

Hemyock Finance Committee
Finance Committee Meeting
held at the Healthy Living & Activities Centre, Hemyock
at 7.30pm on 1 September 2025

Present: Finance Committee members Councillors Atkinson, A Doble, Moon and Summers together with Parish Councillors P Doble and Ward and Mrs S McGeever (Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer).

1. Election of a Chairman

Councillor A Doble proposed that Councillor Summers take on the Chairmanship of the Finance Committee and this was seconded by Councillor Atkinson.

Members of the Finance Committee were unanimous in this decision and Councillor Summers was duly elected.

2. Welcome by the newly-elected Chairman, apologies for absence and introductions

Councillor Summers welcomed those present to the meeting.

Apologies had been received from Councillors Povah and Talbot.

3. Declarations of Interest/Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest relating to business to be conducted at the meeting and no dispensation requests had been received.

4. To note the minutes of the meeting on 30 April 2025.

Councillor Summers proposed and Councillor A Doble seconded the proposal that the minutes of the meeting on 30 April 2025 were a true record of the meeting and duly signed by the Chair.

5. Public participation

No members of the public were present.

6. Matters arising

There were no matters arising that were not covered in the meeting agenda.

7. Finance Review

7.1 Update from Chairman on latest financial information

The Chairman advised that the August figures were not available for this meeting but would be presented to the Finance Committee meeting on 3 September 2025.

The July figures show that £52492.05 monies had been received and £53705.27 had been expended. Expenditure came from both the precept and the reserves set aside for specific expenditure on assets and grants.

7.2 Review of reserves

The Parish Clerk advised that Capital Reserves should cover the purchase of new assets whilst Earmarked Reserves should cover the maintenance of assets and other known future expenditure as well as having a year's precept as a reserve amount.

It was RESOLVED that Councillor Summers and the Parish Clerk would look to bring the reserves in line with best practice.

When considering Reserves, the Finance Committee needed to take into account the life of such assets as the MUGA and the bike ramp and set aside a sum each year so that the funds were available when the work needed to be carried out. Other such items would be provision for an election every four years.

It was RESOLVED that this work would be carried out by the end of September 2025 and reviewed by the Finance Committee at a meeting in October so that budget proposals could be brought to the November Parish Council meeting.

Whilst considering budgets, it was noted:

- a) The Garages were leased with the exception of the Parish Store which was owned by the Finance Committee. The Garages were used to house youth activities and had 11 years left on the lease. Insurance was arranged by the lessor but paid for by the Finance Committee.
- b) The BHLAC had originally been intended for youth activities but now provided important services to the elderly. The Finance Committee insured the building and the BHLAC charity insured the contents.
- c) Should arrangements for the Garages change then a building to house youth activities would have to be considered or a possible extension to Longmead.
- d) Longmead was insured by the Finance Committee but the Longmead Management Committee insured the contents. A change in the financial arrangements for Longmead could produce a saving.

As discussed at Parish Council meetings, a maintenance schedule for each asset should be put in place and this would require outside input from a building specialist or builder and there could be an associated cost. Both Councillor Clist and the Parish Clerk were seeking advice on companies to use.

7.3 Longmead financial arrangements and last year's accounts

The Parish Clerk had circulated three years of accounts from the Longmead Management Committee showing income (approximately £6000 per year) and expenditure (approximately £6000 per year) with largely related to the income from the football and tennis clubs with minimum room hire. Expenditure covered the pavilion in terms of cleaning and utilities.

It was clear that the current Constitution, due to the low income, could not be adhered to in as much as the Powers of the Management Committee included:

- 4.1 to charge users of the facilities a sum proportionate to the cost of upkeep of any buildings, fittings, pitches, courts, games areas, maintenance, etc
- 4.2: to hire the facilities to groups or organisations not represented on its committee, by prior arrangement & subject to availability
- 4.3: to appoint grounds person(s) for the maintenance of the Longmead facilities
- 4.4: to borrow money or make other financial arrangements
- 4.5: to accept donations & gifts in accordance with the objects of the committee
- 4.6: to print and publish information by any media including newsletters, articles, leaflets, for the promotion of Longmead
- 4.7: to provide gifts and prizes in accordance with the objects of the committee
- 4.8: to enter into any contracts the committee considers necessary or desirable
- 4.9: to exclude any person(s) whose conduct is considered inappropriate

The Finance Committee was picking up all costs relating to maintenance of the pavilion, ground maintenance and maintenance of the assets on site.

The Finance Committee noted that Longmead contributed significantly to the wellbeing of residents providing sporting facilities and meeting rooms.

It was understood that the Longmead Management Committee were in favour of the Parish Council taking over the finances leaving the committee to concentrate on promoting the facility.

Proposal 1

Councillor Summers proposed and Councillor Moon seconded the proposal that the finances of Longmead be brought in house and this was unanimously agreed.

Proposal 2

Councillor Summers proposed and Councillor Moon seconded the proposal that the Longmead Management Committee become the Longmead Advisory Committee and this was unanimously agreed.

Proposal 3

Councillor Summers proposed and Councillor Moon seconded the proposal that the Longmead Advisory Committee be furnished with Terms of Reference and the current Constitution become redundant and this was unanimously agreed.

It was noted that this would produce an increase in workload for the Parish Clerk.

7.4 Current funding of Longmead (2024/25 and 2025/26 to date)

Given changes made to the Cost Codes in Scribe to provide more accurate figures for each asset it could generally be said that the Finance Committee had spent £6,890.23 on ground maintenance in 2024/25 and £4,718.90 to date in 2025/26. There had also been £5,883.66 in improvements in 2025/26.

This did not include grants etc for white-lining etc which did need to be attributed to Longmead.

The work of Councillor Summers and the Parish Clerk would provide more accurate figures in October.

7.5 Repair/re-surfacing of the MUGA

Report on current surface

The Finance Committee considered that the current surface was unfit for purpose. The MUGA had been in situ for 18 years and was due to be re-surfaced.

It was noted that the MUGA had not been inspected on a yearly basis and no independent assessment of the surface had taken place. The Parish Clerk advocated an independent review of the surface but the Finance Committee RESOLVED that this was not necessary given its age.

Review of incidents notified

It was noted that the loose surface had contributed to an accident on site resulting in a hospital visit and a reluctance from parents and players alike to use the surface.

Current usage (football/netball)

The MUGA had been used for winter training by the Youth Football Club which ran 4-5 teams involving over 100 children.

The Senior Football Club was hiring a 2G surface in Wellington.

The Netball Club currently ran Junior Teams but were looking to introduce a senior team.

Both football clubs had indicated that they wished to train in Hemyock. Many of the parents of children playing in the youth teams could not accommodate training out of the village.

The Finance Committee was faced with three choices; a) close the MUGA, b) resurface with porous asphalt or c) resurface with a 2G multi-sport option.

Overall, the Finance Committee considered the MUGA provided a significant contribution to the village and its residents, promoting sport and health and wellbeing and, by providing sporting opportunities, reduced anti-social behaviour. A multi-sport surface would allow other clubs such as the bowls club to play in the winter and the ability to introduce new sports.

Review of quotes received and types of surfaces

Three quotes had been received covering both replacement of the existing asphalt surface and upgrading to a 2G multi-sport surface which could accommodate netball provided the length of the artificial turf met the netball criteria (12-15mm).

The asphalt quote was around the £30,000 mark whereas the 2G surface quotes ranged from £60,000 to £80,000.

In considering the quotes, the Finance Committee also considered other 2G and 4G surfaces available to hire in the area and the fees charged and the projected income stream going forward with proper marketing and an online booking facility.

Bringing more sport to the village, could also assist in increasing income both through the hire of facilities and the potential of having a café as could be seen in all Mid Devon District Council's leisure facilities. The café could be a community venture that raised funds for the maintenance of Longmead and the support of its clubs.

Funding recommendations from reserves

Given that a budgeting strategy for replacing the MUGA had not been put in place and the need to act quickly for evident Health & Safety reasons, the Finance Committee considered whether the re-surfacing of the MUGA (£60,000) could be met from current reserves and funds.

Proposal 4

Councillor Summers proposed and Councillor Moon seconded the proposal that the Finance Committee look to use current reserves and funds to cover the cost of resurfacing and this was unanimously agreed.

In making this decision, it was noted that grants could not be applied for respectively and that fund-raising would be needed to fund any project from which reserves were vired.

The Finance Committee considered what monies could be used and noted that following the unsuccessful bid for Lottery money, the Skatepark needed to be revisited and a decision taken on its viability and whether a less ambitious facility would be viable with an obvious reduction in cost. Subject to these discussions, a decision could be taken on the amount of funds needed.

Proposal 5

Councillor Summers proposed and Councillor Moon seconded the proposal that the Skatepark Reserve of £30,000 be vired to resurface the MUGA and this was unanimously agreed.

Proposal 6

Councillor Summers proposed and Councillor Moon seconded the proposal that the remaining £30,000 be taken from the current precept funds to resurface the MUGA and this was unanimously agreed.

Given the agreement that the funding of the resurfacing of the MUGA was possible from existing funds, a decision on supplier was taken.

Proposal 7

Councillor Summers proposed and Councillor Moon seconded the proposal that MUGA contract be given to the company offering not only the best value for money but also based in the South West and this was unanimously agreed.

Councillor Summers advised that this company was receptive to discussions on reducing the overall cost and could re-surface the MUGA prior to the half-term holiday and the clocks changing when the MUGA being required for winter training. This would ensure the future of the Youth Football Club and maintain its numbers at the current 100 children as well as having the potential for the club to increase its numbers.

Future fund raising

All clubs using the MUGA would be asked to assist in fundraising to build up a reserve for future works needed.

Ongoing maintenance costs

It was noted that the maintenance of a 2G surface required sand and regular raking manually. The Finance Committee considered that there was the potential that this work could be undertaken by members of the football clubs but the cost would be limited.

Proposal 8

Councillor Summers proposed and Councillor Moon seconded the proposal that the new MUGA surface be inspected by a specialist company on an annual basis at an approximate cost of £500 and this was unanimously agreed.

Potential income

In order to maximise the revenue generated by the MUGA, the Finance Committee considered that Longmead should have its own page on the Parish Council website with an online booking system.

Proposal 9

Councillor Summers proposed and Councillor Moon seconded the proposal that the Parish Clerk should obtain quotes for providing the required facilities on the website and a budget set aside for this purpose and this was unanimously agreed.

With an online booking facility, a mechanism should be put in place for clubs booking the MUGA to be able to obtain access easily to the facility and Councillor A Doble advised that he used a special lock that retailed at the £250 mark with the person booking the facility receiving a code via email. The code could be changed on a regular basis.

Proposal 10

Councillor Summers proposed and Councillor Moon seconded the proposal that such a lock should be purchased as and when required and this was unanimously agreed.

Future reserve allocation

As part of the reserve review, the Finance Committee felt the precept should include an allocation to cover the next resurfacing of the MUGA. The putting of a reserve in place did not negate the use of any available grants or S106 funding that became available.

Proposal 11

Councillor Summers proposed and Councillor Moon seconded the proposal that following these proposals going to the Parish Council for approval, the Football and Netball clubs should be advised of the proposed decision to resurface the MUGA with a 2G multi-sport surface.

The proposals listed above would be taken to the Parish Council meeting on 3 September 2025 – all Parish Councillors had been copied in on all correspondence relating to the agenda of this meeting.

8. Insurance Renewal

The insurance documents had been circulated to councillors and, as previously recorded, the Parish Clerk should ask for a 15% increase on the cost of replacing the various buildings.

9. Items raised by the Clerk

The Clerk had no items to raise.

10. Items raised by the Chairman

Councillor Summers asked if the grant application from the Repair Café should be considered. The Clerk advised that this was on the agenda of the Parish Council meeting and the bank statements were awaited.

11. Items raised by Councillors

Councillor Ward asked if the planting of the hedge at the cemetery should be discussed and it was noted that this was on the Parish Council agenda.

Councillor Moon advised that a contractor had come forward to maintain the Flood Cameras at a lower cost than DCC's appointed contractor. This would be relayed to the Parish Council.

12. Date of the Next Finance Meetings

The next Finance Meeting would be held in October. Date to be advised.