Minutes of the Finance and Management Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 8th September 2026 at 2.09pm, in accordance with notice given

Chair: Councillor Gardiner

Present: Councillors Morris-Wyatt, Roberts and Woodfine

In attendance: Deputy Clerk/RFO

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FM 01/08.09.26 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE –** Cllrs Humberstone, Oakley and Shepherd and Woodfine

FM 02/08.09.26 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION –** None.

FM 03/08.0926 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA –** Cllrs Gardiner and Roberts have dispensation for Agenda Item 10.

FM 04/08.09.26 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING –** Cllr Morris-Wyatt proposed **"that the minutes of the meeting held on 8th August 2026 be approved."** This was seconded by Cllr Roberts and all in favour.

FM 05/08.09.26 **To Receive the ROF Report – sent out in advance**

FM 06/08.09.26 **To Confirm Internal Auditor Letter of Engagement Internal Auditor Letter of Engagement** - The Committee noted that the Internal Auditor (IA) was appointed at the Finance and Management Committee meeting on 19 May 2026 and that the appointment was recorded in the minutes. The External Auditor (EA) subsequently advised that the minutes should also confirm the IA's independence from the Council. Following discussion with the IA, a Letter of Engagement was prepared, signed and appended for councillors' confirmation and formal recording. Although the Letter of Engagement does not expressly state that the IA is independent, this is confirmed in the interim and final reports for the year.
Cllr Morris-Wyatt proposed **that the Committee confirm the IA's Letter of Engagement and the IA's independence from the Council.** Cllr Woodfine seconded the proposal, which was unanimously agreed. **Action: RFO**

FM 07/08.09.26 **Update External Audit 2025–2026** - The RFO informed the Committee that Section 2, the Accounting Statements of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), had been restated. The bank reconciliation spreadsheet provided by the EA is designed for receipts-and-payments accounting. As the Council uses income-and-expenditure accounting, the required adjustments are made within the accounting software and are already reflected in the bank reconciliation; they should not therefore be added again to the spreadsheet. The bank reconciliations and AGARs for 2025–2026 and the preceding year were consequently restated, initialled and signed by the RFO and the Chair of the Council. The RFO reported that the Section 3 External Auditor's Report and Certificate for 2025–2026 had been received that morning. The report concluded that, on the basis of its review of Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR, the information was in accordance with Proper Practices and that no other matters had come to

the auditor's attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements had not been met.
The report also identified two matters not affecting the auditor's opinion: the Council had not provided evidence that the IA's independence had been considered at the time of appointment, and the AGAR had not been accurately completed before submission for review. The AGAR was subsequently amended.
The completed documents are to be displayed on the noticeboard and published on the Council's website.
Cllr Morris-Wyatt proposed **that the findings of the External Auditor be accepted**. Cllr Gardiner seconded the proposal, which was unanimously agreed. **Action: RFO**

FM 08/08.09.26 Approval and Ratification of Previous Months' Banking

a) **Bank reconciliations.** The Committee considered the authorised bank reconciliations for June, July and August, which had been signed by two councillors, together with the August petty cash reconciliation. Cllr Morris-Wyatt proposed that all bank reconciliations for June, July and August be ratified. Cllr Woodfine seconded the proposal, which was unanimously agreed. **Action: RFO**

b) **Authorised bank payments for June, July and August.** The RFO authorises bank payments, which are then approved on the banking portal alternately by either Cllr Gardiner or Cllr Morris-Wyatt. An authorisation list generated from the accounting system is subsequently signed by two other councillors. Cllr Woodfine proposed that the authorised payments be ratified. Cllr Morris-Wyatt seconded the proposal, which was unanimously agreed. **Action: RFO**

c) **Income for June, July and August.** Income received related primarily to cemetery and Pro Ev fees, together with bank interest. Cllr Morris-Wyatt proposed that the income received be ratified. Cllr Woodfine seconded the proposal, which was unanimously agreed. **Action: RFO**

d) **Receipts and Payments Forecast for September.** Members reviewed salary costs and asked the RFO to compare contract-labour expenditure to date with the net salary cost of the Assistant Groundsman. Members also requested an income forecast, checks of the Insurance and General Grants cost codes, and clarification of the overspend against the Associate Membership cost code. The RFO explained that the GALC annual membership subscription for 2026/2027 comprised the NALC element of 8.64 pence per elector and the GALC element of 35.57 pence per elector, based on 4,988 electors on the register in February 2026. Membership of GALC provides councillors with support from NALC. The subscription had been considered during the previous year's precept discussions and retained in view of the potential Local Government Reorganisation. Cllr Woodfine proposed that the forecast position be approved and that responses to the questions raised be reported to the next meeting. Cllr Roberts seconded the proposal, which was unanimously agreed. **Action: RFO**

e) **Receipts and payments against the August flexed budget and reserves balance.** The RFO proposed that, from the next meeting, reporting terminology be changed from "Receipts and Payments" to "Income and Expenditure" in preparation for the next audit. Members agreed. The reserves balance was reported to be in line with expectations. Cllr Morris-Wyatt proposed that the flexed budget and reserves balance be approved. Cllr Woodfine seconded the proposal, which was unanimously agreed. **Action: RFO**

f) **Bank account balances.** The Committee considered the bank account balances as at 30 June, 31 July and 31 August 2026.

Bank Balances as at 30 June 2026	
Lloyds Bank – Current Account	£2,057.28
Lloyds Bank Deposit Account	£83,085.52
Lloyds total	**£85,142.80**
Petty Cash	£2.01
Cambridge & Counties	£85,444.34
Hampshire Trust	£47,524.30
Grand total	**£218,113.45**

Bank Balances as at 31 July 2026	
Lloyds Bank – Current Account	£10,879.85
Lloyds Bank Deposit Account	£59,670.04
Lloyds total	**£70,549.89**
Petty Cash	£42.01
Cambridge & Counties	£85,450.68
Hampshire Trust	£47,524.30
Grand total	**£203,566.88**

Bank Balances as at 31 August 2026	
Lloyds Bank – Current Account	£1,847.46
Lloyds Bank Deposit Account	£39,698.12
Lloyds total	**£41,545.58**
Petty Cash	£42.01
Cambridge & Counties	£85,450.71
Hampshire Trust	£47,524.30
Grand total	**£174,520.59**

Year-to-date income was budgeted at £124,289.69. Actual income was £127,986.70, representing a favourable variance of £3,697.01.

Year-to-date payments were budgeted at £106,336.45. Actual payments were £97,004.09, representing an underspend of £9,332.36.

The favourable year-to-date variance was £13,029.37, compared with a budgeted variance of £17,953.24.

Budgeted expenditure for the first five months was £103,031.66. Actual expenditure was £6,297.57 below budget.

The second precept instalment of £119,173.00 was due that month.

FM 09/08.09.26 To Consider and approve – Valley Management Plan and Valley Risk Assessment

The Clerk advised that both documents were detailed and requested councillor assistance to ensure that all relevant matters were addressed, or alternatively that the documents be referred to the Working Group. Cllr Gardiner requested that Japanese knotweed be included because it is present in the area. Cllrs Gardiner and Woodfine volunteered to assist with the initial review. Once completed, the Clerk will circulate the documents to the Working Group, which has delegated authority to approve them, before referral to Full Council in October for ratification. Cllr Morris-Wyatt

proposed **that this process be approved.** Cllr Roberts seconded the proposal, which was unanimously agreed. **Action: Clerk**

FM 10/08.09.26 **To Receive an update on Frith Youth Centre** Cllr Morris-Wyatt opened the discussion on the future funding of Frith Youth Centre (FYC), following meetings with its Management Committee and trustees. Concerns were raised about the organisation's long-term sustainability and governance. As agreed during the previous year's precept discussions, any increase in Council funding would require public consultation. Members requested further information on management arrangements, policies, recruitment and retention, funding from other sources, and safeguarding. Concerns were also noted regarding staffing, recruitment and relationships within the management structure. Members discussed the need for an appropriate balance of Council and non-Council trustees. Although the Trust Deed currently requires most trustees to be Council members, it is to be amended to specify the number of Council and non-Council trustees. Members noted that safeguarding and other relevant policies were not available on the website, nor was information about other youth provision in the area. Cllr Morris-Wyatt confirmed that safeguarding arrangements were under review. Cllrs Gardiner and Roberts expressed concern about current staffing capacity. Gloucestershire Rural Community Council was due to meet the management group on Wednesday 9 September to provide advice.

FM 11/08.09.26 **Training** - Cllr Humberstone and the Deputy Clerk are booked to attend SDC's online Budget and Precept Setting training on 17 September. Cllr Humberstone is booked to attend Internal Controls training on 18 November, and Cllr Shepherd requested a place on the session on 30 September. **Action: RFO**

The RFO reminded members that Finance for Councillors training was scheduled for 22 September and 29 October.

FM 12/08.09.26 **To discuss Draft Precept for 2027–2028 and Two-Year Forecast** - Members agreed that the draft figures provided a sound starting point. Further figures would be available at the next meeting. The RFO will prepare a budget for consideration by the Works Committee at its October meeting. **Action: RFO**

FM 13/08.09.26 **To Discuss Assistant Groundsman** - Members noted that recruitment had proved difficult following the departure of the former Assistant Groundsman, who had sought full-time employment. The Council required succession planning for the Senior Groundsman, cover for annual leave and sickness, support for lone working, and contingency arrangements in the event of incapacity. The current contract labourer did not wish to assume responsibility during the Senior Groundsman's absence and was available for only two days per week because of other business commitments. Members agreed that there was a case for a full-time post and considered options for offsetting the salary cost. Cllr Morris-Wyatt proposed **that salary costs for three-, four- and five-day working patterns be obtained and reported to the next meeting**. **Action: RFO**

FM 14/08.09.26 **To Discuss Electricity and Gas Prices -** The Council's contract with its current supplier, 100 Green, had expired and the Council was therefore paying a variable rate. In view of market volatility, a broker had been asked to provide comparative prices to inform whether an alternative supplier

should be considered. Members also asked the RFO to clarify whether solar-generation income is offset against the Council's usage or whether all generated electricity is sold to the grid. The projections were received that morning. Members asked the RFO to compare them with the current supplier's rates and report to the next meeting. **Action: RFO**

FM 15/08.09.26 To Consider any Correspondence – none

FM 16/08.09.26 To Note any Items for Information or Referral Only - none

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled to be held on Tuesday 13th October at 2pm.

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 15.56pm.