

NOTES OF A MEETING OF THE BUCKDEN PARISH COUNCIL FINANCE AND COMPLIANCE ADVISORY GROUPS HELD ON 29 JULY 2025.

Present:

Chairs: Councillors Mark Williams (Finance AG), Caroline Underwood (Compliance AG)

Advisory Group Chairs: Councillors Peter Clark, Gerald Sansom, John Thelwall, Madeleine Fraser.

In Attendance:

Councillor Emily Lankfer, Parish Clerk Ramune Mimiene

Apologies:

Councillors Anne Howell-Jones, Aidan Joy, Anita Pancholi-McCann

Finance AG

1. Actions Arising. The notes and actions arising from the meeting held on 29 October 2024 were discussed. In particular, it was noted that the actions arising had been to:

- a. Finalise the 26/26 budget, for which the precept, subsequently approved by HDC, had remained within the intended target of the 24/25 precept + inflation (*action closed*).
- b. Endorse the proposals, which were subsequently approved by Council, to review and improve the return of funds held in savings accounts and of financial reporting information, and to clarify Reserve fund categories. Progress had been made in these areas as at Item 3 below (*action ongoing*).

2. End of Year Accounts. The end of year 24/25 accounts had been circulated previously; the results were creditable, with an expenditure to budget variation within 1% and clean external and internal audits.

3. Q1 25/26 Report. A Q1 25/26 Budget/Expenditure comparison report with additional narrative commentary had been circulated. This was seen as a welcome and informative improvement, with further actions to be taken to:

- a. Develop a usable Excel format to transfer financial budget and expenditure data from the EDGE system, without the need for significant manual input (*Action: Chair and Councillor Lankfer*).
- b. Profile the expected spread of each AG's expenditure of their year's budget by month to enable in-year forecasting; information to be submitted produced by the end of August (*Action: AG Chairs*).
- c. Assess and recommend to Council the apportionment of existing reserve funds between General, Earmarked, Contingency and Restricted categories to meet relevant guidelines (*Action: Chair*). It was noted that there is a need to ensure that CIL funding is applied correctly (*Note: it has been subsequently suggested to treat it as Restricted funding to ensure that it is spent appropriately*).

d. Action was in hand to consolidate the general and reserve funds held in various savings accounts, initially into the best existing interest bearing account (Nationwide) and to continue to review further options.

4. 2026/27 Budget planning. Given the impending summer break, it was recommended that AG Chairs hold individual AG 2026/27 budget planning meetings required during September and submit draft AG budgets no later than 1 October, in order to collate the information and resolve any initial queries before the Ops Planning meeting scheduled for 22 October (*Action: AG Chairs to send to the Chair and Councillor Lankfer*).

5. Any Other Business. A brief update on the Council's potential purchase of the Silver Street Allotments site was provided; action continues to determine any issues and to firm up likely cost and timescale.

Compliance AG

1. Actions Arising. The notes and actions arising from the meeting held on 29 October 2024 were discussed. The compliance aspects of actions arising and new business were discussed in parallel with the relevant finance matters discussed above.

2. Any Other Business. Safeguarding leads and a designated councillor are required to be nominated. The proposal will be for the Clerk and Assistant Clerk to be nominated as the leads and for the Chair and Vice Chair of the Council as designated councillors.

M WILLIAMS
Fin AG Chair

C UNDERWOOD
Compliance AG Chair

5 August 2025