

WESTON AND CREWE GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

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14 August 2025

NOTICE OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Parish Councillors are summoned to a meeting to be held on:

Date: Tuesday, 19 August 2025

Time: 7.00PM

Venue: Weston Church Hall

Mark Robinson

Clerk to the Parish Council

Members of the Finance Committee

Janet Chamberlain, John Cornell, John Densem, Simon Lewis and Rennie Schafer

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND THIS MEETING.

A G E N D A

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

To elect the Chair of the Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

if a member is present at a meeting of the authority, and they have a disclosable interest in any matter to be considered or being considered at the meeting, they should disclose the interest to the meeting and follow the Council's code of conduct. Whilst the Clerk can offer guidance on the Code of Conduct, it remains the responsibility of the Member to decide whether they have an interest in a particular item. To consider any requests for dispensations.

4. FINANCE

To note the Council's financial position and projected end of year position.

5. GRANTS AND DONATIONS

To agree a Policy and Procedure for the distribution of grants and donations.

6 TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND RESERVES POLICY

To approve a Treasury Management and Reserves Policy

7 LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME

To note the financial requirements of the Local Council Award Scheme

8 FUTURE WORK FLOW

Q3 meeting (December) – Receipt of External Audit report and consideration of 2026/27 Budget and Precept

Q4 meeting (February) – Review of Q3, expected end of financial year position and review of all finance related policies

Q1 meeting (April) – Review of 2025/26 finances, completion of Annual Governance and Accountability Return

9 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be agreed – in most cases immediately prior to meetings of the Parish Council.

WESTON AND CREWE GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

MEETING: 19 AUGUST 2025

AGENDA ITEM FINANCE

1. Projected End of Year Position (31 March 2026)

Spending as per Budget

Opening Balance 25/26	61,326.52		
Expected Income		Less	
Precept	59,682.00	Projected Expenditure	86,919.67
Interest	1,600.00	Projected VAT expend	1,500.00
VAT refund	1,500.00		
VH Passthrough	1,024.14		
Allotments	2,000.00		
Compact	1,150.00	CIL (reserved)	19,734.11
Total	128,282.66	Forecast Outturn	20,128.88

Spending as per Expected Items – this excludes any unexpected spending such as legal fees and additional maintenance – see budgetary analysis

Expected Income		Less	
Precept	59,682.00	Projected Expenditure	64,723.24
Interest	1,600.00	Projected VAT expend	1,500.00
VAT refund	1,500.00		
VH Passthrough	1,024.14		
Allotments	2,000.00		
Compact	1,150.00	CIL (reserved)	19,734.11
Total	128,282.66	Forecast Outturn	42,325.31

2. Budgetary Analysis

Budget and Expected Spending

Yellow denotes estimated sums

Weston and Crewe Green Parish Council
Finance Committee Meeting – 19 August 2025

Line No.	Items	Budget 25/26	Spend to Date	Variance	Percentage Spent	Expected spend
		£	£	£	£	£
1	Clerk's Salary and Employer NI	28,500.00	12,014.59	16,485.41	42%	27,169.43
2	Clerk's Office allowance	1,500.00	625.00	875.00	42%	1,500.00
3	Chairman's Allowance	1,100.00	1,100.00	0.00	100%	1,100.00
4	External Audit	315.00	0.00	315.00	0%	210.00
5	Internal Audit	285.00	0.00	285.00	0%	250.00
6	Insurance (Parish Council)	650.00	631.57	18.43	97%	631.57
7	Insurance (Village Hall)	900.00	0.00	900.00	0%	1,024.14
8	Affiliations	50.00	0.00	50.00	0%	50.00
9	Hall Hire	600.00	409.50	190.50	68%	409.50
10	Cheshire Association of Local Councils	850.00	756.60	93.40	89%	756.60
11	Stationery and Copying	500.00	0.00	500.00	0%	0.00
12	General Village Upkeep	3,000.00	152.95	2,847.05	5%	1,000.00
13	Travel Expenses	250.00	0.00	250.00	0%	0.00
14	General Maintenance	2,750.00	0.00	2,750.00	0%	500.00
15	Lengthsman	5,250.00	1,909.00	3,341.00	36%	5,500.00
16	Neighbourhood Plan	6,000.00	2,329.16	3,670.84	39%	5,000.00
17	Community Resilience Plan	1,500.00	0.00	1,500.00	0%	250.00
18	Playing Field Maintenance	1,250.00	0.00	1,250.00	0%	1,250.00
19	Planning consultation	4,100.00	0.00	4,100.00	0%	4,100.00
20	Legal Fees	4,000.00	0.00	4,000.00	0%	0.00
21	Village Hall Maintenance	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00	0%	1,000.00
22	Vice-Chairman's allowance	300.00	300.00	0.00	100%	300.00
23	Planning Chairman's allowance	1,100.00	1,100.00	0.00	100%	1,100.00
24	Communications	2,000.00	403.50	1,596.50	20%	2,000.00
25	Shires Payroll	400.00	78.00	322.00	20%	250.00
26	Weston Cemetery extension	3,000.00	0.00	3,000.00	0%	3,000.00
27	Vice-Chairman's expenses - Planning	300.00	300.00	0.00	100%	300.00
28	Publications	2,500.00	0.00	2,500.00	0%	250.00
29	Defibrillators	1,500.00	0.00	1,500.00	0%	0.00
30	Banking	72.00	24.00	48.00	33%	72.00
31	Allotments	2,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	50%	2,000.00
32	Community Garden	500.00	175.00	325.00	35%	500.00
33	Street Lighting - electricity	2,200.00	835.66	1,364.34	38%	1,750.00
34	Contingency	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	0%	0.00
35	Election Costs	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00	0%	1,500.00
	TOTALS	87,222.00	24,144.53	63,077.47	28%	64,723.24

Agenda Item 5: Draft Grants and Donations Policy

1. Purpose

The Parish Council is committed to supporting local organisations, charities, and community groups that enhance the well-being, cohesion, and vibrancy of our parish. This policy sets out how the Council considers and awards grants and donations.

2. Eligibility Criteria

Applications will be considered from:

- Voluntary and community organisations
- Registered charities
- Not-for-profit groups and clubs
- Educational or cultural bodies serving the parish

We do not fund:

- Individuals (except in exceptional cases of community benefit)
- Political or religious activities (funding for secular community events may be considered)
- Projects promoting a commercial or profit-making agenda

3. What We Support

Grant and donation funding can be awarded for:

- Community projects or events
- Equipment, materials, or resources
- Initiatives that improve facilities or services within the parish
- Projects that address specific local needs

Grants and donations will not normally cover:

- Routine running costs
- Retrospective funding for projects already completed

4. Application Process

- Applicants must complete the official grant and donation application form
- Applications must be received by **[insert deadline dates]**
- Supporting documents, such as accounts or project plans, must be included
- Applications will be considered at full Parish Council meetings

5. Assessment Criteria

Each application will be assessed against:

- Clear evidence of community benefit
- Alignment with Parish priorities
- Value for money and sustainability
- The organisation's ability to deliver the project
- Match-funding or contributions from other sources

6. Awarding of Grants and Donations

- Decisions are made by the Parish Council; awards are at its sole discretion
- The Council reserves the right to award part-funding
- All decisions are final; unsuccessful applicants will be informed in writing

7. Conditions of Funding

Grant and donation recipients must:

- Spend the funds for the agreed purpose only
- Acknowledge Parish Council support in publicity materials where possible
- Provide a short written report on the outcomes and benefits achieved
- Return any unspent funds

8. Monitoring

The Parish Council will monitor funded projects to ensure the grant or donation has been used appropriately.

Application Scoring Matrix

Criteria	Score (0-5)	Notes
Evidence of Community Benefit		
Alignment with Parish Priorities		
Value for Money		
Sustainability of Project		
Organisational Capacity		
Match-Funding or Other Contributions		
Total Score	_____ / 30	

Parish Households (based on electoral register 2025)

Area	Households
Basford	104
Crewe Green	124
Englesea Brook	33
Gorsty	10
Stowford	20
Weston	457
Wychwood Village	307
Total	1055

Agenda Item 6: Draft Investments, Treasury Management and Reserves Policy

1. Overview

This document sets out the Investment Strategy for the Parish Council in line with statutory guidance issued in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003 s15(1)(a).

The Council is committed to effective management of its investments to ensure that:

- It maintains the security of its cash balances whilst retaining sufficient liquidity to meet its spending plans;
- Any capital expenditure plans are affordable;
- Any external borrowing or long-term liabilities are within prudent and sustainable levels.

2. Investments

The Council's investment priorities are the security of its cash reserves and the liquidity of its investments. The Council will aim to achieve the optimum return on its investments commensurate with appropriate levels of risk management and the security of cash balances.

The Council will only make deposits in specific investments with UK banks or building societies, UK government authorities or UK based financial establishments.

The Council's deposits are currently held in three separate accounts; two with Unity Trust Bank and one with Redwood Bank

3. Liquidity

The Council will aim to hold no more than £10,000 in its current accounts which are not income generating, transfers will be made from the Council's interest-bearing accounts, in which the precept is paid, in order for the Council to undertake its normal business. Internal transfers between accounts will be authorised by the Clerk and one Councillor who is an authorised signatory on the account.

4. Long term investments (greater than 1 year)

Any decisions regarding long-term investments will be made by full Council, which will agree the length and amount of the investment, after consideration of the risks and security against the potential yield of the investment.

5. Risk Assessment

The council is covered under the Financial Compensation Scheme, but only up to the maximum up to £85,000 per eligible person, per bank, building society or credit union. This is the reason the Council banks with more than one institution.

The Council should aim to spread its investments across multiple opportunities to ensure that its investments are covered under this scheme.

Where the compensation scheme is not available, the Council will only invest with organisations that have a high credit rating or profile.

6. Reporting of performance

Investment performance will be reported back to the full Council and an annual summary will be included in the end of year financial reports.

7. External borrowing

The Council will only agree borrowing for specific capital projects, as defined in Section 6 of the Local Government Act 2003.

Before a Council can borrow money, it must obtain approval from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. This application would need to be submitted via Cheshire Association of Local Councils who will review the application. Any such application will require approval from full Council.

It is noted that the Council does not currently have any external borrowing and is currently not considering it.

8. Reserves

The Parish Council is required by statute to maintain financial reserves sufficient to meet the needs of the organisation and in addition has statutory limitations on how it spends certain receipts which it must ensure are accounted for separately to the council's general funds.

Whilst there is no statutory minimum (or maximum) level of reserves, the council has no power to hold revenue reserves other than those for reasonable working capital needs or specific earmarked purposes.

The Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) Practitioners' Guide, which sets out the 'proper practices' for how the council must maintain its accounts, recommends that the minimum level of general reserves should be between three and twelve months of net revenue expenditure. For an authority of the council's size, it states that the lower end (three months, or 25%) is appropriate.

9. General Reserve

The general reserve is not ringfenced (earmarked) for any specific expenditure. Its purposes is to smooth the impact of uneven cashflow or cover unexpected/emergency expenditure. It is not intended to fund on-going expenditure.

The general reserve will be replenished as part of the budget process in any year where it has been utilised for unexpected/emergency expenditure.

The council will hold a general reserve of at least 25% of its net revenue expenditure this is the difference between its budgeted income and expenditure less any budgeted capital expenditure, expenditure from earmarked reserves and budgeted transfers to reserves.

10. Earmarked Reserves

The council may establish ringfenced (earmarked) reserves for any reason where it reasonably believes it may incur expenditure in the future and these will be reviewed by the Parish Council on an annual basis.

11. CIL Receipts Reserve

CIL Receipts are subject to statutory restrictions requiring they only be used for certain kinds of expenditure.

Agenda Item 7: Local Council Award Scheme

Bronze Award	
The budget and precept information for the current or next financial year	The council can post up the current or next year's budget (or both). The council publishes detailed budget documents that include information on income and expenditure (or receipts and payments). Documents show how the precept was calculated and that the council understand the impact of precept changes on taxpayers.
Minutes	The minutes will show that the council monitors its performance against the budget at least every three months.
Silver Award	
A grant awarding policy	The council gives grants to community organisations and publishes a grant awarding policy.
An action plan and related budget responding to community engagement and setting out a timetable for action and review	The action plan (or similar forward plan) summarises findings from community engagement and sets out aims and objectives that respond to community views. The action plan includes a timetable for actions to be completed with dates for reviewing the plan. The council's budget shows how the action plan is put into practice and manages risks to public money.
Gold Award	
A business plan covering a financial forecast for at least three years linked to revenue and capital plans for the council and its community	The council works to a forward plan (or business plan) created for at least three years even if this takes the council beyond the next election. This plan explicitly responds to community engagement. It sets out the council's aims and objectives for both the council and the community and shows how they will be achieved including financial forecasts for both revenue and capital for the duration of the plan.