Minutes of the Finance and Management Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 13th October 2026 at 2.09pm, in accordance with notice given

Chair: Councillor Gardiner

Present: Councillors Humberstone, Morris-Wyatt and Woodfine

In attendance: Deputy Clerk/RFO

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FM 01/13.10.26 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE –** Cllrs Roberts and Shepherd

FM 02/13.10.26 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION –** None.

FM 03/13.10.26 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA –** Cllr Gardiner has a dispensation in respect of Agenda Item 10. **Action: Clerk to issue a dispensation to Cllr Humberstone.**

FM 04/13.10.26 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING –** Cllr Morris-Wyatt proposed **"that the minutes of the meeting held on 8th September 2026 be approved."** This was seconded by Cllr Woodfine with one abstention.

FM 05/13.10.26 **RFO REPORT –** The report had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

FM 06/13.10.26 **COMPARISON OF ELECTRICITY AND GAS PRICES –** At the previous meeting, members had asked the RFO to compare the quotations received with the Council's current supplier. A comparison chart was considered. Following discussion of the Centre's energy use, including the two Pro EV chargers, members requested that the RFO investigate the availability of separate day and night tariffs. The RFO will also provide information on the impact of the solar panels at the next meeting. **Action: RFO**

FM 07/13.10.26 **DRAFT PRECEPT 2027–2028 (VERSION 2) AND TWO-YEAR FORECAST –** Members reviewed each budget code.
Salaries – Members considered costings for increasing the Assistant Groundsman's contracted hours to either 30 or 37 hours per week. A 30-hour week would increase annual costs by £7,230, while a 37-hour week would increase annual costs by £8,606. Members agreed that there was sufficient need and work for a full-time Assistant Groundsman, taking account of holiday and sickness cover, support for the Senior Groundsman and succession planning. The RFO was asked to include the full-time post in the draft precept for consideration at the next meeting, before a final decision is made. **Action: RFO**

IT support – The current monthly fee of £120 had been honoured from the start of the contract but will increase to £150 from April. Two support options were considered. Option A comprises a monthly fee of £150, including one hour of support per month; antivirus software would be purchased separately.
Option B comprises a monthly fee of £200 and includes unlimited support, Kaseya antivirus, Endpoint Detection and Response (EDR), coverage for all Council devices and scheduled overnight updates. No decision was made.

Trees – Following the recent tree inspection, the recommended works were estimated to cost just over £4,701, resulting in an overspend against the current budget. In view of the exceptionally hot and dry conditions experienced over the past two years, further tree works may also be required. It was therefore proposed that the budget be increased to £8,000. The Works Committee will consider the matter at its October meeting and may recommend that further provision be made.

Crime and disorder – Members noted that this budget code covers correspondence relating to the non-ANPR camera and batteries for the vehicle-activated signs. The time required by office staff to verify photographs and complete reports was discussed. The RFO was asked to establish whether reporting could be completed without verification of the photographs. **Action: RFO**

Frith Youth Centre – Following discussion, members supported retaining the allocation at £25,000. Members also identified the need for a Letter of Assurance setting out requirements relating to safeguarding, conditions, targets and improved reporting.

Members also discussed using general reserves to offset the precept and keep the increase below 5%.

The RFO was asked to incorporate any additional requests from the Works Committee, verify all figures, and include income and the precept calculation in the papers for the November meeting before submission to Full Council in December. **Action: RFO**

FM 08/13.10.26 Approval and Ratification of Previous Months' Banking

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

b) **Authorised bank payments for September** 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 Morris-Wyatt proposed "**that the authorised payments be ratified."** Cllr Gardiner seconded the proposal, which was unanimously agreed. **Action: RFO**

c) **Income for September -** 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 October.** Members noted the predicted overspend on salaries considering the contract labour is less than the Assistant Groundsman and asked RFO to update at next meeting. They noted the underspend on Employer NI and pensions. The underspend is due to employer pension costs has been reduced from 21.1% to 18.1%. Employers NI contribution had an allowance that HMRC stated the Parish was able to claim, but at a recent visit from the Internal Auditor he corrected this by saying it does not apply to LA so this will

correct itself. Cllr Morris-Wyatt proposed "**that the forecast position be approved and that responses to the questions raised be reported to the next meeting."** Cllr Humberstone seconded the proposal, which was unanimously agreed. **Action: RFO**

e) **Receipts and payments against the September flexed budget -** The members agreed all seem to be as expected. Cllr Morris-Wyatt proposed "**that the flexed budget be approved**." Cllr Humberstone seconded the proposal, which was unanimously agreed. **Action: RFO**

f) **Reserves Balance –** Members agreed all seem to be as expected. Cllr Humberstone proposed "**that the Reserves Balance be approved**." Cllr Gardiner seconded the proposal, which was unanimously agreed. **Action: RFO**

g) **Bank account balances.** The Committee considered the bank account balances as at 30 September 2026.

Bank balances as at 30 September 2026

Lloyds Bank – Current Account	£11,301.32
Lloyds Bank Deposit Account	£138,888.12
Lloyds total	**£150,189.44**
Petty Cash	£2.01
Cambridge & Counties	£85,444.34
Hampshire Trust	£47,524.30
Grand total	**£283,160.09**

Year-to-date income was budgeted at £125,313.02. Actual income was £248,155.83, representing a favourable variance of £122,842.81. This is primarily due to receipt of the second instalment of the precept, totalling £119,173

Year-to-date payments were budgeted at 127,177.37. Actual payments were £114,525.95, representing an underspend of £12,651.42.

The year-to-date budgeted deficit was £1,864.35, compared with a actual surplus of £133,629.88.

Budgeted expenditure for the first half of the year was £123,638.00. Actual expenditure was £9,112.05 below budget.

h) To Ratify Payment over £500 – First and Second Quarter
Members agreed that all payments were either approved by Committees or normal monthly budget costs. Cllr Humberstone proposed "**that the 1st & 2nd Quarter payments over £500 be ratified**." Cllr Gardiner seconded the proposal, which was unanimously agreed. **Action: RFO**

FM 09/13.10.26 Risk Register – Quarterly Update
Members agreed that the register should be updated in relation to Valley Pleasure Ground and Frith Youth Centre. The staffing risk associated with the absence of an Assistant Groundsman should be increased, and inclusion of local government reorganisation (LGR) should be checked. The updated register will be brought back to the next meeting. **Action: Clerk**

FM 10/13.10.26 Frith Youth Centre Quarterly Report – this coincided with the discussion in agenda item 7 Precept. Members noted the report and there was nothing further to add.

FM 11/13.10.26 **POLICY REVIEWS –** Members considered updates to ten policies that had been due for review in July 2026. It was agreed to defer the reviews pending the Internal Auditor's report following the half-year review on 12 October. The Committee had asked the Internal Auditor to assess whether the policies were up to date and identify any additional policies required. The matter will return to the next meeting. **Action: RFO**

FM 12/13.10.26 **HEALTH AND SAFETY –** No incidents or accidents had been reported. Portable appliance testing and the five-year fixed electrical inspection will be undertaken by Meko in November.

A&E attended on 12 October to complete the six-monthly smoke alarm testing; no issues were identified.

FM 13/13.10.26 **OFFICE CHRISTMAS OPENING HOURS –** Members considered Christmas office opening hours, and it was agreed that if staff used their holiday entitlement the office could close from Wednesday 23 December and reopen on Monday 4 January. Staff would attend on 23 December to carry out back-office administration such as archiving. Members discussed the length of the closure and noted that this arrangement had been customary for many years with the office, emails and post being monitored periodically during this time. Cllr Gardiner proposed **"the office Christmas opening hours be approved subject to staff using their holiday entitlement."** Cllr Morris-Wyatt seconded the proposal, which was agreed unanimously. **Action: RFO**

FM 14/13.10.26 **TRAINING –** Members noted that NALC training on neighbourhood plans was available and requested that details be circulated to the Planning Group.

FM 15/13.10.26 **CORRESPONDENCE –** None.

FM 16/13.10.26 **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION OR REFERRAL ONLY –** None.

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled to be held on Tuesday 10th November at 2pm.

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 3.56pm.