

Minutes of the Finance Working Group meeting of Bearsted Parish Council

Parish Office, Madginford Hall, Egremont Road, Bearsted on Thursday 9th April 2026 at 11am

Present:

Cllr David Hall (Chair)
Cllr Richard Ash MBE
Cllr Frank Jagger
Cllr Carolyn Smith

Also, in attendance was the Clerk Joanne Upton, Cllr Val Springett and two members of the public.

1. Signing of the minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 5th March 2026 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

2. Community Energy Government Initiative

Cllr Hall welcomed the members of the public to speak about the proposal to set up a Community Group which could apply for grants for community buildings to install solar panels, helping communities to generate energy locally and reduce costs. The Community Group would initially consist of 3 directors, responsible for making decisions. The working group discussed the benefit of a Parish Council being a director on the group. Although the scheme would generate a profit this would be used to fund further panels for other properties, there are no shareholders to take profit. There is also an asset lock clause that would name a secondary charity to take ownership of the panels should the Community Group go into administration. The initial grant request would be made for solar panels to the Madginford Hall. The working group voiced support for the initiative.

3. Finance (Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011/817)

- a. Resolution to approve/ratify quotations or payments:
 - i. KALC Subscription, £2000 +VAT: it was agreed to recommend approval to Full Council.
 - ii. SLCC membership for Clerk, £253 +VAT: it was agreed to recommend approval to Full Council.
 - iii. Computer 4U to upgrade to Windows Pro Licence, £452.00 +VAT: it was agreed to recommend approval to Full Council.
- b. Grants and Donations:

Community Energy Initiative, £400: The working group, will recommend approval to Full Council. The Clerk advised this cannot be paid to Bearsted CAN but can pay to the Community Group. Cllr Jagger queried whether this should be led by the Parish Council.
- c. Review April Payments: It was agreed to recommend approval to Full Council.
- d. Review Finance Reports: It was agreed to recommend approval to Full Council.
- e. Review Balance of Accounts: It was agreed to recommend approval to Full Council.

4. Banking

The working Group will recommend moving £50,000.00 to Redwood Bank 35 day variable rate account at 3.74 AER.

5. KCC Rent Review and Lease

The valuation report from Martin Waghorne provided a comprehensive report with 3 valuations. One to purchase the land without the car park, one to include the car park and a rental valuation. The working group discussed the potential liabilities and costs of owning the car park and the possibility that the car park could be sold off if not owned or on a lease with BPC. This will be discussed and a decision made at Full Council whether to offer the valuation amount for the land with or without the car park.

6. Date of next meeting, 12th May 2026

There being no further business to transact, the meeting ended at 12:05 hrs.

Signed..... Date.....