



WENDOVER PARISH COUNCIL

The Clock Tower, High Street, Wendover,
Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP22 6DU

Terms of reference for the Wendover Parish Council Finance Committee

1. Authority

The Finance Committee is appointed by and is solely responsible to Wendover Parish Council (WPC). The Committee's duties are defined and agreed by the Council who may vote, at any time, to modify the Committee's powers. The Committee will meet monthly except in August unless items for the agenda are insufficient.

2. Membership

All members of the Committee will be WPC Councillors.

The membership of the Committee will be reviewed annually but will consist of no less than **five and no more than eight Councillors**. A quorum at the Committee meeting will consist of no fewer than **three Councillors**. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Council will automatically be ex officio members of the Committee with full voting rights if in attendance making the maximum in attendance 10 Councillors.

Any member of the Committee unable to attend a meeting must notify the Clerk* within three working days of the meeting. A reason for absence should be given in order that the Committee can decide whether to accept the apology.

Should a member of the Committee be unable to attend a meeting, they may appoint another Councillor to attend as their substitute. It should be noted however that this should only occur where:

- the meeting may be at risk of being inquorate without such a substitution
- the substitute Councillor has specific knowledge to share which is important to an item on the agenda

The Clerk* must be notified of any substitution within three working days of the meeting. The ordinary member is responsible for ensuring the Councillor attending in his place is fully briefed on the items on the agenda.

The Committee may, by a show of hands, co-opt new permanent members on to the Committee. A new member who has been co-opted onto the Committee may take his place on the Committee immediately following his co-option.

Councillors wishing to resign from a Committee must do so by notifying the Clerk*.

3. Chair of the Committee

At its first meeting, following the Annual Council Meeting, the Committee will elect a Chair to preside at its coming meetings. The Committee will then elect a Vice Chair to the Committee. The Vice Chair cannot be the Chair of Council or a Chair of another Committee.

In the absence of the Chair of the Committee, if present the Vice Chair will preside. If the Vice Chair of the Committee is not present at the meeting the Chair of Council will preside.

In the absence of the Chair of the Committee, the Vice-Chair of Committee and the Chair of Council then first order of business of that meeting will be the nomination, by a show of hands, of a Chair to preside at that meeting. In this occurrence the Committee should consider carefully whether to proceed if it is quorate.

If, by January, the Vice Chair has not chaired a meeting, the Chair of the Committee should consider if it is practical to waive their right to chair the next ordinary meeting. The Chair of the Committee would consider the business being discussed and the frequency of the meetings before waiving this right to Chair.



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If the numbers of Councillors do not permit the role of vice chair can remain unelected. This will be noted in the minutes and this decision reviewed should the number of councillors change.

4. Agenda Setting

The Clerk* and Chair of the Committee will agree the items for the agenda prior to its publication.

Any Councillor wishing to ask for a particular item to be included on the agenda must do so at least **eight working days prior to the meeting date** to allow the request to be considered by the Clerk* and Chair of the Committee. The decision on which items should be included on the agenda is ultimately the responsibility of the Clerk*, it should however be possible for the Chair and the Clerk* to agree together which items should and should not be on an agenda.

No decision should be made about any matter not listed for discussion on the published agenda.

5. Record of Proceedings

Written minutes will be taken by an officer* of the Council. If an officer* is unavailable, a member of the Committee must be nominated at the start of the meeting to take the minutes.

Minutes must include all the Committee's decisions, any advice given by the Clerk even if that advice is not followed. Draft minutes will be circulated to all Councillors no later than 5 clear working days after the Committee meeting. The Clerk* is responsible for arranging the distribution of the minutes and receiving any requests for amendments or additions. Where the Clerk* is in doubt about any requested alteration to the agenda this will be decided by the Committee and noted in the minutes.

6. Public exclusion

If the public is excluded from the meeting a record will be taken of all matters discussed and if not included in the general minutes, attached as a confidential record to be signed with the published draft minutes by the Chair at the next meeting. Should the Clerk be excluded from this part of the meeting, for any reason, the Chair shall take the minute/confidential record. Full minutes, including the confidential record, will be circulated to full Council, noting confidentiality if necessary.

At each meeting the Committee will consider the draft minutes of the previous meeting. The Committee will make a resolution to accept the minutes (which may be subject to minor changes) and the Chair of the meeting will sign them accordingly.

All Councillors are asked to contact the Clerk* at least two working days prior to the Committee meeting if there are any changes they wish to make to the draft minutes.

7. Responsibilities

Primary Purpose: to manage the Council's financial resources and to debate and recommend strategy and action on policy and operational matters concerned with Council's finances.

The Finance Committee has the following specific duties: -

- a) To prepare budgets and recommend precepts for submission to the Council for approval.
- b) To ensure adequate financial controls are in place to utilise and protect the Council's finances and assets – to include;
 - insurance of buildings and property
 - maintenance of the asset register
- c) To review and if necessary, amend the Council's Financial Regulations on an annual basis and ensure the Council is observing the regulations.



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- d) To monitor and effect compliance with laid down internal and external audit and other financial procedures, regulations and statutes.
- e) To monitor, and where appropriate, recommend the purchase of capital items.
- f) To make provision for future agreed capital projects.
- g) To review Council Fees and Charges on a regular basis
- h) To monitor the Council's financial risk assessments and recommend changes where necessary.
- i) To establish and effect a clear policy for grant administration.
- j) To approve other Committee's annual spending/budget levels and capital projects to be undertaken and recommend implementation of the same to the Council.
- k) To approve, within budgetary limits, day to day expenditure. To appoint the Responsible Financial Officer to oversee the Council's financial affairs (normally the Clerk)
- l) To regularly review the Council's banking and deposit arrangements.

8. Delegated power

The Committee makes recommendations to the Council regarding the matters it debates. The Committee is however given full delegated power with regards to the following activities;

- a) To approve expenditure within the agreed budget limits.
- b) To approve minor amendments to the RBS accounting system (or any such system that replaces it)
- c) To approve grant applications with a value of up to £5000 submitted to WPC.
- d) To review and recommend the Council's policies except those related to HR and Health & Safety
- e) To arrange future meetings of the Committee
- f) To co-opt new members onto the Committee
- g) To accept apologies from Committee members
- h) To resolve to accept the minutes of the Committee
- i) To delegate decisions to the Clerk

Where the Council believes it to be appropriate, it may resolve to delegate additional specific decisions to the Committee.

Note: that in emergency situations, where delaying a decision would lead to a cost to the Council, any decisions regarding the investment of the Council's reserves can be made by the Clerk under advisement of the Chair of Finance (PC14/123).

The setting of the precept cannot legally be delegated as a decision to be taken by a Committee.

9. Public Participation

Committee meetings are held in public but are not 'public meetings'. The meetings are open to the public unless their presence would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business, or items of business to be transacted. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting will be by a resolution which shall give the reason(s) for the public's exclusion.

The period of time which is set aside for public participation is at the Committee Chair's discretion but in general will not exceed 15 minutes. Individuals will have a maximum of 3 minutes each. Further information can be found in the Standing Orders of Wendover Parish Council.

10. Conduct at Committee Meetings

Committee member are expected to abide by the WPC Code of Conduct at all times.

Although debate at Committee meetings is often less formal than at the Council meeting, Councillors may at the discretion of the Chair still be asked to raise their hand to speak and to only speak when invited to by the Chair.



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All Councillors must:

- respect other members' right to express their opinions
- not interrupt members or officers when they are speaking
- consider all views before coming to a conclusion on an item on the agenda

Clear and concise resolutions are required at all times to avoid ambiguity in the minutes and to ensure that the intention of the resolution is conveyed to the members for them to vote on.

*** In this document where marked, "Clerk" should be read as "Clerk or their delegated officer"**