

# Great Waltham Parish Council

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Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee of Great Waltham Parish Council held in the Pavilion, South Street, Great Waltham on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 7.00pm.

1. Chair's Welcome:

Chair: Gilbert.

Cllrs: Martin, Jackson, Stephenson.

2. Apologies for Absence.

Cllrs Bradley and Micklem

3. Declarations of interests (existence and nature) with regard to items on the agenda and requests for dispensation.

Cllr Jackson – Item 7 – Allotment holder. Request for dispensation agreed.

4. Public Participation session - items do not need to be on the agenda.

No public present.

5. To review open items on the Action Tracker circulated prior to the meeting.

The items were reviewed and closed as actions completed.

6. Confirm the current position on the 2024-2025 budget.

- Using the AdvantEdge software to create reports the Committee was able to review both an overview of the spend for 2024-2025 and a line-by-line breakdown by transaction.
- At the halfway point in the financial year no concerns were raised.

**Resolution: The current position was confirmed.**

7. To consider changes to allotment hiring fees.

- Discussion on the most reasonable principles to use to calculate the rent and service charge elements of the annual hiring fee.
- Discussion on the items to be included in the service charge.
- The principles place the onus on the Council to ensure all plots are hired to achieve optimal income. That is, hirers should not pay more if there are vacant plots.

**Resolution: The Committee agreed that the principle of dividing the rent cost from September 2025 by the total number of hireable rods across both sites will determine the cost per rod to the hirers.**

**Resolution: Change in cost per rod (to increase the total possible income to, but not exceeding, the rental charges paid by the Council to its landlord) to be introduced at the next review date.**

**Resolution: The Committee agrees with the principle of dividing the projected costs of maintenance of common areas (hedge cutting, grounds maintenance) and the provision of water, but not the cost of maintaining vacant plots, by the total number of hireable plots to calculate the service charge (same for each plot holder irrespective of size of plot).**

8. To consider changes to Pavilion hiring fees.

- The current fees were set in 2022 when the Pavilion was opened for hire.
- The fees were reviewed against the current costs.
- From January 2025 there will be an increase in the number of bookings.

**Resolution: The hire fees will remain the same for the next 12 months.**

**Resolution: Review the hire fees in line with increased usage and costs in 2025 as the data becomes available.**

9. Discuss a budget for 2025-2026.

- A draft budget was reviewed and various options discussed.
- An increase in budget to build the reserve for Great Waltham Playground refresh was offset by reductions in other areas and increased income.
- Additional areas for spend to be included in the budget: defibrillators, professional fees, play area project.

**Resolution: A budget of £111,499.84 was agreed to propose to the Council.**

10. Discuss and propose a precept demand on Chelmsford City Council for 2025-2025 (to be agreed in full council).

- On current data the proposed precept would be a reduction from the 2024-2025.

**Resolution: The Committee recommends the precept of £104,027 for 2025-2026.**

**Members – Cllr Jackson, Cllr Martin, Cllr Gilbert, Cllr Bradley , Cllr Micklem and Cllr Stephenson.**

Meeting Closed 21.15  
Will Adshead-Grant  
Clerk to the Council.