

Amersham Town Council

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 20 OCTOBER 2025

PRESENT:

Councillor Martin Day (Chair)
Councillor Jane Barnes
Councillor Paul Edwards
Councillor Mark Roberts
Councillor James Wilkinson
Councillor Simon Woodhead (Town Mayor)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor Kelly Thornton
Councillor Dominic Pinkney
Councillor James Brown
Elizabeth Richardson - Town Clerk Finance & Policy

OPEN SESSION:

Councillors were pleased to receive a presentation from Philippa Harrison of Scripti, including a demonstration of AI software which would enable a search function for use with the council's historic minute books.

27. APOLOGIES:

Councillor Maura Brady
Councillor Jonathan Allum
Councillor Heena Amarshi
Councillor Elizabeth Kolb
Councillor Joseph Noaman (part meeting)

28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

29. TO RECEIVE THE FINANCE REPORTS FOR JULY/AUGUST 2025:

- i) Income and Expenditure Reports for period ending 31 July and 31 August 2025
- ii) Balance sheets as at 31 July & 31 August 2025
- iii) Accounts paid from 1 July to 31 August 2025

It was

Proposed - Councillor M Roberts
Seconded – Councillor S Woodhead

RECOMMENDED that the finance reports for the period 1 July to 31 August 2025 be accepted.

30. APPROVAL OF THE GRANTS SUB-COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS:

The recommendations of the Grants Committee to allocate grants for the 2025-26 financial year were noted.

It was

Proposed – Councillor S Woodhead
Seconded – Councillor J Barnes

RESOLVED to approve the grant allocation, as recommended by the Grants Sub-Committee, as follows:

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Chesham/Amersham Christmas Party for the elderly | £400 |
| 1 st Chesham Bois Scout Pack | £500 |
| 2 nd Amersham Common Scout Group | £750 |
| Chiltern Toy Bank | £500 |
| Henry Allen Nursery | No grant awarded |
| Sustainable Amersham | No grant awarded |
| Chiltern Voice | £500 |
| Citizens Advice Buckinghamshire | £1000 |
| Chiltern Open Air Museum | £800 |
| Amersham Men's Sheds | £400 |
| Old Amersham Retail & Hospitality Group | £200 |
| Amersham Royal British Legion | £100 |
| Total | £5150 |

31. **PURCHASE OF AI SEARCH SOFTWARE FOR COUNCIL MINUTES:**

Following a presentation from Philippa Harrison earlier in the evening, Members considered the proposal to purchase the software package for Council use. After much discussion,

It was

Proposed – Councillor S Woodhead
Seconded – Councillor J Wilkinson

AGREED to use the software for a free trial period offered, on the condition that the software company indemnifies the Council against misuse of Council data held in the cloud. A further assessment of the software's value for money would need to be carried out before considering possible purchase next year.

32. **RENEWAL OF COUNCIL'S MAIN INSURANCE POLICY:**

The three comparative quotations obtained by the Clerk were noted. After discussion

It was

Proposed – Councillor P Edwards
Seconded – Councillor J Brown

AGREED to renew the insurance policy with Clear Councils Insurance at a premium of £17,969.68 for the year October 2025 to October 2026.

33. **RENEWAL OF THE COUNCIL'S FLOOD INSURANCE FOR FLINT BARN COURT:**

After noting the Clerk's report

It was

Proposed – Councillor M Day
Seconded – Councillor J Barnes

AGREED to renew the flood insurance for Flint Barn Court with Gallagher at £1,341.52 for the 2025-26 year.

34. **RENEWAL OF COUNCIL'S CYBER INSURANCE POLICY:**

After noting the Clerk's report

It was

Proposed – Councillor M Roberts
Seconded – Councillor J Brown

AGREED to renew the cyber insurance package with Gallagher at £633.52 for the 2025-26 year.

35. **REPLACEMENT BEAVER-TAIL VAN FOR DEPOT:**

Members noted the report from the Depot & Facilities Manager on renewal of the Council's beaver-tail van. After discussion

It was

Proposed – Councillor J Barnes
Seconded – Councillor P Edwards

AGREED to proceed with the officer's recommendation for a replacement van on a 5 year hire-purchase agreement at £880 per month, funded from the fleet replacement capital programme.

36. **APPROVAL OF CARBON LITERACY TRAINING:**

It was noted that the Council's Climate Emergency Working Group had recommended Carbon Literacy training be undertaken for Councillors and staff, with a view to rolling out further training to community groups. After discussion

It was

Proposed - Councillor M Day
Seconded - Councillor M Roberts

AGREED to progress Carbon Literacy Training with an approximate cost of £1500 for the initial basic training.

37. **PURCHASE OF NEW FINGER POST SIGNS FOR AMERSHAM ON THE HILL:**

After discussion,

It was

Proposed – Councillor J Barnes
Seconded – Councillor M Day

AGREED to approve the Community Services Committee's recommendation to purchase replacement signs with an approximate cost of £10,000.

38. **REPLACEMENT PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT AT BARN MEADOW:**

The indicative quotes obtained by the Depot and Facilities Manager for items of replacement play equipment were noted.

It was

Proposed – Councillor M Roberts
Seconded – Councillor M Day

AGREED that a budget of £30,000 be allocated from the Council's capital fund. The Clerk was asked to look at possible options and cost of replacement fencing. A meeting of the Playground Working Group will be arranged to examine the quotes and will visit the playground to gauge public opinion on the designs.

39. **BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL MATTERS:**

a) **Community Board**

It was noted that the Community Board manager had been seconded to another role within Buckinghamshire Council on a temporary basis. It was also suggested that the acting Board Manager be invited to attend a meeting of the full Council to meet Councillors.

b) **Parking in Amersham**

Cllr Roberts reported that he and Cllr Pinkney had met the Head of Parking Services at Buckinghamshire Council. It was suggested that an informal consultation could be carried out to identify issues and examine options in problem areas, to see which options may have public support. A formal consultation could follow on the preferred options. It was understood that Amersham Town Council would have to match fund the cost of any public consultation. Cllr Roberts agreed to circulate a list of the parking issues already identified and requested that fellow Councillors inform him of any issues within their own wards. It was suggested that the Planning Committee set up a Working Group to examine the list of problem areas –(suggested membership to be Cllrs Roberts, Pinkney, Barnes, Day & Brown).

40. **MATTERS FOR REPORT:**

There were no matters for report.

Part two

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

That under Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admissions to meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they include the likely disclosure of exempt information, stated to be confidential.

41. **RENEWAL OF BOWLS CLUB LEASE:**

It was noted that the club had been served a Section 25 Notice on their lease and that a response had been received from the club, rejecting the proposed thumbnail terms. After discussion

It was

Proposed – Councillor S Woodhead
Seconded – Councillor M Day

AGREED to send the response drawn up by the Working Group, including more detailed terms for the new lease.

42. **RENEWAL OF LEASE FOR FLINT BARN HOUSE:**

Councillors noted that the current tenant of Flint Barn House has expressed an interest in renewing their 10 lease which is due to expire in December 2026. The Clerk was asked to obtain an independent opinion on the current market rent for the property for Council's consideration.

The meeting closed at 9.12pm

Chairman.....

Date