Minutes of the Finance & HR Committee Meeting of Amberley Parish Council on Thursday 15th October 2026 at 11.00am at The Old Surgery, Amberley.

Councillors Present: Cllrs Graham Smith, Jason Charman Hazell Aillinson, Ian Corcoran and Tim Simpson
Officer Present Trevor Parsons – Clerk

1. **Apologies for absence**

   All committee members were present

2. **To receive declarations of interest from councillors for items on the agenda**

   Cllr Charman is a Trustee of AMG and Cllr Smith's wife is a Trustee of AMG.

3. **Purchase of Land at Amberley Football Ground**

   Councillors reported positive feedback from residents regarding the purchase. Cllr Smith has completed the application form, budgets, business plan and public notices.

   APC are still waiting for final quotes regarding the installation of new gates and improved access.

   ACTION: Clerk to email the application form and associated papers to Trevor Leggo at WSALC who will then submit the forms to PWLB Loans.

4. **To approve the purchase of the new Defibrillator**

   Cllr Simpson reported that the existing defibrillator is beyond economic repair and has sourced a reconditioned defibrillator at a cost of £650. Councillors unanimously approved its' purchase.

5. **Approval of internal auditors**

   Councillors unanimously agreed to retain the services of Mulberry as the Internal Auditor for Amberley Parish Council and we confirmed the independence of the person and the firm.

6. **Review of External Auditors Report**

   Councillors reviewed the External Auditors report and agreed with its' findings.

7. **Review of Income received**

   Councillors reviewed income being precept, interest, football ground rent and VAT refund and agreed it was in line with budget expectations.

8. Review of payments at Cashbook

The Scribe Accounting Software is presently unavailable to Councillors so this item has been deferred until the next meeting.

9. Review of direct debits, Octopus Energy, Tech Doctor's, PWLB, HDC and ICO. No standing orders.

Councillors reviewed the direct debits which are all now taken from Unity Bank. No issues raised.

10. Review of Reserves

Councillor Smith reported that the Council's balances totalled £55,657.43 in line with expectations

ACTION: Clerk to open a new Unity Bank Instant Access Account to separate the earmarked reserves from the general reserves.

11. Review of contracts for grass and hedge cutting

Councillors reviewed the present contractor services and were happy to continue with the service for a further 12 months.

12. **Adopted telephone box**

The ownership of telephone box outside the Team Room has now been transferred to the Parish Council. Councillors agreed that the box requires a thorough overhaul and agreed that this was likely to take place in the New Year.

Action: Clerk to investigate WIFI booster options and report back to the Council.

13. Clerk Pay Award

Councillors unanimously agreed to comply with the NALC NJC-agreed formula for staff pay awards.

Due to ongoing issues with HMRC, Amberley Parish Council Payroll provider cannot register the new Clerk. Councillors unanimously agreed to pay the Clerk a nominal £1,400 per month until HMRC resolve the issue and payment of PAYE/NIC can be made.

14. Donations and grants

Grants have already been made to Amberley CC and AMG in this financial year.

Councillors approved the £300 payment to AMG towards insurance premium costs.

ACTION: Clerk to email Wildbrooks, Gaggle and PCC with grant application forms for consideration in the New Year.

15. Review of CIL balances

Cllr Smith reported to the meeting that CIL balances were currently £12,561.26. Councillors unanimously approved directing £10,000 of CIL balance towards the purchase of the football ground.

16. Budget 2027 – 2028

Cllr Smith reviewed the budget for the current year, which is within expectations, but has changed recently due to the proposed acquisition of the football ground. With a likely first repayment of the new PWLB loan within this financial year and the cost of improving access to the ground, the original aspiration to increase reserves is likely to be much less than planned.

Cllr Smith presented the budget for 2027 – 2028 evidencing total projected expenditure of £52,288 based on a likely inflationary cost rises around 2.5%. Modest contingency allowances have been made in each area of expense.

Cllr Smith proposed a 2.7% rise in precept to £52,000 (with the balance from bank interest and rents) to cover likely inflationary costs.

Members of the Finance & HR Committee unanimously supported the recommendation to increase the precept to £52,000 to the next Full Council for the financial year 2027 – 2028.