

FENSTANTON PARISH COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

Finance and Constitution Committee

held in the Church Centre, Fenstanton on Thursday 3rd September 2026

Present: Cllr M Hewitt, Cllr S King, Cllr K Mitchell, Cllr A Puntambekar and Cllr T Yates
In attendance: S Barber (Clerk) A Watchman (assistant). One member of public.

Minutes

1. **To receive any apologies of absence and to receive any declarations of interest**
   Comments and observations from members of the public (NB comments should be relevant to items on this agenda only).
   Apologies – Cllr M Collison and Cllr H Howatt. – Apologies accepted.
   Declarations – None.

2. **To approve the minutes of the Finance and Constitution Meeting held on Thursday 27th November 2025.**
   Cllr M Hewitt Proposed The minutes were a true record of the meeting held on Thursday the 27th of November 2025. **Cllr T Yates 2nd. 2 abstain. 3 in favour. RESOLVED Minutes approved.**

3. **Year end, AGAR, External audit and the management of (any) penalties/adverse opinion.**
   Council funds currently stand at approximately £139,248.54.
   Journal funds hold a further £40,000.
   Total cash holdings are therefore around £180,000.
   A further precept payment of approximately £112,000 is expected in October.

4. **Financial Position after VAT repayment/ penalties/ interest and update/ future implications on our VAT registration.**
   The Council appears to be in a healthy financial position.
   Adequate reserves should remain available through the end of the financial year.
   Potential liabilities relating to VAT/HMRC investigations remain unknown.

   Action – Ali to contact KTS re Dropbox issues for Councillors.

5. **Management and oversight of various FPC ' activities and involvements', inc Journal, welcome space, Xmas market, BVFD.**
   The Journal
   The Committee noted that the Journal must remain within the Parish Council's arrangements while the current VAT position is being resolved. Members were advised that invoices, including VAT where applicable, had now been issued. It was further noted that different VAT treatments apply depending on the status of the organisation concerned, including commercial organisations, parish councils, registered charities and certain small non-profit organisations. To ensure compliance, organisations seeking VAT relief or exemption will be required to complete a declaration confirming their eligibility and status. Appropriate correspondence will be issued to the relevant organisations.
   The Committee also noted that the Parish Council cannot charge itself for advertising within its own

publication. As a consequence, the current arrangement whereby the Council contributes £2,000 annually for advertising within the Journal will require further review.

Welcome Space

The Committee considered the future governance and management of the Welcome Space activities. Members agreed that the Parish Council could not remain partially involved and that the project should either be brought fully under Council management, with appropriate oversight of safeguarding, training, risk assessments, insurance and financial matters, or operate independently with its own governance and banking arrangements.

It was noted that bringing Welcome Space fully under the Council's management would create a significant administrative burden and require ongoing oversight of compliance, volunteers and training requirements.

The Committee agreed to consult with volunteers before making a final recommendation to Full Council and to explore options for additional support resources.

The Committee further discussed the potential appointment of additional administrative support to assist with the management of community projects and volunteer-led activities. It was agreed to recommend to Full Council that consideration be given to appointing a fixed-term support officer for an initial six-month period, subject to budget availability and the outcome of ongoing discussions regarding the future management of these activities.

Cllr S King Proposed the Parish Council seeks to employ a third person on a fixed term contract to cover the extra work. **Cllr M Hewitt 2nd. All in Favour. RESOLVED to employ third person.**

Christmas Market

The Committee considered the future management of the Christmas Market. It was noted that the Parish Council had already committed funding and site support for the event and that there was interest in aligning its management with that of the Big Village Fun Day. Members expressed a preference for a community-led approach, with responsibility for organising and delivering the event resting with an independent committee rather than the Parish Council.

The Committee agreed in principle that the Parish Council should continue to support the event through grant funding and the provision of land and facilities where appropriate, whilst operational management should be undertaken independently. It was further agreed that ongoing financial support could be considered through the annual budget-setting process.

Cllr K Mitchell Proposed Subject to further discussions with event organisers, the Committee recommends that the Christmas Market transition to an independently managed model supported by Parish Council grant funding. **Cllr M Hewitt 2nd. All in favour. RESOLVED the Christmas market will run independently with PC Grant funding.**

Actions – advertise for new member of staff, ensure Welcome space paperwork/training is correct, meet with volunteers.

6. **New budget for the remainder of this financial year in light of VAT and Journal deficit and any other 'uncosted' commitments.**

7. **First thoughts on next year's budget/precept.**

members identified a number of potential future commitments, including cemetery and memorial projects, green space maintenance and improvements, repairs to play area safety surfacing, and the possible provision of additional play facilities near the Village Hall development. Members also expressed a desire to revisit and progress the Hampton Field Pocket Park project.

The Committee further noted that provision may be required for community initiatives, including Welcome Space activities, village events and event coordination support. Officers were asked to begin developing budget proposals for consideration by the Committee**.**

8. **Bank accounts. Access, authority and signatories, new cards.**

The Committee noted ongoing delays with Lloyds Bank in relation to changes to account signatories, online banking access and other administrative matters. Members expressed concern at the length of time these issues had remained unresolved.

The Committee further agreed that, should the current issues continue, alternative banking providers

should be investigated to ensure more efficient account management. Unity Trust Bank, Barclays and HSBC were identified as potential options for further consideration.
The Committee discussed the current practice of officers purchasing items personally and reclaiming the cost from the Council. Members agreed that a Council debit card would provide a more efficient and transparent process for routine purchases. Expenditure would continue to be supported by appropriate documentation and reconciled through the Council's financial procedures.
Action: Sarah continues pursuing outstanding banking matters with Lloyds Bank.

9. **Use of purchase orders.**
Cllr R McGee Proposed Purchase orders are used. **Cllr M Hewitt 2nd. All in favour. RESOLVED use purchase orders.**

10. **To discuss Fenstanton Parish Council grant giving.**
This wasn't discussed it was mentioned with the policy items.

11. **To discuss and agree on Fenstanton Parish Council Bo-Diversity.**
The Committee reviewed a number of outstanding policies, including the Biodiversity Policy, IT Policy and Grant Funding Policy. Members agreed that the existing drafts should be simplified where appropriate and that standard CAPALC model policies should be adopted wherever possible. It was further agreed that revised policies be prepared and submitted directly to Full Council for consideration and approval.
Actions -Draft policies and add to next PC meeting for approval.

12. **To discuss and agree on Fenstanton Parish Councillor officer protocol.**
As above item 11.

13. **To discuss and agree on Fenstanton Parish Council IT Policy.**
As above item 11.

Meeting closed – 20.40

Signed K Mitchell (Chair)……