



COPYTHORNE PARISH COUNCIL

A meeting of the Finance Advisory Committee was held via Zoom Video Conference on Wednesday November 26th 2025 starting at 1pm.

Members of Advisory Committee present:

Voting:- Cllrs Graham Chillcott (Chair); Sherri Johnstone; Jackie Rhodes; Sylvia Wiggins;

Non Voting:- Mr. David Rigby – Clerk and RFO

A G E N D A (with draft notes of discussion)

1. Apologies for absence.

None

2. Declarations of Interest.

None

3. Review of notes of previous meeting (September 11th 2025)

All voting members present at the last meeting were happy that the notes of the meeting held on May 1st 2025 accurately reflected the discussions.

4. To discuss and approve a recommendation to Council of the 2026/27 Budget and Precept.

The RFO presented an initial draft of the 2026/27 Budget which was discussed line by line by the Advisory Committee members. The voting members also considered that it would be prudent to include a reserve sum to cover any currently unknown financial consequences that might arise from the impact of the current Local Government Re-Organisation. A sum of £1,000 was agreed. Following those discussions the proposed budget (amended copy attached) totalled £30,640, an increase of £375 (equating to a 1.2% rise) on the 2025/26 budget of £30,265).

The RFO advised that with no transfer of earmarked reserves for a specific project (£1,500 included in the 2025/26 budget) and a lower level of expected bank interest of £300 (£400 in the 2025/26 budget) the 2026/27 budget would result in a required Precept of £30,340 (an increase of £1,975 equating to £1.48pa increase for Band D properties) which is a 6.5% rise on the 2025/26 Precept of £28,365)

The budget and precept as detailed above was proposed by GC, seconded by SW, all voting members in favour.

ACTION – RFO to prepare reports recommending the 2026/27 Budget and the proposed Precept for approval at the Council meeting on December 9th 2025.

5. To discuss and agree a recommendation to Council for proposed changes to the Terms of Reference (“ToRs”) for the Finance Advisory Committee.

Members discussed the changes suggested by the Clerk in the report prepared for this item
All voting members agreed to recommend the changes to a future meeting of Council as part of a wider ongoing review of the ToRs for all of the Advisory Committees

6. Discussion of other matters relating to the Aims and Responsibilities of the Finance Advisory Committee.

None

7. Agree date for next meeting.

Thursday February 19th 2026, 12pm (provisional)

Meeting closed at 1.43pm

Copythorne Parish Council – Finance Advisory Committee Meeting – Nov 26th 2025

Item 3 – Review of notes of previous meeting (September 11th 2025)

A meeting of the Finance Advisory Committee was held via Zoom Video Conference on Thursday September 11th 2025 starting at 1pm.

Members of Advisory Committee present:

Voting:- Cllrs Graham Chillcott; Sherri Johnstone; Jackie Rhodes; Sylvia Wiggins;

Non Voting:- Mr. David Rigby – Clerk and RFO

A G E N D A (with draft notes of discussion)

1. Election of a Chair

Cllr. Rhodes proposed Cllr. Chillcott, seconded by Cllr. Wiggins - Carried

2. Apologies for absence.

None

3. Declarations of Interest.

None

4. Review of notes of previous meeting (May 1st 2025)

All voting members present at the last meeting were happy that the notes of the meeting held on May 1st 2025 accurately reflected the discussions.

5. Verbal update on Conclusion of Audit for 2024/25 and new requirements for 2025/26 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (DR).

DR (as RFO) advised that the External Auditor issued the "External Auditor's Report and Certificate" (Section 3 of the AGAR) on July 29th 2025. No issues were raised. The Notice of Completion of Audit (and Sections 1-3 of the AGAR) was added to the Council's website on August 4th 2025. A paper copy of the notice was also added to all seven Council noticeboards and remained in place for a period of 14 days.

He further advised that BDO LLP will continue as External Auditor for 2025/26 and that an additional requirement "Assertion 10" relating to Digital and Data compliance will be added to the AGAR. DR concluded by advising that he will be attending a Digital and Data Compliance workshop being run by HALC on November 13th 2025.

Members of the Advisory Committee asked that their thanks for the RFOs hard work on the 2024/25 AGAR and the finances of the Council in general be noted.

6. Review of the report prepared by the Responsible Financial Officer of expected income and expenditure against the approved budget for the six months to September 30th 2025. (DR)

DR (as RFO) talked members through a copy of his report. Report noted, no questions raised.

7. Discussion of other matters relating to the Aims and Responsibilities of the Finance Advisory Committee.

DR advised that with the Advisory Committee system in place for over five years he felt that it was time to ask each Advisory Committee to review their aims and responsibilities. As RFO he would undertake this review and present his thoughts at a future meeting. Members noted this.

8. Agree date for next meeting.

Thursday November 20th 2025, 12pm (provisional)

Meeting closed at 1.21pm

ITEM 4 - To discuss and approve a recommendation to Council of the Budget & Precept for 2026-27

EXPENDITURE	2025-26		NOTES FOR 2026-27	2026-27	2026-27
	BUDGET	SPEND ?		BUDGET	UPLIFT
1.Clerk's Costs	£	£			
Salary	15400	15300	Allows for Clerks Pay Review & possible increase in employer NI	16500	7.1
Room Allowance	300	300	No increase	300	0.0
Mileage	240	240	No change from 2025-26 budget	240	0.0
Payroll	165	140	No increase on 2024-25 budget	165	0.0
Section Total	16105	15980		17205	6.8
2.Office Costs					
Gen Office Admin	125	125	No change from 2025-26 budget	135	8.0
Office Phone	220	200	No change from 2025-26 budget	220	0.0
IT Equip	170	170	Continue to build reserve	200	17.6
Virus Protection	50	50	Increase on expected 2025-26 spend	60	20.0
Data Protection	35	47	Increase to reflect expected uplift	55	57.1
Software Licenses (inc. Zoom)	250	250	Increase on expected 2025-26 spend	300	20.0
Bank Charges	50	51	Increase to reflect expected uplift	75	50.0
Section Total	900	893		1045	16.1
3.General Admin					
Room Hire & Broadband	550	550	Reflects expected Parish Hall & other hall rent increases	600	9.1
Stationery/Postage/Printing	220	320	Increase on 2025-26 spend (partly covered by contingency)	350	59.1
Newsletter	700	675	Increase on expected 2025-26 spend	700	0.0
Stanley's Own Magazine	250	200	No change from 2025-26 budget	250	0.0
Annual Parish Meeting	50	50	No change from 2025-26 budget	50	0.0
Defib Consumables	200	205	Expected extra cost of consumables	250	25.0
Website Maintenance	700	720	Increase on expected 2025-26 spend	750	7.1
Section Total	2670	2720		2950	10.5
4.Subs/Mandatory/Grants					
HALC/NALC Subs	1050	1018	Reflects expected subscriptions	1100	4.8
SLCC Subs	220	190	No change from expected 2025-26 spend	220	0.0
NFDC GIS/Parish Online	150	250	Covers cost of both (after reduced Parish Online discount)	250	66.7
Audit Fees	660	650	Increase on expected 2025-26 spend	700	6.1
Insurance	800	851	Expected based on rising market despite "Long Term Agreement"	900	12.5
Elections	0	0	Sufficient reserves held to cover cost of full elections	0	0.0
Training	500	1000	Allows for ongoing costs	500	0.0
S137 Grants	500	1000	Increase to expand grant making to local organisations	1000	100.0
Wreath	30	20	No change from 2025-26 budget	30	0.0
CPRE Subscription	40	36	Reflects expected subscription	40	0.0
Section Total	3950	5015		4740	20.0
5.Misc					
Chair's Allowance	250	250	No change from 2025-26 budget	250	0.0
External Asset Maint.	250	250	No change from 2025-26 budget	250	0.0
Telephone Boxes	0	0	Expected maintenance spend	250	#DIV/0!
Splitwind Pond	0	410	Expected maintenance spend	500	#DIV/0!
Lengthsman CPC	500	500	Continue to build reserve in expectation of HCC budget cut	500	0.0
SectionTotal	1000	1410		1750	75.0
6.Playground					
RPII Operational Inspection	110	100	Modest increase on expected 2025-26 spend	125	13.6
RPII Annual Inspection	110	100	Modest increase on expected 2025-26 spend	125	13.6
Maintenance	220	1250	Increasing level of maintenance required as playground ages	500	127.3
Longer term maintenance	500	500	Building up reserve	500	0.0
Playground Insp. Training	200	200	No change from 2025-26 budget	200	0.0
Section Total	1140	2150		1450	27.2
Other Items/Projects					
Contingency Fund	500	100	No change from original 2025-26 budget	500	0.0
Benches	500	500	Donations should cover any new benches	0	-100.0
Website switch to gov.uk	750	750	Likely cost of required switch	0	-100.0
War Memorial Cleaning	500	500	Funds budgeted in 2025/26 expected to cover estimated cost	0	-100.0
Environmental Projects	250	500	Reserve built up from previous underspends	0	-100.0
Village Gates	2000	2000	Reserves/Grants should cover any new projects in 2026-27	0	-100.0
Possible consequences of LGR	0	0	To create reserve in case of Local Government Re-organisation impact	1000	#DIV/0!
Section Total	4500	4350		1500	-66.7
TOTAL	30,265	32,518		30,640	1.2
INCOME	BUDGET	RECEIPT?			
Precept	28,365	28365	2026-27 Precept increase of £1,975*	30,340	7.0
Bank Interest	400	300	Expected interest income	300	-25.0
Transfers from Reserves	1,500	3910		0	-100.0
TOTAL	30,265	32575	(* Precept increase of £1.48 pa for avg Band D property)	30,640	1.2

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Item 5 – To discuss and agree a recommendation to Council for proposed changes to the Terms of Reference for the Finance Advisory Committee.

Background

During discussion of Item 7 at the September 11th 2025 meeting of the Finance Advisory Committee titled “*Discussion of other matters relating to the Aims and Responsibilities of the Finance Advisory Committee*”, the Clerk (as Responsible Financial Officer) advised that with the Advisory Committee system in place for over five years he felt that it was time to ask each Advisory Committee to review their aims and responsibilities. As RFO he would undertake this review for the Finance Advisory Committee and present his thoughts at a future meeting. Members noted this.

Current Position

Attached is an extract from the Council’s Terms of Reference for Advisory Committees that relates to Advisory Committees in general and the Finance Advisory Committee in particular. Detailed in red are recommended additions and struck through in black are recommended deletions.

Required Action

Councillor members are asked to consider the proposed changes and agreed a proposed revision of the Terms of Reference as they relate to the Finance Advisory Committee for adoption by the Council at a future Council meeting as part of a review of the Terms of Reference for all of the Council’s Advisory Committees.

David Rigby
Clerk/RFO to Copythorne Parish Council
November 17th 2025

Copythorne Parish Council

Advisory Committees: Terms of Reference

(Adopted 10/06/2025)

**** EDITED FOR FINANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ONLY****

Copythorne Parish Council

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

The role of Advisory Committees

The role of Advisory Committees is to progress the Council's day to day service delivery and to develop strategy.

Advisory Committees are not empowered to make decisions on behalf of the Council.

Under Copythorne Parish Council's Standing Orders Advisory Committees are constituted as follows:

- a. The Council may appoint Advisory Committees comprised of a number of councillors and non-councillors.
- b. Advisory Committees are constituted to implement the decisions of the Council as are specifically identified in their Terms of Reference and may only use the resources as delegated by the Council and have no mandate to make decisions on behalf of the Council save as are delegated necessary to act in that capacity.
- c. Advisory Committees must report on activities in the period since the last meeting (or identify that no activities were conducted) to Council at meetings in order that progress against Terms of Reference may be noted and decisions may be ratified.
- d. Advisory Committees or their individual members cannot under any circumstances undertake activities involving other agencies, bodies or individuals which commit the Council to any financial, legal or promotional / advisory functions without reference to the Council and its approval. All communications with external agencies, bodies or individuals should notified to the Clerk to maintain audit trails of any developments.

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TERMS OF REFERENCE: Advisory Committees

A. Finance Advisory Committee

Aim:

The aim of the Finance Advisory Committee is to oversee and advise the Council on all matters relating to Financial and other risk management

Responsible for:

1. Preparing budgets and recommending precepts and submit them to the Council for approval
2. Monitoring quarterly reports - prepared by the Responsible Financial Officer - of income and expenditure against the approved budget and recommend virements between budget lines as required
3. Ensuring that an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the Council's records and control systems is maintained as required by the Accounts and Audit regulations
4. Reviewing and recommend the Council's Financial Regulations annually and to ensure that the Council is observing those regulations
5. Monitoring compliance with laid down internal and external audit and other financial procedures, regulations and statutes
6. Recommending to Council the Annual Return and as part of the process to:-
 - a. Consider the Annual Accounts
 - b. Ensure that the asset register is up to date
 - c. Consider any risk management issues
7. Reviewing the Council's cash (and if applicable investment) reserves so that they may be kept at a level appropriate to financial risk; also identify and earmark reserves for specific projects
8. Regularly reviewing & recommending the Council's Banking, Investment and Insurance arrangements
9. Monitoring and where appropriate recommend purchase of all capital items
10. Assessing and recommending provision for future capital projects
11. Monitoring, reviewing and recommending on all matters relating to the Council's staff levels, emoluments and conditions of service passed to it by the **Personnel & Governance** HR Advisory Committee (the Clerk will not participate in discussions related to their own emoluments other than to confirm that funding is available within the Council's budget)
12. Monitoring the Council's financial risk assessments and recommend changes where necessary
13. Establishing, recommending and then implementing a clear policy for grant administration, both incoming and outgoing
14. To examine and where relevant recommend to Council future possible models for Council operations in respect of funding of initiatives and activities, either in partnership with others or in specific task arrangements with the broader Parish community and other partners.
15. Recommending to the Council such delegated powers to the Clerk as though appropriate

Members

- Voting Membership of the Committee shall comprise the Chairman of the Council; the Vice Chair of the Council; and a minimum of two/maximum of three other Councillors elected annually by the Council at the Annual Parish Council Meeting in May
- The Clerk (in their role as Responsible Financial Officer is a non-voting member).
- The voting members of the Finance Advisory Committee will elect a Chairman annually
- Membership of Committees may be changed at any Council meeting.
- Councillors may be co-opted to join during the year if authorised by Council.

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- Due to the nature of items to be discussed, non-councillors will not be invited to join the Finance Advisory Committee.
- Three voting members shall constitute a quorum for meetings.

Meetings

- Are to be held in such locations that are legal and practical for members to attend and that result in minimal financial burden on the Council.
- The Finance Advisory Committee will ~~as a minimum~~, meet regularly, **usually** four times a year (**and** usually in the month following a financial quarter end) in order to conduct current business as determined in the Terms of Reference and as instructed by the Council.
- In addition, a **further fifth** meeting **may** will be held in November each year to confirm the recommended budget and requested precept for the following financial year **if not already included as an item in the regular cycle of meetings above**. ~~(non-councillor members of the Financial Advisory Committee, if any, will not be permitted to attend this meeting).~~
- In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 (s.100) the public are able to attend and observe meetings of the Finance Advisory Committee but do not have the right to participate (unless invited to do so by the Chairman of the meeting). Dates of meetings will be published on the Council's website.
- Agendas are to be prepared by the Clerk in consultation with the Chair of the Finance Advisory Committee and distributed (with any written reports) to all members of the Council a minimum of five working days prior to any meeting. Any agenda item that could result in a request for action by the Council must be accompanied by a written report. The Clerk is to arrange for a copy of the agenda (and any supporting papers) to be added to the Council's website at the same time.
- The Clerk (or in his absence from the meeting an appointed member of the Finance Advisory Committee) is - within five working days of the meeting - to forward to the Chairman of the Finance Advisory Committee notes of the meeting for approval. The approved notes are to be distributed to all members of the Council within seven working days of the meeting. A copy is also to be published on the Council's website at the same time.

Decisions and Delegated Powers

- The Finance Advisory Committee is constituted to implement the decisions of the Council as specifically identified in its Terms of Reference and may only use resources as delegated by the Council **and in accordance with the terms of that delegation**. The Finance Advisory Committee has no mandate to make decisions on behalf of the Council

Reporting to Council

- The Chair of the Finance Advisory Committee must submit to the Clerk of the Council any report arising from its meetings that includes recommendations to Council in accordance with Standing Order 9 ("Motions for a meeting that require written notice to be given to the Proper Officer").
- Clear and concise recommendations are required at all times to avoid ambiguity in the motions to the Council to ensure that the intention of the resolution is conveyed to the members for them to vote.