ASTON CLINTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the **Finance and Staffing Committee** meeting held at 6.30pm on **13th April 2026** at the Parish Council Office, Aston Clinton Park, HP22 5HL

PRESENT: Cllr C Read (Chair), Cllr M Collins, Cllr J Hodge, Cllr M Mason, Cllr D McCall & Cllr L Ronson

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs S Payne (Clerk)

FS25.44 Questions and Comments from the Public. No members of the public were present.

FS25.45 To Receive Apologies for Non-Attendance. Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr J Warburton.

FS25.46 To Receive Declarations of Interest or Requests for Dispensation. None declared.

FS25.47 To Approve the Minutes of the Meeting Held on 9th February 2026
The minutes of the meeting held on 9th February 2026 were approved as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair.

FS25.48 To Review the Council's Financial Regulations
The committee reviewed the updated Financial Regulations. **It was resolved to recommend the updated Financial Regulation for adoption by Council.** **ACTION: Clerk**

FS25.49 To Review the Council's Risk Management Register
The committee reviewed the updated Risk Management Register. It was agreed that reference be made to the key safe under the security of buildings section. **It was resolved to recommend the updated Risk Management Register with the above addition for adoption by Council.** **ACTION: Clerk**

FS25.50 To Review the Council's Asset Register at 31st March 2026
The committee reviewed the asset register. **It was resolved to approve the asset register at 31st March 2026 with a total asset value of £3,207,094.64.**

FS25.51 To Review the Financial Reports for the Year Ending 31st March 2025
The committee reviewed the financial reports for the year ending 31st March 2026. Total income was £431,909 and total expenditure £346,042.

FS25.52 To Receive an Update on the Updating of Council's Bank Signatories
The Clerk reported that all committee members were now signatories for the Unity Trust Bank account, Cllrs Mason, Cllr Read, Cllr McCall and Cllr Ronson were signatories for the Barclays Bank accounts, Nationwide account and CCLA fund. It was noted that Cllr Read had not yet received access advice from Barclays Bank. This matter would be investigated. **ACTION: Clerk/Cllr Read**

FS25.53 To Review the Council's Updated Grievance Policy
The committee reviewed the updated Grievance Policy. It was noted that there were typos in points 3.5, 3.5.2 and 4.10. **It was resolved that with these amendments the updated Grievance Policy be adopted**. **ACTION: Clerk**

FS25.54 To Review the Council's Updated Disciplinary Policy
The committee reviewed the updated Disciplinary Policy. **It was resolved to adopt the updated Disciplinary Policy.** **ACTION: Clerk**

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FS25.55 **<u>It was resolved that under Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media are excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they include the likely disclosure of exempt information, stated to be confidential</u>.**

FS25.56 **To Note the Staff Appraisal Documentation and Consider Any Actions**

All three members of staff received appraisals during March 2026. The committee reviewed the appraisal documentation, considered pay scales for each role and agreed the action plans for 2025/2026 as follows:

Clerk/RFO: Resurfacing of Park View; updating out-of-date licences; extending CCTV coverage near the compound; identifying a new burial ground site; NALC Bronze status application; and overseeing the transition to .gov.uk email addresses.

Assistant Clerk: Increase membership of the Community Speedwatch team; digitally map Council assets and signage; improve organisation of compound; and CiLCA training.

Admin Assistant: Update the streetlight digital map; research/organise a school posters against speeding campaign; create a social media campaign timeline; and create fillable PDF forms for burial ground and allotment tenancy agreements.

The meeting closed at 8.08pm

Signed……Date ……

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Aston Clinton Parish Council
Reserves Policy

Last Review: November 2024 Next Review: September 2026

1. Introduction

Aston Clinton Parish Council (ACPC) are required to maintain adequate Financial Reserves to meet its needs.

Sections 32, 43 and 50 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 require local authorities to have regard to the level of reserves needed for meeting estimated expenditure when calculating the budget requirement. However, there is no specified minimum or maximum level of reserves that an authority should hold.

2. Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out how ACPC will determine and review the level of its general and earmarked reserves.

2.2 ACPC will hold GENERAL RESERVES for three main purposes:

(a) As a working balance to help cushion the impact of uneven cash flows and avoid unnecessary temporary borrowing.

(b) As a contingency to cushion the impact of unexpected events or emergencies.

2.3 ACPC will hold EARMARKED RESERVES for four main purposes:

(a) Renewals - to facilitate services, to plan and finance an effective programme of equipment and infrastructure replacement and planned asset maintenance. These reserves are a mechanism to smooth expenditure so that a sensible replacement programme can be achieved without the need to vary budgets.

(b) Carry forward of underspend - some services commit expenditure to projects but cannot be spent from the budget in year. Reserves are used as a mechanism to carry forward these resources.

(c) Insurance reserve - to enable ACPC to meet the excesses of claims not covered by insurance.

(d) Other earmarked reserves may be set up from time to time to meet known or predicted liabilities.

3. General Reserves

3.1 The general reserves are funds which do not have any restrictions as to their use. These are sometimes referred to as 'working balances'. These reserves can be used to smooth the impact of uneven cash flows, offset the budget requirement if necessary, or can be held in case of unexpected events or emergencies thereby enabling ACPC to meet its legal, statutory and proper duties and responsibilities. These may include:

- Undertaking essential repairs or maintenance work.
- Undertaking unexpected administrative duties or to challenge or deflect future threats to the Parish, its people and its environment.
- Making provisions for potential employment issues e.g. staff ill-health, redundancy obligations, disciplinary or grievance investigations/hearings.
- Short term cash flow difficulties.

3.2 The level of general reserves is a matter of judgement and so this policy does not attempt to prescribe a blanket level. ACPC must build and maintain sufficient working balances to cover the key risks it faces .

3.3 The primary means of building general reserves will be via an allocation from the annual budget.

3.4 The level of financial reserves held by ACPC will be considered during the budget setting process.

3.5 If, in extreme circumstances, General Reserve were exhausted due to major unforeseen spending pressures within a particular financial year, ACPC would be able to draw down from its Earmarked Reserves to provide short-term resources.

4. Earmarked Reserves

Earmarked reserves represent amounts that are generally built up over a period which are earmarked for specific items of expenditure to meet known, or anticipated liabilities or projects. The 'setting aside' of funds to meet known future expenditure reduces the impact of meeting the full expenditure in one year. ACPC, when establishing an earmarked reserve, will set out:

(a) The reason/purpose of the reserve.

(b) How and when the reserve can be used.

(c) Procedures for the management and control of the reserve.

(d) A process and timescale for review of the reserve to ensure continuing relevance and adequacy.

5. Setting of Reserves

5.1 The Governance and Accountability Practitioners' Guide (2021) sets out guidance and audit considerations for Town & Parish Councils.

5.2 Earmarked reserves will be established on a "needs" basis, in line with planned or anticipated requirements.

5.3 ACPC will be required to identify the following when making recommendations for each reserve:

- The reason for/purpose of the reserve
- How and when the reserve can be used
- Procedures for management and control of the reserve/s
- A process and timescales for review of the reserve to ensure continuing relevance and adequacy.

5.4 Any decision to set up a reserve must be made by ACPC.

5.5 Expenditure from reserves can only be authorised by the Full Council, not by Committees.

5.6 If general reserves are used to meet short term funding gaps, they must be replenished in the following year. However, earmarked reserves that have been used to meet a specific liability would not need to be replenished, having served the purpose for which they were originally established. Virements may be made by ACPC at any time during the year - both to and from reserves (general and earmarked) by resolution of the Full Council.

5.7 All earmarked reserves will be recorded on a schedule held by the Responsible Financial Officer which lists the various earmarked reserves and the purpose for which they are held.

6. Review of the Adequacy of Balances & Reserves

6.1 In assessing the adequacy of reserves the strategic, operational and financial risks facing the authority will be taken into account. The level of earmarked reserves will be reviewed as part of the annual budget preparation.

6.2 Monies resulting from budgetary underspends will ordinarily be added to the general reserves. If, however, the general reserves are higher than necessary, working balances may be used to reduce the subsequent precept.

6.3 If in extreme circumstances general reserves were exhausted, due to unforeseen spending pressure within a particular financial year, ACPC would be able to draw down from its earmarked reserves to provide short-term resources.

Reserve Detail	Opening Balance at 1 April 2025	2025/2026 Expenditure	Adjustments approved at June 2025 Council	Closing Balance at 31 March 2026	DRAFT 2026/2027 Reserves	Comments & Commitments not yet accounted for
General Reserves	£ 142,090			£ 154,006	£ 126,506	**Committed**: £900 (BG Robinson refund), £3,740 Clock Repair
Streetlights Reserve	£ 40,000	£ -	£ 5,000	£ 45,000	£ 50,000	£5k added from 25/26 capital budget. **Committed** £18,757 Sparks remedial work
Playpark Equipment Reserve	£ 40,000	£ -	£ 7,500	£ 47,500	£ 47,500	
Street Furniture Reserve	£ 15,000	£ -	£ 5,000	£ 20,000	£ 20,000	
Burial Ground Reserve	£ 28,959	£ -	£ 2,041	£ 31,000	£ 31,000	
Major Asset Repair Reserve	£ 15,000	£ -	£ 10,000	£ 25,000	£ 25,000	**Committed**: £10,000 Churchill Hall roof repair
Allotment Reserve	£ 3,000	£ -		£ 3,000	£ 3,000	
Defibrillator Reserve	£ 2,000	£ -	£ 500	£ 2,500	£ 25,000	
Woodland Management Reserve	£ 5,000	£ -		£ 5,000	£ 5,000	
Pond Renovation Reserve	£ 10,000	£ -	£ 2,000	£ 12,000	£ 12,000	
Resurfacing of Park View	£ 16,000	£ -		£ 16,000	£ 16,000	
Highways Projects Reserves	£ 10,000		£ 10,000	£ 20,000	£ 20,000	**Committed**: £10k Traffic Calming
Beach Area Improvements	£ 15,000	£ -	£ 5,000	£ 20,000	£ 20,000	
Car Park Resurfacing Reserve	£ -		£ 20,000	£ 20,000	£ 20,000	
Elections Reserve	£ -		£ 2,000	£ 2,000	£ 2,000	
CCTV Reserves	£ -	£ -	£ 4,910	£ 4,910	£ 4,910	**Committed**: £4,449 Tickford Security
Total Reserves	£ 199,959	£ -		£ 273,910	£ 301,410	

Areas highlighted in blue need to be agreed at this meeting

Council's Reserves Policy (3.2) states that the level of general reserve is a matter of judgement

…and the Council must build and maintain sufficient working balances to cover the key risks it faces.

3 month expenditure is approx £90,000