4.00	10/03/2026

RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED the Parish Council financial monitoring for Month 11 (February 2026).

F25/26.122: Village Centre Financial Monitoring for Month 11 (February 2026): The Committee noted:

(i) Payments of £9,214.27 (VAT N/A). This included the Q4 Management Fee to the Parish Council of £4,379, and the external bench refurbishment of £1,496.53.
(ii) Receipts of £3,682.80 (VAT N/A).
(iii) Bank Reconciliations. These were signed by Cllr Street.
(iv) Balance Sheet.
(v) Income and Expenditure.
(vi) Bank accounts held were i) CAF Cash Current Account with 0.2% interest and ii) CAF Gold Savings Account with 1.75% interest. Maturity dates do not apply. The bank credit rating will be requested, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED the Village Centre financial monitoring for Month 11 (February 2026).

F25/26.123: Parish Action Plan: The Committee reviewed the:

(i) The Finance & Governance Action Plan: The Committee noted progress against the three remaining actions. The revised Neighbourhood Plan and new Parish Strategy will transfer to the 2026/7 Action Plan. The Training and Development Policy has been approved and the ongoing councillor and staff training will be monitored.
(ii) The Estates & Facilities Action Plan: The Committee noted all of the progress against the actions. New grave spaces are being identified in the Cemetery and a report will be presented to Council for approval prior to them being sold. There have been delays in the Reeds Lane play equipment project but the bins, benches and picnic tables will all be installed in April. The South Avenue drainage project is underway and will be completed in April, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED the Action Plan updates for 2025/26.

F25/26.124: Estates & Facilities Update: The Committee noted the comprehensive update report and the actions completed since the last meeting, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee NOTED the update report on Estates & Facilities Management.

F25/26.125: Internal Controls: The Committee reviewed the findings from the March 2026 internal controls exercise and agreed to recommend their adoption by Council. Cllr Street identified one amendment with the precept payments wording, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED the findings from the March 2026 internal controls exercise, as amended, and agreed to recommend their adoption by Council.

F25/26.126: Financial Risk Management Review: The Committee considered a briefing note on the Parish Council's exposure to financial risk in 2025/2026 and considered any necessary changes or actions required for 2026/2027. Cllr Street identified an amendment where the medium risk box for Court Bushes Income was coloured green and should be orange. With no actions required, the Committee agreed to recommend it, as amended, to Council for adoption, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED the financial risk management review in respect of the Parish Council's exposure to financial risk in 2025/2026 and agreed to recommend it to Council for adoption, as amended.

F25/26.127: Provisional Year End Processes: The Committee considered a briefing note on the processes and timetable for the completion of the 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 year end Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED the processes and timetable for the completion of the 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 year end Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

F25/26.128: Allocation of Bank Interest to Earmarked Reserves: The Committee considered a briefing note on the proposed year end bank interest allocations to Earmarked Reserves as per the Savings and Investment Policy, and it was:

> **RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED the proposed year end bank interest allocations to Earmarked Reserves as per the Savings and Investment Policy.**

F25/26.129: Year End Adjustments: The Committee considered a briefing note on the year end processes and the provisional adjustments required for the year end to ensure modifications for creditors, debtors, accruals and receipt in advance are allowed for, and agree any transfers to or from the General Reserve and Earmarked Reserves, and it was:

> **RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED the year end processes and the provisional adjustments required for the year end, to ensure modifications for creditors, debtors, accruals and receipt in advance were allowed for. The Committee also agreed the proposed transfers to the Earmarked Reserves.**

F25/26.130: Approval of Contractors 2026/27: The Committee considered a briefing note on the proposed list of approved contractors to be used during 2026/27, and it was:

> **RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED the proposed list of approved contractors to be used during 2026/27.**

F25/26.131: New 3 Year Internal Audit Agreement: The Committee considered a briefing note with two quotes for internal audit services for 2026/7, 2027/8 and 2028/9. The Committee reviewed the service required and the two quotes and agreed to recommend the appointment of Mulberry LAS for three years, to Council for approval, and it was:

> **RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED to recommend to Council, the appointment of Mulberry LAS as the Parish Council's internal auditor for three years (2026/7, 2027/8 and 2028/9).**

F25/26.132: Christmas Lights: The Committee considered a briefing note setting out future proposals for managing the Christmas lights including the appointment of a new contractor to provide the service, and it was:

> **RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED to appoint Light Angels to provide the Christmas lights service for the next three years at an annual cost of £2,899.00 plus VAT, and an additional cost of £894.00 plus VAT every 2 years for anchor testing and certification, including at the start of the contract.**

F25/26.133: To note any further information items, correspondence received or requests: There were no further items.

There being no other business, the Chair closed the meeting at 8.49pm.

Chair