



FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the Flitwick Town Council meeting held on
Tuesday 17th February 2026 at the Rufus Centre at 7:45pm

Present:

Cllr J Roberts (Chairman)
Cllr I Blazeby
Cllr A Snape
Cllr F Patterson
Cllr L Bandy
Cllr P Earles
Cllr R Wilsmore
Cllr M Platt
Cllr C Thompson
Cllr L Hart
Cllr D Toinko
Cllr A Crawford

Also present:

Cllr I Adams – Central Beds Council (CBC) Ward Member
Stacie Lockey – Town Clerk & Chief Executive (TC)
Stephanie Stanley – Deputy Town Clerk & RFO (DTC)
Lisa Simpson – Community Engagement Manager (CEM)

5953. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was **resolved** to accept apologies for absence from Cllrs Parsons (holiday), Harald (bereavement) and Hodges (unwell).

5954. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive Statutory Declarations of Interests from Members in relation to:

- (a)** Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item – none.
- (b)** Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item – none.

5955. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor had attended the following civic engagements:

- Given a talk about the role of the Town Mayor at Flitwick Library
- Attended the Flitwick Community Fridge 3rd Birthday Celebrations
- Attended the Children's Town Trail Presentation Evening with pupils of Kingsmoor Lower School and their families as part of the Council's Flitwick Living History project
- Attended a Men's Mental Health event organised by the Amptill Town Mayor

The Town Mayor reminded Members to speak through the Chairman and to follow the 3-minute rule for meetings.

The Deputy Town Mayor would chair the March Council meeting.

The Deputy Town Mayor had attended a recent meeting of the Beds Association of Town & Parish Councils (BATPC) and would provide an update under item 11.

5956. Leader Update

No items.

5957. REPORTS FROM WARD MEMBERS

Cllr Adams apologised that he had not had time to prepare a written report and updated members on the following information:

Senior Living Development (Red Kite Meadows)

Cllr Adams had asked for an update on this project and received a briefing the previous day. CBC planned to move residents into the independent living units from 23rd March onwards, and the residents for the care home element were hoped to be completed in May. The care home side included moving Ferndale residents, and it was anticipated that familiar groups would be moved together. Once this stage was completed, the home would be opened to others which was to be made up from 50% self-funders and 50% adult social care entitlement.

The hoardings around the site were due to be removed on 8th March.

Steppingley Road Field Planning Application

Residents had been asking about the outcome of the enquiry, but there was no news. The developer had erected fencing around the site, but chose to undertake this work presumptuously, without the inspection outcome being known.

Land next to the Senior Living Facility

This project was running a month behind, and no planning application had yet been received for the 24 bungalows (McCarthy & Stone), but it was thought this was imminent.

Land at Steppingley Road (adjacent to allotments)

This application was close to being made under an officer-delegated decision. Cllr Adams had revoked the call-in for the Development Management Committee because the answers provided were satisfactory.

Land at Froghall Farm

This item was due to be considered by the CBC Executive Committee in April for the right to sell the land. The land included a listed building, but not the grey farmhouse, which CBC would retain ownership of. Cllr Adams was due to speak to Steppingley Parish Council about this as well, since it was in their parish. Plans were unknown but given that the old barns were a Grade II listed building, there would be limitations, and it was assumed to be an upmarket development.

Fix My Street

Cllr Adams reminded members and officers that individuals must report highway matters on the Fix My Street portal before he would chase them up.

Questions

Cllr Wilsmore asked if there had been a TRO applied to the Kite Meadows Road to enforce the parking arrangements. Cllr Adams stated that this had not been done yet.

Cllr Wilsmore asked what was happening at Grange Farm in Ampthill. Cllr Adams did not know about this, but he was happy to investigate and report back.

Cllr Adams left the meeting at 19:57.

5958. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

No items.

5959. INVITED SPEAKER

No items.

5960. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

No items.

5961. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

- a. For Members to approve the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held, on **Tuesday 20th January 2026**, this meeting was held at the Rufus Centre.

It was **resolved** to adopt the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 20th January 2026 at the Rufus Centre.

- b. For Members to receive and consider the resolutions and recommendations of the Community Services Committee meeting, held on **Tuesday 3rd February 2026**, this meeting was held at The Rufus Centre.

Members noted the resolutions presented and that the recommendation for approving the Community Engagement Strategy would be considered later in the meeting.

5962. MATTERS ARISING

- a. Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on **Tuesday 20th January 2026** – no items.

- b. Members to receive any updates from Officers – no items.

5963. OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Platt, the Council's representative for attending BATPC meetings, attended a recent meeting on 12th February and provided a list of agenda items discussed. He advised that the main item of business related to the Governance Review, which would see a reduction of 107 councillors across Central Beds. This decision would have no cost savings, but the impact would be related to a reduction in local input and increased control for CBC as an authority. It was agreed at the BATPC meeting to make this Governance Review public. Cllr Platt stated that he had notes of the meeting that he could share with other Members if required.

A member asked how many attendees there were at the BATPC meeting, and Cllr Platt advised that there were seven people.

5964. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Community Fridge – Stocksfield Room

The Chairman introduced the item by outlining the resolution passed at the previous meeting. He added that Option B, as presented in the circulated report, addressed concerns raised previously about the Lockyer Suite bookings that required a green room facility, and it was a compromise to potentially resolve this issue. Members were informed that this option also provided a lot more space for the Community Fridge project than was currently available.

Cllr Thompson had missed the previous meeting but commented that, although she was an advocate for the Community Fridge since its creation, this project had snowballed and was becoming a high cost to the Council. She mentioned that the Council had supported several proposals to support the project's growth, but that these were considered in isolation, and when compared to other activities, this project received significantly more funding. Cllr Thompson felt the service was incredibly important, but felt the impact on the Rufus Centre was not being fully considered in the report. Her personal view was to proceed with Option B, albeit that other members may consider this route a compromise too far.

Cllr Hart commented that she understood the points raised by Cllr Thompson, but she believed that it did not make sense to spend the additional capital funds to install the partition wall. She stated that there were other options for a green room by using the meeting rooms for the 14-16 bookings that required the facility. Cllr Hart did not think the proposed size of the green room was large enough for any artists/entertainers with more than 1 or 2 people. She added that the operations of the fridge project would work far better with the whole space of the Stocksfield Room.

Cllr Hart referred to the site plan included in the report and commented that it would have been helpful to show members the three entrances available to the Lockyer Suite on the right-hand side of the hall. She did not believe that the additional expenditure to include a green room within the footprint of the Stocksfield Room was the right route.

Cllr Bandy commented that the fridge project needed the whole space due to demand for the service, and that more residents of Flitwick needed it to happen, given the cost of living. She believed that the Council should look after its community, and this was a step toward achieving that aspiration. Cllr Bandy commented that the groups who used to utilise the space had been moved elsewhere. She urged members to reflect on this.

Cllr Wilsmore agreed with Cllr Thompson's standpoint and believed the Council needed to strike a balance between the commerciality of the Rufus Centre and community activity, and commented that a green room should be incorporated. He could not see any mention of other locations for a green room within the report.

Cllr Crawford asked whether there were any other options for a green room. The Town Clerk said that Officers could look at options and that other alternative spaces had been discussed offline, but these ideas were considered too costly. The Town Clerk stated that the use of meeting room space had not been discussed, as it was perhaps too far from the Lockyer Suite, but if Members wanted this looked at in detail, Officers would do so. Cllr Blazeby commented on the opportunity cost of using the meeting rooms.

Cllr Hart commented that other venues' green rooms/preparation spaces/backstage areas were much further away than the Rufus Centre's meeting rooms. The Town Clerk highlighted one reason to be aware of was the toilets being in the main foyer area, and the inability to block these off. Members noted that there were no toilets in the current 'green room'.

Cllr Snape felt that it was important to say that the fridge's growth had reached this scale due to community need. The project was unlikely to grow further, as there were

insufficient food supplies to support any further expansion of the service. He believed the operations had reached their peak, but there was a need to make the activity safe for volunteers and users. The current space was not big enough, and other buildings, such as the Hub, were not viable.

Cllr Snape referred to the ongoing artificial tension between commercial and community value in terms of the Council's activities and commented that members have been unable to resolve this issue. Cllr Snape felt there was room for both elements, but there were currently inconsistencies in decision-making. He pointed out one example of the difference in answers regarding the allocation of space for the Community Engagement Team and the Rufus Team. Cllr Snape mentioned the workshop for the Hospitality Porters and thought the Council needed to improve consistency in matters like this.

Cllr Snape advised that he was frustrated with the process in this situation, commenting that at the previous meeting, it was resolved to look at options, but only three had been presented for consideration. He commented that the idea of partitioning the room or the green room requirement had not been debated previously, and that an option had been developed with increased capital costs for a facility that might be used 10-12 times annually.

Cllr Snape informed members that the fridge service was data-led, and he expected a robust assessment of the green room partition option to include the number of events booked for the coming year. The Stocksfield Room occupancy from last year was not part of the report either. He added that it was known that the Rufus Centre had overall low occupancy and mentioned the difficulties with operating in a building that used to be a school.

Cllr Snape's final point was around co-production. He informed members that the service enlisted the help of 30+ volunteers, and the compromise option was not discussed with anyone who worked to help make the service happen. He elaborated that this process had created significant bad feeling and that the Council should learn from this together.

Cllr Snape's view was to prioritise the fridge. He stated that he had no interest or bias and that he cared deeply about the traded service as well. Cllr Snape commented that he was currently prioritising a well-valued community service that was unable to operate safely anymore. He wanted residents to receive the service they deserved, and his preference was to proceed with Option A rather than Option B, which would complicate the space layout for a demanding service in an under-utilised building.

Cllr Thompson fundamentally agreed with Cllr Snape's points about the community space verses the traded service requirements and commented that as the Chairman of the Community Services Committee, she had fought for fairness throughout her time in this role. She referred to the reduction of the community events programme as an example and went on to explain that it appeared to be inconsistent when it came to the fridge because this project seemed to be expanding while other community provisions were being stopped. She referred to the fact that many members were also volunteers for the fridge project and commented that the Council needed to be careful. Cllr Thompson agreed that the resolution about community verses commercial debate was required and reiterated her points about being in favour of Option B.

The Chairman pointed out that Option B was suggesting a considerable extension of space for the project and that this was a compromise. He was a volunteer for the fridge project and believed that this additional space would be fantastic. The Chairman explained that the entire space in the Stocksfield Room would be available for fridge operations when Lockyer Suite bookings did not require a green room, which would be the case most of the time. He was in favour of Option B.

Cllr Hart asked about the number of Rufus Centre events that featured entertainers (e.g., bands) with more than two people. Cllr Blazeby advised that historically there had been only a few bands using the Lockyer Suite, with comedians, tribute acts without a band, etc., being more common. Cllr Blazeby had spoken to the Business & Facilities Manager (BFM), who had advised that the proposed green room space was minor (8sqm) compared to the full room (33sqm). The BFM had advised Cllr Blazeby that four seats would comfortably fit in the proposed area with room for hanging space and a mirror. Cllr Blazeby explained the following:

- There were 12 bookings for the next financial year that would require a green room, and it was presumed this would increase as the year progressed
- This space was unsuitable to facilitate weddings
- It was challenging to answer the questions about data because there were limited recordings of the room's usage, given that most bookings were free of charge
- The Stocksfield Room was the ideal location for a green room, given it was adjacent to the main suite and did not need performers to walk through other areas of the building to get there
- Option B was a suitable compromise that would work for the business
- There was a potential for the traded service to make a surplus of £120k, which would help the Council put on community activities
- Use of the proposed space was only ad hoc when required for an event
- The paper was written by the CEM, but it provided a partition option with costs as per the resolution made at the previous meeting
- The option was practical, but if members voted in favour of Option A, the Council would need to allocate a green room elsewhere, and there was an opportunity cost to think about

Cllr Snape commented that Cllr Blazeby had been trying to find a solution, but it would have been more appropriate for everyone involved to be present for these offline discussions. Cllr Snape mentioned that the members were supposed to be colleagues.

Cllr Blazeby responded that he was frustrated because he and the Town Mayor had spent hours discussing potential options with the staff teams to establish the best compromise. Cllr Snape mentioned that the fridge volunteers were not there to give their opinion, and respectfully, the Town Mayor did not volunteer during the day.

Cllr Blazeby commented that he was not against attending a meeting about this. The Chairman stated that the members were all trying to achieve the same thing and that he and Cllr Blazeby had been open about the offline discussions. The Chairman reminded members that the original paper considered in January only presented one option. Cllr Snape responded that the compromise could have been discussed with representatives from the fridge there, and that would have been better than having this in-depth disagreement at a Full Council meeting. The Chairman disagreed with this.

Cllr Wilsmore believed that Option B was the compromise to suit everyone and could not understand what the extra space being suggested as the green room would give the fridge operations.

Cllr Hart reiterated her earlier comments about an alternative location for the green room and said that in other venues, acts were moved around the buildings and through different areas. She added a point about the additional costs of the partition option for a space that was not often required. Cllr Hart agreed with Cllr Snape's points about there being a lack of data in the report presented in terms of the Stocksfield Room usage.

Cllr Bandy did not think the proposed green room area was big enough and commented that Cllr Blazeby should volunteer for a morning at the fridge to see how it worked.

Cllr Thompson suggested that the Council should trust the details provided by the BFM. Cllr Hart responded that the details provided by the BFM had been given verbally by Cllr Blazeby, and these points were not included in the report. Cllr Thompson commented that these details had been shared as part of the discussion and Cllr Blazeby reminded members that the circulated report had been written as a community proposal. He added that a joint report might not have proposed the same thing and suggested there would have been a greater focus on a green room.

It was **resolved** to progress with Option B – to segregate the Stocksfield Room to accommodate a separate green room for Rufus Centre events, as presented in the circulated site plan, and to utilise the remaining Stocksfield Room space for Community Fridge operations. The Community Fridge would utilise the 'green room' space when Rufus Centre bookings did not require it.

Action: TC/CEM/BFM

Cllr Blazeby commented that it would be useful for members to understand how this proposal would be funded, as the original paper stated that information on the funding route should be provided. He added that members could be informed at the next meeting about the funding for this activity, as it had not been budgeted for, and there was an opportunity cost.

The Town Clerk advised that Cllr Blazeby raised a valid point and that funding for projects would be included in all subsequent reports. She advised members that this work could be funded by the Ops Reserves, as other capital projects had been for this financial year, and then, should the Town Mayor's Charity choose to contribute, any grants would be deducted from the total expenditure.

It was **resolved** to allocate £15,433.30 from the Ops Reserves (319) to fund the capital works for the Stocksfield Room as detailed in Option B of the circulated paper.

Action: DTC

b. Environmental Working Group (EWG)

Cllr Hart had asked for this item to be put on the agenda. The membership was discussed, along with its relationship to the committee structure. Members noted that the EWG reported to the Council since there were matters affecting both the community and the business activity. Members discussed that the EWG looked at green spaces, wildflower planting, environmental issues, waste disposal, working with contractors, initiatives with staff to conserve energy, and building management (including solar panels use and LED lighting) etc. Members noted that this group did not deal with litter picking or other smaller, similar matters. Cllr Blazeby pointed out that the EWG had historically presented options for the Council to consider, and that previously there were an equal number of members to residents on the working group.

It was **resolved** to elect the following members to the EWG: Cllrs Hart, Patterson, Wilsmore and Toinko.

It was **resolved** to elect Cllr Hart as the Chairman of the EWG.

c. Annual Residents Survey

Various questions had been raised since the last meeting. Cllr Blazeby reminded members of the importance of a reasonable survey length and the risk that respondents would not complete the questions if it were too long.

Cllr Thompson asked for clarification on which questions were being proposed, and it was confirmed that the top four questions in the supporting paper and Cllr Parsons' previous suggestion regarding residents' safety would be included. The public safety question had been removed from the national survey, and members agreed that the language could be slightly adjusted to gather actionable data on matters such as CCTV and street lighting times.

Members agreed that there was little point including questions that the Town Council had limited control over, e.g. air quality, congestion etc.

Members had an extended discussion about air pollution and traffic calming measures.

It was **resolved** to accept the three questions circulated at the top of the supporting paper (taking out 'town centre' from question 3) and tightening the language on the safety question.

Action: Communications & Marketing Manager

Cllr Hart offered to analyse the results of the survey.

d. Community Engagement Strategy

The Community Services Committee had recommended the circulated Community Engagement Strategy be adopted. Cllr Thompson advised that this document had been written in advance of the new Corporate Strategy for the Council and therefore some assumptions had been made when putting this together in terms of the Council's direction with activities. She added that it may need amendments once the Corporate Strategy was developed.

It was **resolved** to adopt the circulated Community Engagement Strategy with the revised dates of 2026 – 2031.

Action: CEM

The CEM left the meeting at 21:01.

e. Central Bedfordshire Council – Street Naming & Numbering Application CB/SN/25/0260

Cllr Crawford asked why the correspondence had been written to Phillip Thompson. The TC advised that he was a former Councillor, and the incorrect address information had been addressed with CBC subsequently.

Cllr Wilsmore asked how many roads there would be for this development, as the plans looked like one road in a horseshoe shape.

Cllr Toinko asked why the matter was being considered by members. Cllr Snape advised that the Council were consulted on road naming matters.

Members had an extended discussion about the appropriateness of two of the proposed street names, but reservations were made about the 'servicesmen's' one.

It was **resolved** to accept 'Bonnewit' and 'Muncaster' but suggest 'DeHavilland' in replacement of 'Servicesmen'.

Action: TC

f. Councillor Working Space

The Chairman had requested that this item be included on the agenda, as a small office was due to become available, and it was proposed that members could use it when visiting the Council offices. He added that officers could also use the space for a meeting room.

Cllr Blazeby asked if the space was rentable. The TC advised that it was currently not rentable. Due to the discussion being related to a current Rufus Centre tenant, the TC suggested moving this item for further debate to the exempt section of the meeting, which was agreed.

g. Rotavator Purchase

The Amenities Officer had prepared a report for members to consider regarding the purchase of a rotavator.

The following points were made:

- Cllr Toinko pointed out that this proposal had not been considered by the Allotment Working Group, and he thought it would have been beneficial to talk to allotment representatives about this proposal because rotavating plots could frustrate those who farm all year. He did not understand the rationale for wanting this.
- Cllr Blazeby asked how the service had been costed and where the rotavator would be stored. He also raised concerns about the officer's time to implement this.
- The TC stated that officers would need to cost it out properly and that she took members' points on board. Members were informed that there was a high turnover of plots, and that the Public Realm Team were already strimming and clearing plots when allotment holders gave up their plots. The TC commented that rotavating plots would save time, and that funds in the Allotment EMR were available to purchase the equipment if members agreed. The TC was unsure whether this proposal was appropriate for consideration by the Allotment Working Group.
- Cllr Thompson was surprised that this issue had not been discussed at the Allotment Working Group. She believed the frequent transfer of allotments was the primary reason for this proposal and that the fees for tenants to use the service were more of an afterthought. Cllr Thompson supported the recommendation and the EMR was available to use, but she asked whether the upcoming capital receipt could be used for the purchase.
- Cllr Hart asked if the rotavator could be used on other Council sites, and the TC agreed that this could happen.
- Cllr Blazeby commented that there did not seem to be an explicit demand from allotment holders and that the paper had not been written in the same way as described by the TC.
- Cllr Toinko did not think the expenditure should come from the allotment EMR and recalled the Council rotavating other areas previously for the installation of wildflower meadows. He also commented that there were differing opinions on how helpful it was to rotavate, as when the weeds were chopped in this way, new weeds emerged.
- Cllr Wilsmore commented on the price to hire a rotavator from Jewsons and wondered why the Council would offer the proposed service.
- Cllr Thompson pointed out that the officers, including the Public Realm Team, had indicated that they would see the value in having a rotavator and reminded members that not agreeing to the proposal was a way of saying that the members knew how to do the work better. She asked the members to be mindful of this connotation when making decisions.
- Cllr Snape referred to the community budget perhaps being underspent. The DTC advised that it was underspent, but she would need to investigate the numbers before advising members of what was available.

It was **resolved** to purchase the rotavator at a cost of £999.00 and delegate the decision of where to code this expenditure to the Town Clerk, but it was not to come from the Allotments EMR.

Action: TC

5965. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Finance Reports

The balance sheet and the project fund summary documents were noted.

5966. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

No items.

5967. EXEMPT ITEMS

The following resolution will be **moved** that is advisable in the public interest that the public and press are excluded whilst the following exempt item issue is discussed.

a. Confidential Report

The Confidential Report from the Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 20th January 2026 was noted.

b. 3 Station Road

It was **resolved** to:

1. Approve a capital incentive to be taken from the unspent Central Projects Fund and Ops Reserves from the current financial year, to assist with the fit-out of 3 Station Road.
2. Re-market 3 Station Road for wider use to include restaurant, retail, leisure, medical, and potentially educational opportunities (marketing material would not detail the value of the capital incentive and would take a different approach to the previous literature).
3. Delegate future decisions relating to the tenancy of 3 Station Road to the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

Action: TC/DTC

5964f cont.

Councillor Working Space

It was **resolved** to make the office space available for councillors and officers until such time it is required for renting out in the future.

Action: TC/BFM

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the public bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Council **resolve** to exclude the public and press by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.

Meeting closed at 21:33.

Signed: Chairman

**Recommendations and Resolutions of the
Community Services Committee 3rd March 2026**

The Town Council are asked to note the **RESOLUTIONS** and **approve** the **RECOMMENDATIONS** of the Community Services Committee 3rd March 2026

1359 MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the Community Services Meeting held on Tuesday 3rd February 2026 as an accurate record of the meeting.

1361. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Youth Provision

It was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Approve continuation of current youth provision during the 2026 optimisation and alignment phase from August 2026 – March 2027 (budget for this duration already agreed)
2. Approve formal alignment of the service specification and reporting arrangements with Central Bedfordshire's framework to demonstrate partnership outcomes and support funding opportunities.
3. Officers to create a Youth strategy for consideration by the council in September.

b. Community Events & Activities

It was **RESOLVED** not to proceed with the lantern procession and workshops, and leave the budget in the community cost centre for the time being.

Members were happy with the list of events circulated

Flitwick Town Council

Internal Audit Report 2025-26: 2nd Interim

Sally King

*For and on behalf of
Auditing Solutions Ltd*

Background

All town and parish councils are required by statute to make arrangements for an independent internal audit examination of their accounting records and system of internal control and for the conclusions to be reported each year in the Annual Return. Auditing Solutions Ltd provides this service to Flitwick Town Council.

This report sets out all the work undertaken in relation to the 2025-26 financial year to date, during our visits on 22nd September 2025 & 28th January 2026.

Internal Audit Approach

In undertaking our review for the year, we have had regard to the materiality of transactions and their susceptibility to potential mis-recording or misrepresentation in the year-end Annual Governance and Accountability Return. We have employed a combination of selective sampling techniques (where appropriate) and 100% detailed checks in several key areas to gain sufficient assurance that the Council's financial and regulatory systems and controls are appropriate and fit for the purposes intended.

Our programme of cover has been designed to afford appropriate assurance that the Council's financial systems are robust and operate in a manner to ensure effective probity of transactions and to afford a reasonable probability of identifying any material errors or possible abuse of the Council's own and the national statutory regulatory framework. The programme is also designed to facilitate our completion of the 'Annual Internal Audit Report' in the Council's Annual Return, which requires independent assurance over several internal control objectives.

Overall Conclusion

We have therefore concluded that, based on the programme of work undertaken this year to date the Council has again maintained a sound, pro-active approach to risk management and corporate governance issues, together with the development and management of effective internal controls and procedural documentation. Once again pleased to acknowledge the quality of records maintained by the Clerk and the Finance Officer and thank them for their assistance, which has ensured the smooth progress of our review process.

Detailed Report

Maintenance of Accounting Records & Bank Reconciliations

The Council's accounts are maintained with Rialtas accounting software reporting on an Income and Expenditure basis.

Our objective here is to ensure that the accounting records are being maintained accurately and currently and that no anomalous entries appear in cashbooks or financial ledgers. To that end, we have:

- Confirmed closing balances from 2024-25 have been correctly brought forward to the current financial year.
- Checked to ensure that a comprehensive, meaningful, and appropriate nominal coding schedule together with cost centres remains in place.
- Checked and agreed transactions (both receipts and payments) in the Council's main Current and Business Saver account cashbooks to the relevant Barclays Bank statements for August & September 2025, including the daily "sweep" transfers to retain a level of £5,000 in the current account.
- Checked and agreed the relevant bank account reconciliations for each account as of 31st December 2025 to ensure that no long-standing, uncleared cheques, or other anomalous entries exist.
- Confirmed with officers the arrangements for backing up the computer system.
- Noted the Council has suspended the issuing grants for the 2025-26 financial year.

Conclusions

We are pleased to report that no matters have arisen in this area of our review process to date warranting formal comment or recommendation. Further work in this area will be undertaken in this area at our final visit.

Review of Corporate Governance

Our objective here is to ensure that the Council has a robust regulatory framework in place; that Council and Committee meetings are conducted in accordance with the adopted Standing Orders; those financial transactions are made in accordance with the extant Financial Regulations and that we have a reasonable chance of identifying any actions of a potentially unlawful nature that have been or may be considered for implementation. Consequently, we have: -

- Commenced examination of the minutes of the Full Council and its various Standing Committees for the year to November 2025, to ensure that no issues affecting the Council's financial stability exist in the short, medium, or long-term, also that no legal issues appear to be in existence whereby the Council may either be considering or have taken decisions that might result in ultra vires expenditure being incurred.
- We note that the Council have reviewed and readopted Standing Orders at its meeting held on 18th March 2025 (minute ref. 5787 d.); they are scheduled to be reviewed again before the end of the financial year.

- Financial Regulations were reviewed and readopted the meeting held in February 2025 (minute ref. 5771 di.); again, they will be reviewed before the end of the financial year.
- We have reviewed the external auditor's report, issued since our last visit; to confirm they are raising no matters regarding the Councils accounts and governance.

Conclusions

We are pleased to report that no matters have arisen in this area of our review process to date warranting formal comment or recommendation. Further work in this area will be undertaken in this area at our final visit.

Review of Expenditure

Our aim here is to ensure that, in addition to confirming that sound financial control procedures are in place: -

- Council resources are released in accordance with the Council's approved procedures and approved budgets;
- Payments are supported by appropriate documentation, either in the form of an original trade invoice or other appropriate form of document confirming the payment as due and / or an acknowledgement of receipt, where no other form of invoice is available.
- An official order has been raised for all purchases and service delivery where one would be expected.
- All discounts due on goods and services supplied are identified and appropriate action taken to secure the discount.
- The correct expense codes have been applied to invoices when processed.
- There is a satisfactory process for the approval of grants and donations (where no invoice is appropriate) and that they have been approved for payment by members under the correct expenditure code; we note that grants have been suspended during the 2025-26 financial year.
- VAT has been appropriately identified and coded to the control account for periodic recovery. We note that the Council continues to engage the services of a VAT consultant as required.
- We have reviewed this area selecting a test sample for compliance with the above criteria comprising all payments individually more than £5,000 plus every 50th cashbook transaction, irrespective of value for the financial year. Our test sample comprised of 34 payments, totalling £246,688 of non-pay expenditure to December 2025, with all the above criteria met.

Conclusions

We are pleased to report that no matters have arisen in this area of our review process to date warranting formal comment or recommendation. Further work in this area will be undertaken in this area at our final visit.

Assessment and Management of Risk

Our aim here is to ensure that the Council has put in place appropriate arrangements to identify all potential areas of risk of both a financial and health and safety nature, whilst also ensuring that

appropriate arrangements exist to monitor and manage those risks to minimise the opportunity for their coming to fruition.

- Noted that the Corporate Risk Register has been reviewed and readopted at the Town Council meeting held on 21st October 2025 (minute ref. 5904 g).
- Reviewed the Council's insurance policy underwritten by Aviva which commenced in September 2025 noting that it includes public liability cover of £10 million and employers' liability cover of £10m.

Conclusions

We are pleased to report that no issues have been identified in this area warranting further comment.

Review of Income

In considering the Council's income streams, we aim to ensure that robust systems are in place to ensure the identification of all income due to the Council from its various sources; to ensure that the income is invoiced in a timely manner and that effective procedures are in place to pursue recovery of any outstanding monies due to the Council.

In addition to the annual precept the Council has a variety of income sources arising mainly from the Rufus Centre lettings and rentals, allotment income, café, cemetery fees, also the letting of sports pitches, miscellaneous grants, and bank interest.

The Council manages the Cemetery income stream using the Rialtas software module. On our first interim visit we examined the Cemetery income procedures included the Burials Register and Exclusive Rights of Burial records, examining a sample of entries relating to each area for April to August 2025 to ensure that each is supported by all relevant and legally required documentation and that the appropriate fees have been levied in accord with the published scales and recovered within a reasonable period.

The Allotments are managed using Rialtas software. There are 2 sites containing 58 plots. New tenancy agreements are issued each year along with the invoices and chased if not returned with payment. We are pleased to note that the Council reviews allotment fees on an annual basis. On our second interim visit we examined the level of outstanding invoices and tenancy agreements and are pleased to note that robust procedures are in situ.

On our second interim visit on 28th January 2026, we examined the procedures in place regarding hire of rooms for conferences, meetings, weddings & parties which are managed on bespoke software (Rendezvous). We also discussed the procedures regarding the office rent paid by Rufus Centre tenants. With no issues arising.

Conclusions

We are pleased to report that no matters have arisen in this area of our review process warranting formal comment or recommendation.

Petty Cash Account & Credit Cards

We are required, as part of the annual Internal Audit Certification process in the Annual Return, to indicate the soundness of controls in this area of the Council's financial activities.

The Council has an imprest style petty cash scheme it also holds floats for various activities. We confirmed this was within the limits set in Financial Regulations and confirmed controls over access to the safe where the money was kept. A physical check of cash held was undertaken at our first interim visit.

The Council uses a Barclaycard, and we are pleased to note that robust procedures are in place including provision of receipts and reconciliation of the statements. As part of our payment review, we examined the August 2025 Barclaycard reconciliation, with no issues arising.

We are pleased to note that receipts are attached to the invoices received from the fuel card supplier.

Conclusion

We are pleased to report that no issues have been identified in the areas examined warranting further comment.

Investments and Loans

Our objectives here are to ensure that the Council is investing "surplus funds", be they held temporarily or on a longer term basis, in appropriate banking and investment institutions and that the Council is obtaining the best rate of return on the funds held, with any interest earned brought to account correctly and appropriately in the accounting records, also that any loan repayments due to or payable by the Council are transacted in accordance with the relevant loan agreements.

We are pleased to note the Council has an Investment Management Policy in situ; this was reviewed by the Finance & General Purposes Committee at the meeting held on 17th November 2025 (minute ref. 45 e (i)).

During our visits we test repayments of PWLB loans as recorded in the Council's accounts to independent PWLB statements. We have agreed the repayments to the bank statements in relation to our work on accounting and bank reconciliation.

Conclusions

We are pleased to report that no matters have arisen in this area of our review process to date warranting formal comment or recommendation. Further work in this area will be undertaken in this area at our final visit. We will also verify the accurate disclosure of the residual year end loan liability in the AGAR

Asset Register

The Governance and Accountability Manual require all councils to develop and maintain a register of assets identifying detail of all land, buildings, vehicles, furniture, and equipment owned by the Council.

We are pleased to note that the Council holds a detailed asset register updated which is now maintained and updated through Rialtus software for the 2025-26 financial year.

Conclusions

We are pleased to report that no matters have arisen in this area of our review process to date warranting formal comment or recommendation. Further work in this area will be undertaken in this area at our final visit. We will also ensure appropriate recording of the assets in the AGAR.



Flitwick Town Council

Mayor's Special Recognition Awards Report to Town Council 17.3.26

Introduction

Recently, a number of residents have asked if the Flitwick Mayor/ Town Council has an awards scheme to recognise those members of the community who make an exceptional contribution to the community. Flitwick is very fortunate to have so many volunteers who are prepared to contribute their time and help to make Flitwick a better place to live for its residents. However, many of these contributions are informal and remain largely unrecognised. The introduction of an annual awards scheme will provide a formal mechanism to recognise these contributions.

I would like to have the scheme in place for the Civic Reception I am holding on the 17th April 2026. Due to time constraints, there will be no nomination process this year, with awards being made on verbal nominations made to the Major. It is anticipated there will be 3-4 awards this year.

Proposal

It is proposed that FTC establishes a Mayor's Special Recognition Awards scheme. The first award will be at the Mayor's Civic Reception being held on the 17th April 2026.

There will be one category, Mayor's Special Recognition Awards.

Award

The award will consist of a framed certificate presented by the Flitwick Town Mayor.

Nomination Process

Nominations will be open to residents, community organisations and councillors eight weeks before the ceremony. Nominations can be made via email or submitted in person at the Rufus Centre.

Recipients must live in Flitwick, or the voluntary work they do must benefit the Flitwick community.

Selection Panel

The selection panel will consist of:

- Town Mayor
- Two Councillors
- Council Officer

Selection Criteria

Awards will be made for outstanding voluntary service.

Awards Ceremony

Winners will be presented with their certificate at either the Mayor's Civic Reception or at the Mayor's Civic Service. It is proposed awards will be presented annually.

Financial Implications

The cost of the certificates and frame will come from the Town Mayor's allowance. As the awards will be presented at the annual Civic Reception or Civic Service there will be no additional cost.

If a Civic Reception or Civic Service is not held, alternative arrangements can be made for an awards ceremony with any additional costs coming from the Town Mayor's allowance.

Recommendations

1. To approve the Mayors Special Recognition Awards Scheme.

Cllr John Roberts
Town Mayor



FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Draft Amendments for Council 17.3.26

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GENERAL

- 1.1. These financial regulations govern the conduct of financial management by the Council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council. Financial regulations are one of the Council's three governing policy documents providing procedural guidance for members and officers. Financial regulations must be observed in conjunction with the Council's standing orders¹ and any individual financial regulations relating to contracts.
- 1.2. The Council is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that the Council has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.3. The Council's accounting control systems must include measures:
 - for the timely production of accounts.
 - that provide for the safe and efficient safeguarding of public money.
 - to prevent and detect inaccuracy and fraud; and
 - identifying the duties of officers.
- 1.4. These financial regulations demonstrate how the Council meets these responsibilities and requirements.
- 1.5. At least once a year, prior to approving the Annual Governance Statement, the Council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control which shall be in accordance with proper practices.
- 1.6. Deliberate or wilful breach of these regulations by an employee may give rise to disciplinary proceedings.
- 1.7. Members of Council are expected to follow the instructions within these Regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow instructions within these Regulations brings the office of Councillor into disrepute.
- 1.8. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office to be appointed by the Council. The Deputy Town Clerk has been appointed as RFO for this Council and these regulations will apply accordingly.
- 1.9. The RFO.
 - acts under the policy direction of the Council.

- administers the Council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices.
 - determines on behalf of the Council its accounting records and accounting control systems.
 - ensures the accounting control systems are observed.
 - maintains the accounting records of the Council up to date in accordance with proper practices.
 - assists the Council to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources; and
 - produces financial management information as required by the Council.
- 1.10. The accounting records determined by the RFO shall be sufficient to show and explain the Council's transactions and to enable the RFO to ensure that any income and expenditure account and statement of balances, or record of receipts and payments and additional information, as the case may be, or management information prepared for the Council from time to time comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations².
- 1.11. The accounting records determined by the RFO shall in particular contain:
- entries from day to day of all sums of money received and expended by the Council and the matters to which the income and expenditure or receipts and payments account relate.
 - a record of the assets and liabilities of the Council; and
 - wherever relevant, a record of the Council's income and expenditure in relation to claims made, or to be made, for any contribution, grant or subsidy.
- 1.12. The accounting control systems determined by the RFO shall include:
- procedures to ensure that the financial transactions of the Council are recorded as soon as reasonably practicable and as accurately and reasonably as possible.
 - procedures to enable the prevention and detection of inaccuracies and fraud and the ability to reconstruct any lost records.
 - identification of the duties of officers dealing with financial transactions and division of responsibilities of those officers in relation to significant transactions.

- procedures to ensure that uncollectable amounts, including any bad debts are submitted to the Council for approval to be written off in cases over £1,000, and that the approvals are shown in the accounting records; and
- measures to ensure that risk is properly managed.

1.13. The Council is not empowered by these Regulations or otherwise to delegate certain specified decisions. In particular any decision regarding:

- setting the final budget or the precept (Council Tax Requirement).
- approving accounting statements.
- approving an annual governance statement.
- borrowing.
- writing off bad debts.
- declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and
- addressing recommendations in any report from the internal or external auditors, shall be a matter for the full Council only.

1.14. In addition, the Council must:

- determine the bank mandate for all Council bank accounts and review annually. Members of the Finance & General Purposes (F&GP) Committee are to be the named Councillors on the bank mandate.
- approve any grant or a single commitment ([including all Central Project Fund Applications](#)) that is not specifically contained in the budget or covered by other financial regulations in excess of £10,000; and
- in respect of the annual salary for any employee have regard to recommendations about annual salaries of employees made by the relevant Committee in accordance with its terms of reference.

1.15. In these Financial Regulations, references to the Accounts and Audit Regulations or 'the regulations shall mean the regulations issued under the provisions of section 27 of the Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and then in force unless otherwise specified.

In these Financial Regulations the term 'proper practice' or 'proper practices' shall refer to guidance issued in *Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners' Guide (England)* issued by the Joint Practitioners Advisory Group (JPAG), available from the websites of NALC and the Society for Local Council Town

Clerks (SLCC) or *Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in Wales - A Practitioners' Guide*, available from the websites of One Voice Wales (OVW) and SLCC as appropriate.

2. ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL)

- 2.1 All accounting procedures and financial records of the Council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, appropriate guidance and proper practices.
- 2.2 On a monthly basis bank reconciliations for all accounts are completed. The RFO shall sign the reconciliations and original bank statements (or similar documents) as evidence of verification ~~and these are presented to the F&GP Committee, and these shall be presented to the F&GP Committee or circulated by email for the months when there are no face-to-face finance meetings.~~
- 2.3 The RFO shall complete the annual statement of accounts, annual report, and any related documents of the Council contained in the Annual Return (as specified in proper practices) as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and having certified the accounts shall submit them and report thereon to the Council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 2.4 The Council shall ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records, and of its system of internal control in accordance with proper practices. Any officer or member of the Council shall make available such documents and records as appear to the Council to be necessary for the purpose of the audit and shall, as directed by the Council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the Council considers necessary for that purpose.
- 2.5 The internal auditor shall be appointed by and shall carry out the work in relation to internal controls required by the Council in accordance with proper practices.
- 2.6 The internal auditor shall:
- be competent and independent of the financial operations of the Council.
 - report to Council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual written report during each financial year.
 - demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, be free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
 - have no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the Council.
- 2.7 Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:

- perform any operational duties for the Council.
- initiate or approve accounting transactions; or
- direct the activities of any Council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.

2.8 For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as is described in proper practices.

2.9 The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the accounts including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and statements of account required by Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

2.10 The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all Councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors.

3. ANNUAL ESTIMATES (BUDGET) AND FORWARD PLANNING

3.1 Each committee shall review its forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments. Having regard to the forecast, it shall thereafter formulate and submit proposals for the following financial year to the Council not later than the end of December each year including any proposals for revising the forecast.

3.2 The RFO must each year, by no later than January prepare detailed estimates of all receipts and payments including the use of reserves and all sources of funding for the following financial year in the form of a budget with consultation with Budget Holders to be considered by the relevant committee and the Council.

3.3 The F&GP Committee shall consider annual budget proposals and make recommendations for Council approval in relation to the Council's actual forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments having regard to the budget including recommendations for the use of reserves and sources of funding and update the forecast accordingly.

3.4 The F&GP Committee shall meet to finalise the proposed precept for the commencing year and submit their proposals to the Council meeting in January of each year.

3.5 The Council shall fix the precept (Council tax requirement), and relevant basic amount of Council tax to be levied for the ensuing financial year not later than by mid January each year. The RFO shall issue the precept to the billing authority and shall supply each member with a copy of the approved annual budget.

3.6 The approved annual budget shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

4 BUDGETARY CONTROL AND AUTHORITY TO SPEND

- 4.1 Expenditure on revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved revenue budget. Authorisation from the Council is required for expenditure not accounted for in the revenue budgeting process and for applications to the Central Projects Fund.

Contracts may not be disaggregated to avoid controls imposed by these regulations.

- 4.2 No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the amount provided in the revenue budget for that class of expenditure other than by resolution of the Council, or duly delegated committee. During the budget year and with the approval of [Finance & GP Committee Council](#) having considered fully the implications for public services, unspent and available amounts may be moved to other budget headings ('virement') or to an Earmarked Reserve as appropriate.
- 4.3 Unspent provisions in the revenue or capital budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year unless there is a relevant resolution to do so.
- 4.4 The salary budgets are to be reviewed at least annually in November by the HR Committee for the following financial year and such review shall be evidenced by a resolution in the minutes. The RFO will inform committees of any changes impacting on their budget requirement for the coming year in good time.
- 4.5 In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of Council services, the Town Clerk may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the Council which in the Town Clerk's judgement it is necessary to carry out or an emergency. Such expenditure includes repair, replacement or other work, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £5000. The Town Clerk shall report such action to the Leader as soon as possible and to the Council as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 4.6 No expenditure shall be authorised in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the Council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available, and the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained.
- 4.7 All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the Council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.
- 4.8 The Town Clerk can approve overspends of no more than 5% for Capital Projects funded from the Central Projects Fund.
- 4.9 The RFO shall regularly provide the Council with a statement of receipts and payments to date under each head of the budgets, comparing actual expenditure to the appropriate date against that planned as shown in the budget. These statements are to be prepared at least at the end of each financial quarter and shall show explanations of material variances. For this purpose, "material" shall be in excess of £100 or 5% of the budget. The Business & Facilities Manager has the authority to overspend on Rufus

Centre and Rendezvous cost centre budget lines up to 15% or £1,000 where the traded service has corresponding income. This information is to be included on finance report narratives.

- 4.10 Changes in earmarked reserves shall be ~~approved~~ recommended by the F&GP Committee ~~and approved by Council~~ as part of the budgetary control process.

5 BANKING ARRANGEMENTS AND AUTHORISATION OF PAYMENTS

- 5.1 The Council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and approved by the Council; banking arrangements may not be delegated to a committee. They shall be regularly reviewed for safety and efficiency.
- 5.2 All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the RFO to confirm that the work, goods or services to which each invoice relates has been received, carried out, examined and represents expenditure previously approved by the Council Or its Committees.
- 5.3 The RFO shall prepare a schedule of payments, and the RFO and the Town Clerk shall have delegated authority to make necessary payments within the Council's banking arrangements, provided that a list of such payments be circulated by email to members of the F&GP Committee within two working days afterward. Members shall review the payment schedules retrospectively and can request copies of invoices and additional information about the payments from the RFO. Copies of the purchases over £500 records each quarter will be presented for information at the next F&GP Committee.
- 5.4 The RFO shall examine invoices for arithmetical accuracy and analyse them to the appropriate expenditure heading. The RFO shall take all steps to pay all invoices submitted, and which are in order, within our normal credit terms.
- 5.5 The Clerk and RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise fund transfers within the Council's banking arrangements.
- 5.6 The RFO will align regular direct debit payments where possible to the same time in the calendar month.
- 5.7 In respect of grants a duly authorised committee shall approve expenditure within any limits set by Council and in accordance with any Policy statement approved by Council. Any Revenue or Capital Grant in excess of £10,000 shall before payment, be subject to ratification by resolution of the Council.
- 5.8 Members are subject to the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the Council and shall comply with the Code and Standing Orders when a decision to authorise or instruct payment is made in respect of a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary or other interest, unless a dispensation has been granted.

5.9 The Council will aim to rotate the duties of members in these Regulations so that onerous duties are shared out as evenly as possible over time.

6 INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE MAKING OF PAYMENTS

6.1 The Council will make safe and efficient arrangements for the making of its payments.

6.2 Following authorisation under Financial Regulation 5 above, the Council, a duly delegated committee or, if so delegated, the Town Clerk or RFO shall give instruction that a payment shall be made.

6.3 ~~Orders for payment drawn on the bank account in accordance with the schedule shall be signed by two members of Council. If a member who is also a bank signatory has declared a disclosable pecuniary interest, or has any other interest, in the matter in respect of which the payment is being made, that Councillor shall be required to consider Standing Orders, and thereby determine whether it is appropriate and / or permissible to be a signatory to the transaction in question.~~

6.4 ~~To indicate agreement of the details shown on the cheque or order for payment with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall each also initial the cheque counterfoil.~~

6.5 If thought appropriate by the council, payment for certain items may be made by BACS or CHAPS methods provided that the instructions for each payment are signed, or otherwise evidenced, by two authorised bank signatories, are retained.

6.6 The council payments for certain items may be made by internet banking transfer provided evidence is retained showing which members approved the payment.

6.7 Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the Town Clerk/ RFO shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The bank mandate approved by the council shall identify a number of councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts (dual authorisation on all transactions).

6.8 Remembered or saved passwords facilities must not be used on any computer used for Council banking work. Breach of this Regulation will be treated as a very serious matter under these regulations.

6.9 Changes to account details for suppliers, which are used for internet banking may only be changed on written notification by the supplier.

6.10 Any corporate credit card ~~or~~ trade card account opened by the Council will be specifically restricted to use by the Town Clerk, RFO, Business & Facilities Manager, Community Services Manager, ~~Functions & Events Co-ordinator~~, the Café Lead Chef and Public Realm Team for trade card account, all shall be subject to the terms as laid out in the Town Councils Credit Card Policy. Personal credit or debit cards of members of staff, shall not be used under any circumstances unless there is an emergency.

6.11 The Community Services Team will be permitted to use Equals Money cards under the direction of the Town Clerk to facilitate purchasing food supplies for the Community Fridge Project. All users of an Equals Money card must sign an agreement and follow the procedures set out in the agreement regarding the provision of receipts for purchases.

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6.124 The RFO may provide petty cash to officers for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. Proof of purchase for payments made shall be forwarded to the RFO ~~with a claim, along with a claim for reimbursement.~~ ~~for reimbursement.~~

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a) ~~The RFO shall maintain a petty cash float of £4001,200 for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses, additional floats can be taken out for larger events when necessary up to the value of an additional £500. Cheques are to be issued for cash to withdraw funds and to bring the petty cash account into balance. ~~Vouchers-Vouchers~~ for payments made from petty cash shall be kept to substantiate the payment.~~

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a) Income received must not be paid into the petty cash float but must be separately banked, as provided elsewhere in these regulations.

b) Payments to maintain the petty cash float shall be shown separately on the schedule of payments presented to the Finance & GP Committee Council under 5.2 above.

7 PAYMENT OF SALARIES

7.1 As an employer, the Council shall make arrangements to meet fully the statutory requirements placed on all employers by PAYE and National Insurance legislation. The payment of all salaries shall be made in accordance with payroll records and the rules of PAYE and National Insurance currently operating, and salaries shall be as agreed annually by Council from a recommendation by the HR Committee as part of the budgeting process, unless circumstances require a change during the financial year, on recommendation from the HR Committee.

7.2 Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary, such as may be required to be made for tax, national insurance, pension contributions, or similar statutory or discretionary deductions and union fees as applicable, must be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the appropriate dates stipulated in employment contracts, as set out in these regulations above.

7.3 No changes shall be made to any employee's pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the HR Committee and approved by the Town Council.

7.4 Each and every payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a separate confidential record. This confidential record is not open to inspection or review (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or otherwise) other than:

- a) by any Councillor who can demonstrate a need to know.
 - b) by the internal auditor
 - c) by the external auditor; or
 - d) by any person authorised under Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation.
- 7.5. The total of such payments in each calendar month shall be reported with all other payments as made as may be required under these Financial Regulations, to ensure that only payments due for the period have actually been paid.
- 7.6. An effective system of personal performance management should be maintained for the senior officers.
- 7.7 Any termination payments shall be supported by a clear business case and reported to the ~~Council~~HR Committee for consideration with any decisions recommended for Council approval. Termination payments shall only be authorised by Town Council.
- 7.8 Before employing interim staff, the HR Committee, or in some cases, the relevant committee of the Town Council must consider a full business case.

8 LOANS AND INVESTMENTS

- 8.1 All borrowings shall be effected in the name of the Council, after obtaining any necessary borrowing approval. Any application for borrowing approval shall be approved by Council as to terms and purpose. The application for Borrowing Approval and subsequent arrangements for the Loan shall only be approved by the full Council.
- 8.2 Any financial arrangement which does not require formal Borrowing Approval from the Secretary of State (such as Hire Purchase or Leasing of tangible assets) shall be subject to approval by the full Council on recommendation of the Finance & GP Committee ~~FSWG~~ before application. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Council in respect of value for money for the proposed transaction.
- 8.3 All loans and investments shall be negotiated in the name of the Council and shall be for a set period in accordance with Council decisions as required.
- 8.4 The Council shall consider the need for an Investment ~~Management Strategy and~~ Policy which, if drawn up, shall be in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any ~~Strategy and~~ Investment Management Policy shall be reviewed by the Finance & GP Committee ~~Council~~ at least annually, since this is a requirement for the Internal Audit.
- 8.5 All investments of money under the control of the Council shall be in the name of the Council.
- 8.6 All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.
- 8.7 Payments in respect of short term or long-term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, or branch, shall be made in

accordance with Regulation 5 (Authorisation of payments) and Regulation 6 (Instructions for payments).

9 INCOME

- 9.1 The collection of all sums due to the Council shall be the responsibility of the RFO under the supervision of the Town Clerk.
- 9.2 Particulars of all charges to be made for work done, services rendered, or goods supplied shall be reviewed and agreed annually by the Council. The RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all accounts due to the Council.
- 9.3 The Council will review all fees and charges, for Council services, at least annually, following a report from the relevant Senior Manager depending on the service area.
- 9.4 All sums received on behalf of the Council shall be banked intact by or as directed by the RFO. In all cases, all receipts shall be deposited with the Council's bankers with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary.
- 9.5 The origin of each receipt shall be entered on the receipts record.
- 9.6 Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the Council.
- 9.7 The RFO shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claims due in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33 shall be made quarterly. The Council will consider commissioning external VAT Reviews when necessary.
- 9.8 Where any significant sums of cash are regularly received by the Council, the RFO shall take such steps as are agreed by the Council to ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted (£500 minimum) in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken in the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.

10 ORDERS FOR WORK, GOODS AND SERVICES

- 10.1 An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained.
- 10.2 ~~Order books shall be controlled by the RFO and Purchase orders should be digitalised where possible and controlled by the RFO.~~
- 10.3 Officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer issuing an official order shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers, subject to any de minimis provisions in Regulation 12.1 below.
- 10.5 Where a member or employee is related to someone who works for a company which provides goods or services to the Town Council, quotations would be sought from two

additional companies, these would be dealt with by an independent member of staff in a sealed bid situation.

- 10.6 No Member may issue an official order or make any contract on behalf of the Council.
- 10.7 The Council, where possible, will use local suppliers.
- 10.8. The Town Clerk shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order.

11. **CONTRACTS**

11.1 Procedures as to contracts are laid down as follows:

- (a) Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that these regulations shall not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (iv) below:
 - (i) for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services.
for specialist services such as are provided by the District Valuer, solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants.
 - (ii) for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant.
 - (iii) for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the Council.
 - (iv) for additional audit work of the external Auditor up to an estimated value of £500 (in excess of this sum the Town Clerk shall act after consultation with the Leader and Chairman of the F&GP Committee.
 - (v) for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and/or are only sold at a fixed price.
- b) Where the council intends to procure or award a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract as defined by The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 ("the Regulations") which is valued at £30,000 or more, the council shall comply with the relevant requirements of the Regulations³.
- c) The full requirements of The Regulations, as applicable, shall be followed in respect of the tendering and award of a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract which exceed thresholds in The Regulations set by the Public Contracts Directive 2014/24/EU (which may change from time to time)⁴.

³ The Regulations require councils to use the Contracts Finder website to advertise contract opportunities, set out the procedures to be followed in awarding new contracts and to publicise the award of new contracts

⁴ Thresholds currently applicable are:

a) For public supply and public service contracts 209,000 Euros (£181,302)

b) For public works contracts 5,225,000 Euros (£4,551,413)

- (d) When applications are made to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the Council.
- (e) Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Town Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Town Clerk in the ordinary course of post. Each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract.
- (f) All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Town Clerk in the presence of at least one Member of Council.
- (g) If less than three tenders are received for contracts above £60,000 or if all the tenders are identical the Council may make such arrangements as it thinks fit for procuring the goods or materials or executing the works.
- (h) Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to the Council's Standing Orders for contracts and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
- (i) When it is to enter into a contract of less than £30,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the value is below £5,000 and above £100 the Clerk or RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. Otherwise, Regulation 11.3 above shall apply.
- (j) The Council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest of any tender, quote or estimate.
- (k) Should it occur that the council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated, and the council requires further pricing, provided that the specification does not change, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision-making process was being undertaken.
- (l) Contracts ~~and~~ equipment and maintenance agreements can only be issued by the Town Clerk on authority of the Town Council.

12 PAYMENTS UNDER CONTRACTS FOR BUILDING OR OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKS

- 12.1 Payments on account of the contract sum shall be made within the time specified in the contract by the RFO or relevant Senior Manager upon authorised certificates of the architect or other consultants engaged to supervise the contract (subject to any percentage withholding as may be agreed in the particular contract).

12.2 Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments. In any case where it is estimated that the total cost of work carried out under a contract, excluding agreed variations, will exceed the contract sum by 5% or more a report shall be submitted to the Council.

12.3 Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be approved by the Council and Town Clerk to the Contractor in writing, the Council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.

13 STORES AND EQUIPMENT

13.1 A delegated Officer shall be responsible for the stores and equipment relating to their team and shall maintain such stocks as consistent with minimum operating requirements.

13.2 Delivery Notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.

13.3 The RFO shall be responsible for ensuring that checks of stocks and stores are carried out at least annually. Stock checks for the Rendezvous café will be completed quarterly.

14 ASSETS, PROPERTIES AND ESTATES

14.1 The Town Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds and Land Registry certificates of properties and land owned by the Council. The Town Clerk shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties and land owned by the Council, recording the location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.

14.2 No tangible moveable property shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law save where the estimated value of any one item of tangible movable property does not exceed £250.

14.3 No real property (interests in land) shall be sold, leased or disposed of without the authority of the Council, together with any other consents required by law. In each case a Report in writing shall be provided to Council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (Including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).

14.4 No real property (interests in land) shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full Council, together with any other consents required by law. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (Including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).

14.5 Subject only to the limit (in line with 11.3 and 11.4) no tangible moveable property shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full Council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Council with a full business case.

14.6 The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.

15 INSURANCE

15.1 Following a risk assessment which shall be reviewed annually (per Financial Regulation 18), the RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the Council's insurers in consultation with the Town Clerk.

15.2 All officers shall give prompt notification to the RFO of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.

15.3 The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the Council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.

15.4 The RFO shall be notified of any loss liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim and shall report these to Council at the next available meeting.

15.5 All appropriate employees and Members of the Council shall be included in a suitable fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined by the Council or duly delegated committee

16 CHARITIES

16.1 Where the Council is sole trustee of a Charitable body the Town Clerk and RFO shall ensure that separate accounts are kept of the funds held on charitable trusts and separate financial reports made in such form as shall be appropriate, in accordance with Charity Law and legislation, or as determined by the Charity Commission. The Town Clerk and RFO shall arrange for any Audit or Independent Examination as may be required by Charity Law or any Governing Document.

16.2 For the Town Mayor's official charity, the accounts of this body will remain separate from those of the Council, with all income and expenditure of the charity going through their bank account, with the exception of Ticketsolve (the Council's online booking system for events to be used for charity fundraising), and this transfer of funds will be issued to the Town Mayor's charity account where appropriate. Any AGAR requirements to declare this arrangement will be completed **if required**. The Council will transfer funds raised from the civic year via civic events and donations received to the Town Mayor's Charity as soon as practicable following the term.

17 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 17.1 The Council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The Clerk, with the RFO, shall prepare, for approval by the Council, [the Corporate Risk Register](#) ~~risk management policy statements~~ in respect of all activities of the Council. ~~Risk policy statements~~[The Corporate Risk Register](#) and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the Council at least annually.
- 17.2 When considering any new activity, the [relevant Senior Manager](#) ~~Clerk with the RFO~~ shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the Council.

18 SUSPENSION & REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

- 18.1 It shall be the duty of the Council at least once in each Council term to review the Financial Regulations of the Council. The Clerk shall make arrangements to monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and shall advise the Council of any requirement for a consequential amendment to these financial regulations.
- 18.2 The Council may, by resolution of the Council duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of the Council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been drawn up and presented in advance to all members of the Council.

19 CCLA DEPOSIT FUND

- 19.1 The Investment [Strategy Management Policy](#) is to be reviewed annually by the F&GP Committee. Once approved no further authorisation of transactions related to CCLA should be required. The transactions do not represent expenditure/payment by the Council and thus are not required to comply with (the now defunct) LGA 1972 s150(5) – nor with any other specific provisions in the council's Financial Regulations. It is suggested that the Clerk or RFO is authorised under the council's existing bank mandate to make such investments and withdrawals as required in terms of the [Strategy policy](#).



Flitwick Town Council Standing Orders

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These Standing Orders were adopted by Council on ~~16th April 2024~~^{17th March 2026} and replace all previous versions, the most recent being 21st September 2021. They are based on model standing orders of 2018 by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC).

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Standing Orders are one of the council's three principal governing policy documents providing procedural guidance for members and officers. They must be observed in conjunction with the council's **Financial Regulations** and **Standing Orders for Contracts**.

The word "councillor" is used in the standing orders and, unless the context suggests otherwise, includes a non-councillor with or without voting rights.

INTRODUCTION

HOW TO USE STANDING ORDERS

Standing orders are the written rules of the council. Standing orders are essential to regulate the proceedings of a meeting. The council may also use standing orders to confirm or refer to various internal organisational and administrative arrangements. The standing orders of the council are not the same as the policies of a council but standing orders may refer to them.

Local councils operate within a wide statutory framework and these Standing Orders incorporate and reference many statutory requirements to which councils are subject. The statutory requirements to which this council is subject to apply whether or not they are incorporated in a council's standing orders.

The standing orders do not include model financial regulations. Financial regulations are standing orders to regulate and control the financial affairs and accounting procedures of the council. The financial regulations, as opposed to the standing orders of the council, include most of the requirements relevant to the council's Responsible Financial Officer. The Council also operate under their Standing Orders for Contacts.

NOTES

Standing orders that are in **bold type** contain legal and statutory requirements. Standing orders not in bold are designed to help the council operate effectively but they do not contain statutory requirements.

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1. RULES OF DEBATE AT MEETINGS

- a** Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the chairman of the meeting.
- b** A motion (including an amendment) shall not be progressed unless it has been moved and seconded.
- c** A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the chairman of the meeting as withdrawn.
- d** If a motion (including an amendment) has been seconded, it may be withdrawn by the proposer only with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- e** An amendment is a proposal to remove or add words to a motion. It shall not negate the motion.
- f** If an amendment to the original motion is carried, the original motion (as amended) becomes the substantive motion upon which further amendment(s) may be moved.
- g** An amendment shall not be considered unless early verbal notice of it is given at the meeting and, if requested by the chairman of the meeting, is expressed in writing to the chairman.
- h** A councillor may move an amendment to their own motion if agreed by the meeting. If a motion has already been seconded, the amendment shall be with the consent of the seconder and the meeting.
- i** If there is more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion, the amendments shall be moved in the order directed by the chairman of the meeting.
- j** Subject to standing order 1(k), only one amendment shall be moved and debated at a time, the order of which shall be directed by the chairman of the meeting.
- k** One or more amendments may be discussed together if the chairman of the meeting considers this expedient, but each amendment shall be voted upon separately.
- l** A councillor may not move more than one amendment to an original or substantive motion.
- m** The mover of an amendment has no right of reply at the end of debate on it.
- n** Where a series of amendments to an original motion are carried, the mover of the original motion shall have a right of reply either at the end of debate on the first amendment or at the very end of debate on the final substantive motion

immediately before it is put to the vote.

- o Unless permitted by the chairman of the meeting, a councillor may speak once in the debate on a motion except:
 - i. to speak on an amendment moved by another councillor;
 - ii. to move or speak on another amendment if the motion has been amended since he last spoke;
 - iii. to make a point of order;
 - iv. to give a personal explanation; or
 - v. to exercise a right of reply.
- p During the debate on a motion, a councillor may interrupt only on a point of order or a personal explanation and the councillor who was interrupted shall stop speaking. A councillor raising a point of order shall identify the standing order which they consider has been breached or specify the other irregularity in the proceedings of the meeting they are concerned by.
- q A point of order shall be decided by the chairman of the meeting and their decision shall be final.
- r When a motion is under debate, no other motion shall be moved except:
 - i. to amend the motion;
 - ii. to proceed to the next business;
 - iii. to adjourn the debate;
 - iv. to put the motion to a vote;
 - v. to ask a person to be no longer heard or to leave the meeting;
 - vi. to refer a motion to a committee or sub-committee for consideration;
 - vii. to exclude the public and press;
 - viii. to adjourn the meeting; or
 - ix. to suspend particular standing order(s) excepting those which reflect mandatory statutory or legal requirements.
- s Before an original or substantive motion is put to the vote, the chairman of the meeting shall be satisfied that the motion has been sufficiently debated and that the mover of the motion under debate has exercised or waived their right of reply.
- t Excluding motions moved understanding order 1(r), the contributions or

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speeches by a councillor shall relate only to the motion under discussion and shall not exceed 3 minutes without the consent of the chairman of the meeting.

- u** If, at the Chairman's discretion, urgent business is added to the Agenda, the item may be discussed **but no formal decision may be made**. The Town Clerk has delegated authority through the scheme of delegations to deal with urgent matters in consultation with specific members.

2. DISORDERLY CONDUCT AT MEETINGS

- a** No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly. If this standing order is ignored, the chairman of the meeting shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
- b** If person(s) disregard the request of the chairman of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any councillor or the chairman of the meeting may move that the person be no longer heard or be excluded from the meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.
- c** If a resolution made under standing order 2(b) is ignored, the chairman of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.

3. MEETINGS GENERALLY

Full Council meetings
Committee meetings
Sub-committee meetings

- a** **Meetings shall not take place in premises which at the time of the meeting are used for the supply of alcohol, unless no other premises are available free of charge or at a reasonable cost.**
- b** **The minimum three clear days for notice of a meeting does not include the day on which notice was issued, the day of the meeting, a Sunday, a day of the Christmas break, a day of the Easter break or of a bank holiday or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning.**
- c** **The minimum three clear days' public notice for a meeting does not include the day on which the notice was issued or the day of the meeting unless the meeting is convened at shorter notice.**
- d** All items of business will be set out on the agenda for all meetings and sent out with the summons to councillors. Members of Council or members of committee may make a request to the Town Clerk to include relevant items on agendas if relevant to the respective terms of reference. The Town Clerk will where possible include the requested item, however their decision is final. If the Town Clerk declines the request, they will notify the councillor of their decision and explain the reason for it.
- e** **Meetings shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial**

to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.

- f Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.
- g Each period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 3(e) shall not exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting.
- h Subject to standing order 3(f), a member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes and may only speak once.
- i In accordance with standing order 3(f), a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chairman of the meeting may direct that a response to a question by a member of the public be referred to a Councillor for an oral response or to an Officer for a written response.
- j During consideration of planning matters, equal opportunity shall be given to persons supporting applications and to persons opposing.
- k A person, Councillor or member of the public shall raise their hand (either in person or via virtual access) when requesting to speak and remain seated when speaking.
- l A person who speaks at a meeting shall direct their comments to the chairman of the meeting.
- m Only one person is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one person wants to speak, the chairman of the meeting shall direct the order of speaking. Where there is more than one public participation section of a meeting, the chairman will give members of the public who have not already spoken priority over those who have previously spoken.
- n **Subject to standing order 3(o), a person who attends a meeting is permitted to report on the meeting whilst the meeting is open to the public. To "report" means to film, photograph, make an audio recording of meeting proceedings, use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear the meeting as it takes place or later or to report or to provide oral or written commentary about the meeting so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later to persons not present.** The Chairman should have regard if filming takes place, that members of the public may not wish to be filmed. This right must be taken up without disturbing the meeting.
- o **A person present at a meeting may not provide an oral report or oral**

commentary about a meeting as it takes place without permission.

- p **The press shall be provided with reasonable facilities for the taking of their report of all or part of a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.**
- q **Subject to standing orders which indicate otherwise, anything authorised or required to be done by, to or before the Chairman of the Council may in his absence be done by, to or before the Vice-Chairman of the Council.**
- r **The Chairman of the Council, if present, shall preside at a meeting. If the Chairman is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chairman of the Council if present, shall preside. If both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman are absent from a meeting, a councillor as chosen by the councillors present at the meeting shall preside at the meeting.**
- s **Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the councillors and non-councillors with voting rights present and voting.**
- t **The chairman of a meeting may give an original vote on any matter put to the vote, and in the case of an equality of votes may exercise his casting vote whether or not he gave an original vote.**

See standing orders 5(i) and (j) for the different rules that apply in the election of the Chairman of the Council at the annual meeting of the Council.
- u **Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave his vote for or against that question.** Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.
- v The minutes of a meeting shall include an accurate record of the following:
 - i. the time and place of the meeting;
 - ii. the names of councillors who are present and the names of councillors who are absent with the reason for absence;
 - iii. interests that have been declared by councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
 - iv. the grant of dispensations (if any) to councillors and non-councillors with voting rights;
 - v. whether a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights left the meeting when matters that they held interests in were being considered;

- vi. if there was a public participation session; and
- vii. the resolutions made.

w A councillor or a non-councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in the Council's code of conduct in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under the code on his right to participate and vote on that matter.

x Councillors have a *duty* to attend meetings

y The quorum of the Council is 6 councillors. No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the Council are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three.

Apologies should be sent directly to the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk by email prior to the meeting. It is unacceptable for other Councillors to apologise on behalf of colleagues.

~~i. It is the responsibility of the councillor to arrange for a nominated substitute to attend on their behalf which also must be notified as per 3v(ii) above.~~

~~ii. If a councillor is unable to attend and has not arranged for a nominated substitute to attend on their behalf, the Chairman may at their discretion agree for another councillor present at the meeting to substitute.~~

~~iii. If a councillor does not attend a meeting of the Council for six (6) months and has not submitted a reason for long term absence that has been accepted by Resolution of the Council, they will no longer hold the office of Councillor.~~

~~iv. In line with the Local Government Act 1972 s85 (1) & (2) apologies will be shown as:~~

Apologies accepted, with the *reason given*.

z No business may be transacted at a meeting unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the Council are present and in no case shall the quorum of a meeting be less than three.

See standing order 3(y) for the quorum of a committee or sub-committee meeting.

aa If a meeting is or becomes inquorate no business shall be transacted and the meeting shall be closed. The business on the agenda for the meeting shall be adjourned to another meeting.

- bb** A meeting shall not exceed a period of 3 hours.
- cc** Adequate breaks during long meetings are a necessity for maintaining attention, energy, and performance. The Chairman should offer members the opportunity of adjourning the meeting for a ten-minute break if a meeting is expected to be longer than two and a half hours.
- dd** The statutory requirements for meetings are mainly contained in the Local Government Act 1972 ("the 1972 Act") and the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 ("the 1960 Act"). Usually, there is a requirement for local authorities to hold public meetings in person with all members present in one place.

4. COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

- a** **Unless the Council determines otherwise, a committee may appoint a sub-committee whose terms of reference and members shall be determined by the committee.**
- b** **The members of a committee may include non-councillors unless it is a committee which regulates and controls the finances of the Council.**
- c** **Unless the Council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-councillors.**
- d** The Council may appoint standing committees or other committees and working groups as may be necessary, and:
 - i.** shall determine their terms of reference; and any delegation to its committees.
 - ii.** shall determine the number and time of the ordinary meetings of a standing committee up until the date of the next annual meeting of the Council;
 - iii.** shall permit a committee, other than in respect of the ordinary meetings of a committee, to determine the number and time of its meetings;
 - iv.** shall, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of members of such a committee;

~~v. may, subject to standing orders 4(b) and (c), appoint and determine the terms of office of the substitute members to a committee whose role is to replace the ordinary members at a meeting of a committee if the ordinary members of the committee confirm to the Proper Officer 3 clear days before the meeting that they are unable to attend;~~

~~vi-v.~~ shall, after it has appointed the members of a standing committee,

appoint the chairman of the standing committee;

~~vii-vi.~~ shall permit a committee other than a standing committee, to appoint its own vice-chairman at the first meeting of the committee;

~~viii-vii.~~ shall determine the place, notice requirements and quorum for a meeting of a committee and a sub-committee, which, in both cases, shall be no less than three;

~~ix-viii.~~ shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee;

~~x-ix.~~ shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend the meetings of a sub-committee and also the advance public notice requirements, if any, required for the meetings of a sub-committee.

~~xi-x.~~ shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a sub-committee that they are permitted to attend; and

~~xii-xi.~~ may dissolve a committee or a sub-committee.

~~xiii-xii.~~ A councillor who has proposed a resolution on an agenda of a committee of which they are not a member must attend that Committee to explain their resolution and answer questions but shall not vote. The item will not be considered if the member requesting the resolution cannot attend.

~~xiv-xiii.~~ Any councillor is entitled to be present as a spectator at the meetings of any committee or subcommittee of which they are not a member, except if a resolution has been passed to exclude the press and public. The councillor may speak on an item on the Agenda with the chairman's permission but may not participate further or vote.

- e. Non-councillor members of Committees, Subcommittees, or Working Groups will be required to comply with the Council's Standing Orders. If a Non-Councillor member acts in a way that is contrary to the rules set out in the Standing Orders through disruptive or detrimental behaviour, the Council can remove such members from the meetings either permanently or temporarily. All Members should receive a copy of the associated Terms of Reference once elected.

5. **ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS**

- a **In an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on or within 14 days following the day on which the Councillors elected take office.**
- b **In a year which is not an election year, the annual meeting of the Council shall be held on such day in May as the Council decides.**
- c **If no other time is fixed, the annual meeting of the Council shall take**

place at 7:45pm.

- d In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, at least three other ordinary meetings shall be held in each year on such dates and times as the Council decides.**
- e The first business conducted at the annual meeting of the Council shall be the election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council.**
- f All Members are eligible to be proposed as Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Council**
 - I. The Chairman of the Town Council shall be known as the Town Mayor and the Vice-Chairman as the Deputy Town Mayor.
 - II. The Chairman of the Town Council should serve for one year, but this may be varied by Resolution of the Council if circumstances are deemed appropriate for a longer Term of Office.
 - III. The custom and practice of outgoing Town Mayor/Chairman proposing the Deputy Town Mayor/Vice Chairman is not mandatory.
 - IV. It is preferable that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council have experience in Chairmanship before election to these posts.
 - V. The Chairman of the Council should, during their office, involve the Vice-Chairman as much as practically possible.
 - VI. As set out in the Civic Protocol, the Vice Chairman is expected to deputise for the Town Mayor at functions they are unable to attend.
- g The Chairman of the Council, unless he has resigned or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the annual meeting until his successor is elected at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- h The Vice-Chairman of the Council, if there is one, unless he resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Chairman of the Council at the next annual meeting of the Council.**
- i In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has not been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the annual meeting until a successor Chairman of the Council has been elected. The current Chairman of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council but shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.**
- j In an election year, if the current Chairman of the Council has been re-elected as a member of the Council, he shall preside at the annual meeting until a new Chairman of the Council has been elected. He may exercise an original vote in respect of the election of the new Chairman of the Council and shall give a casting vote in the case of an equality of**

votes.

- k** Following the election of the Chairman of the Council and Vice-Chairman of the Council at the annual meeting, the business shall include:
- i.** **In an election year, delivery by the Chairman of the Council and councillors of their acceptance of office forms unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date. In a year which is not an election year, delivery by the Chairman of the Council his acceptance of office form unless the Council resolves for this to be done at a later date.**
 - ii.** If required, the Election of a Leader of the Council.
 - iii.** If required, the Election of a Deputy Leader of the Council.
 - iv.** To receive announcements from the Leader of the Council
 - v.** Confirmation of the accuracy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council;
 - vi.** Consideration of the recommendations and resolutions made by a committee;
 - vii.** Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, officers and other local authorities;
 - viii.** Review of the terms of reference for committees and working groups;
 - ix.** Appointment of members to existing committees;
 - x.** Appointment of any new committees in accordance with standing order 4;
 - xi.** Election of a Chairman to each committee.
 - xii.** Review and adoption of appropriate standing orders, standing orders for contracts and financial regulations;
 - xiii.** Review of arrangements (including legal agreements) with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies and businesses.
 - xiv.** Review of representation on or work with external bodies and arrangements for reporting back;
 - xv.** In an election year, to make arrangements with a view to the Council becoming eligible to exercise the general power of competence in the future.
 - xvi.** Review of inventory of land and other assets including buildings and office equipment;
 - xvii.** Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all

insurable risks;

- xviii.** Review of the Council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies, unless this has been undertaken as part of the budget process
- xix.** Review of the Council's complaints procedure;
- xx.** Review of the Council's policies, procedures and practices in respect of its obligations under freedom of information and data protection legislation (*see also standing orders 11, 20 and 21*);
- xxi.** Review of the Council's policy for dealing with the press/media;
- xxii.** Review of the Council's employment policies and procedures;
- xxiii.** Review of the Council's expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the general power of competence, unless it is to be undertaken at a meeting of the Council to approve year end accounts and the annual governance statement.
- xxiv.** Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.

6. EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL, COMMITTEES AND SUB COMMITTEES

- a** The Chairman of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.
- b** If the Chairman of the Council does not call an extraordinary meeting of the Council within seven days of having been requested in writing to do so by two councillors, any two councillors may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council. The public notice giving the time, place and agenda for such a meeting shall be signed by the two councillors.
- c** The chairman of a committee or a sub-committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee or the sub-committee at any time.
- d** If the chairman of a committee or a sub-committee does not call an extraordinary meeting within 7 days of having been requested to do so by 2 members of the committee or the sub-committee, any 3 members of the committee or the sub-committee may convene an extraordinary meeting of the committee or a sub-committee.

7. PREVIOUS RESOLUTIONS

- a** A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least 3 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee. To

consider a previous resolution, there must have been a material change or further information that has come to light since the previous resolution was made.

- b** When a motion moved pursuant to standing order 7(a) has been disposed of, no similar motion may be moved for a further six months.

8. VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS

- a** Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the chairman of the meeting.
- b** Voting on appointments will be conducted by secret ballot.

9. MOTIONS FOR A MEETING THAT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE TO BE GIVEN TO THE PROPER OFFICER

- a** A motion shall relate to the responsibilities of the meeting for which it is tabled and, in any event, shall relate to the performance of the Council's statutory functions, powers and obligations or an issue which specifically affects the Council's area or its residents.
- b** No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least 5 clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.
- c** The Proper Officer may, before including a motion on the agenda received in accordance with standing order 9(b), correct obvious grammatical or typographical errors in the wording of the motion.
- d** If the Proper Officer considers the wording of a motion received in accordance with standing order 9(b) is not clear in meaning, the motion shall be rejected until the mover of the motion resubmits it, so that it can be understood, in writing, to the Proper Officer at least 5 clear days before the meeting.
- e** If the wording or subject of a proposed motion is considered improper, the Proper Officer shall consult with the chairman of the forthcoming meeting or, as the case may be, the Councillors who have convened the meeting, to consider whether the motion shall be included in the agenda or rejected.
- f** Subject to standing order 9(e) above, the decision of the Proper Officer as to whether or not to include the motion on the agenda shall be final.
- g** Motions received shall be recorded and numbered in the order that they are received.

h Motions rejected shall be recorded with an explanation by the Proper Officer of the reason for rejection.

10. MOTIONS AT A MEETING THAT DO NOT REQUIRE WRITTEN NOTICE

a The following motions may be moved at a meeting without written notice to the Proper Officer:

- i.** to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes of a meeting;
- ii.** to move to a vote;
- iii.** to defer consideration of a motion;
- iv.** to refer a motion to a particular committee or sub-committee;
- v.** to appoint a person to preside at a meeting;
- vi.** to change the order of business on the agenda;
- vii.** to proceed to the next business on the agenda;
- viii.** to require a written report;
- ix.** to appoint a committee or sub-committee and their members;
- x.** to extend the time limits for speaking;
- xi.** to exclude the press and public from a meeting in respect of confidential or other information which is prejudicial to the public interest;
- xii.** to not hear further from a Councillor or a member of the public;
- xiii.** to exclude a Councillor or member of the public for disorderly conduct;
- xiv.** to temporarily suspend the meeting;
- xv.** to suspend a particular standing order (unless it reflects mandatory statutory or legal requirements);
- xvi.** to adjourn the meeting; or
- xvii.** to close the meeting.

11. MANAGEMENT OF INFORMATION

See also standing order 20.

a **The Council shall have in place and keep under review, technical and organisational measures to keep secure information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. Such arrangements shall include deciding who has access to personal data and encryption of personal data.**

- b The Council shall have in place, and keep under review, policies for the retention and safe destruction of all information (including personal data) which it holds in paper and electronic form. The Council's retention policy shall confirm the period for which information (including personal data) shall be retained or if this is not possible the criteria used to determine that period (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980).**
- c The agenda, papers that support the agenda and the minutes of a meeting shall not disclose or otherwise undermine confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**
- d Councillors, staff, the Council's contractors and agents shall not disclose confidential information or personal data without legal justification.**

12. DRAFT MINUTES

Full Council meetings
Committee meetings
Sub-committee meetings

- a** If the draft minutes of a preceding meeting have been served on councillors with the agenda to attend the meeting at which they are due to be approved for accuracy, they shall be taken as read.
- b** There shall be no discussion about the draft minutes of a preceding meeting except in relation to their accuracy. A motion to correct an inaccuracy in the draft minutes shall be moved in accordance with standing order 10(a)(i).
- c** The accuracy of draft minutes, including any amendment(s) made to them, shall be confirmed by resolution and shall be signed by the chairman of the meeting and stand as an accurate record of the meeting to which the minutes relate.
- d** If the chairman of the meeting does not consider the minutes to be an accurate record of the meeting to which they relate, they shall sign the minutes and include a paragraph in the following terms or to the same effect:

"The chairman of this meeting does not believe that the minutes of the meeting of the Council, Committee or sub Committee held on [date] in respect of (----) were a correct record but their view was not upheld by the meeting and the minutes are confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings."
- e** **If the Council's gross annual income or expenditure (whichever is higher) does not exceed £25,000, it shall publish draft minutes on a website which is publicly accessible and free of charge not later than one month after the meeting has taken place.**
- f** Subject to the publication of draft minutes in accordance with standing order 12(e) and standing order 20(a) and following a resolution which confirms the

accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, the draft minutes or recordings of the meeting for which approved minutes exist shall be destroyed. The approved minutes will be published on the Council's website within 2 weeks of approval.

13. CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISPENSATIONS

See also standing order 3(v).

- a** All councillors and non-councillors with voting rights shall observe the code of conduct adopted by the Council.
- b** Unless they have been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest. They may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which they had the interest.
- c** Unless they have been granted a dispensation, a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights shall withdraw from a meeting when it is considering a matter in which they have another interest if so, required by the Council's code of conduct. They may return to the meeting after it has considered the matter in which they had the interest.
- d** **Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Proper Officer** as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
- e** A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by the Town Clerk, or Proper Officer in accordance with the Councils Scheme of Delegation and that decision is final.
- f** A dispensation request shall confirm:
 - i.** the description and the nature of the disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest to which the request for the dispensation relates;
 - ii.** whether the dispensation is required to participate at a meeting in a discussion only or a discussion and a vote;
 - iii.** the date of the meeting or the period (not exceeding four years) for which the dispensation is sought; and
 - iv.** an explanation as to why the dispensation is sought.
- g** Subject to standing orders 13(d) and (f), a dispensation request shall be considered by the Proper Officer before the meeting or, if this is not possible, at the beginning of the meeting of the Council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required.
- h** **A dispensation may be granted in accordance with standing order 13(e) if**

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having regard to all relevant circumstances any of the following apply:

- i. **without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business.**
- ii. **granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Council's area; or**
- iii. **it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.**

14. CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

- a Upon notification by the Unitary Council that it is dealing with a complaint that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the Council's code of conduct, the Proper Officer shall, subject to standing order 11, report this to the Council.
- b Where the notification in standing order 14(a) relates to a complaint made by the Proper Officer, the Proper Officer shall notify the Leader of the Council of this fact. The Leader shall nominate another staff member to assume the duties of the Proper Officer in relation to the complaint until it has been determined and the Council has agreed on what action, if any, to take.
- c The Council may:
 - i. provide information or evidence where such disclosure is necessary to investigate the complaint or is a legal requirement;
 - ii. seek information relevant to the complaint from the person or body with statutory responsibility for investigation of the matter.
- d. **Upon notification by the District or Unitary Council that a councillor or non-councillor with voting rights has breached the Council's code of conduct, the Council shall consider what, if any, action to take against them. Such action excludes disqualification or suspension from office.**

15. PROPER OFFICER

- a The Proper Officer shall be the Town Clerk or, in their absence, the Deputy Town Clerk or other senior officer(s) nominated by the Council to undertake the work of the Proper Officer when the Proper Officer is absent.
- b The Proper Officer shall:
 - i. **at least three clear days before a meeting of the council, a committee or a sub-committee,**
 - **serve on councillors by delivery or post at their residence or by email authenticated in such manner as the Proper Officer thinks fit, a signed summons confirming the time, place and the**

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agenda, (provided the Councillor has consented to service by email and

- **Provide, in a conspicuous place, public notice of the time, place and agenda (provided that the public notice with agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the Council convened by councillors is signed by them).**
- Publish a copy of the agenda and appropriate supporting papers on the Council's website.

See standing order 3(b) for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of a full council and standing order 3(c) for the meaning of clear days for a meeting of a committee;

- ii. subject to standing order 9, include on the agenda all motions in the order received unless a councillor has given written notice at least 4 days before the meeting confirming their withdrawal of it;
- iii. **convene a meeting of the Council for the election of a new Chairman of the Council, occasioned by a casual vacancy in his office;**
- iv. **facilitate inspection of the minute book by local government electors;**
- v. **receive and retain copies of byelaws made by other local authorities;**
- vi. hold acceptance of office forms from councillors;
- vii. hold a copy of every councillor's register of interests;
- viii. assist with responding to requests made under freedom of information legislation and rights exercisable under data protection legislation, in accordance with the Council's relevant policies and procedures;
- ~~ix.~~ ~~liaise, as appropriate, with the Council's Data Protection Officer;~~
- ~~xix.~~ receive and send general correspondence and notices on behalf of the Council except where there is a resolution to the contrary;
- ~~xi-x.~~ assist in the organisation of, storage of, access to, security of and destruction of information held by the Council in paper and electronic form subject to the requirements of data protection and freedom of information legislation and other legitimate requirements (e.g. the Limitation Act 1980);
- ~~xii-xi.~~ arrange for legal deeds to be executed;
(see also standing order 23);
- ~~xiii-xii.~~ arrange or manage the prompt authorisation, approval, and instruction regarding any payments to be made by the Council in accordance with its

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financial regulations;

~~xiv-xiii.~~ record every planning application notified to the Council and the Council's response to the local planning authority and report this to the Council ~~quarterly, each month~~;

~~xv-xiv.~~ consider all planning applications received by the Council in accordance with the adopted planning guide and respond to the application on behalf of the Council or, for significant or controversial applications, refer to the next available meeting of the Council.

~~xvi-xv.~~ manage access to information about the Council via the publication scheme and retain custody of the seal of the Council, which shall not be used without a resolution.

- c. The Town Clerk and other council officers shall have the authority and duties given to them under the Council's Scheme of Delegation and will report decisions taken under such delegation to each Council meeting.

16. RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

- a The Town Clerk post has been designated as the Deputy Responsible Financial Officer and may deputise for the Responsible Finance Officer.
- b The Council shall appoint appropriate officer(s) to undertake the work of the Responsible Financial Officer if the Responsible Financial Officer and Deputy Responsible Financial Officer are absent.

17. ACCOUNTS AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

- a "Proper practices" in standing orders refer to the most recent version of "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners' Guide".
- b All payments by the Council shall be authorised, approved and paid in accordance with the law, proper practices and the Council's financial regulations.
- c The Responsible Financial Officer shall supply to the Finance & General Purposes Committee ~~monthly~~ financial reports to summarise:
- i. the Council's receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for each quarter;
 - ii. the Council's aggregate receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for the year to date;
 - iii. the balances held at the end of the month being reported, which includes a comparison with the budget for the financial year and highlights any actual or potential overspends.
- d As soon as possible after the financial year ends on 31 March, the Responsible Financial Officer shall provide:

- i. each Councillor with a statement summarising the Council's receipts and payments (or income and expenditure) for the last quarter and the year to date for information; and
 - ii. to the Council the accounting statements for the year in the form of Section 1 of the annual governance and accountability return, as required by proper practices, for consideration and approval.
- e The year-end accounting statements shall be prepared in accordance with proper practices and apply the form of accounts determined by the Council (or income and expenditure) for the year to 31 March. A completed draft annual governance and accountability return shall be presented to the Finance & General Purposes Committee at least 14 days prior to anticipated approval by the Council. The annual governance and accountability return of the Council, which is subject to external audit, including the annual governance statement, shall be presented to the Council for consideration and formal approval before 30 June.

18. **FINANCIAL CONTROLS AND PROCUREMENT**

- a. The Finance & GP Committee will review the financial regulations and recommend these to Council for approval. ~~shall consider and approve~~The financial regulations will be drawn up by the Responsible Financial Officer, which shall include detailed arrangements in respect of the following:
 - i. the keeping of accounting records and systems of internal controls;
 - ii. the assessment and management of financial risks faced by the Council;
 - iii. the work of the independent internal auditor in accordance with proper practices and the receipt of regular reports from the internal auditor, which shall be required at least annually;
 - iv. the inspection and copying by councillors and local electors of the Council's accounts and/or orders of payments; and
 - v. whether contracts with an estimated value below **£30,000** due to special circumstances are exempt from a tendering process or procurement exercise.
- b. Financial regulations shall be reviewed regularly and at least annually for fitness of purpose.
- c. **A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 with an estimated value in excess of £30,000 but less than the relevant thresholds referred to in standing order 18(f) is subject to the light touch arrangements under Regulations 109-114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 unless it proposes to use an existing list of approved suppliers (Framework Agreement).**
- d. Subject to additional requirements in the financial regulations of the Council,

the tender process for contracts for the supply of goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall include, as a minimum, the following steps:

- i. a specification for the goods, materials, services or the execution of works shall be drawn up;
 - ii. an invitation to tender shall be drawn up to confirm (i) the Council's specification (ii) the time, date and address for the submission of tenders (iii) the date of the Council's written response to the tender and (iv) the prohibition on prospective contractors contacting councillors or staff to encourage or support their tender outside the prescribed process;
 - iii. tenders are to be submitted in writing in a sealed marked envelope addressed to the Proper Officer;
 - iv. tenders shall be opened by the Proper Officer in the presence of at least one Councillor after the deadline for submission of tenders has passed;
 - v. tenders are to be reported to and considered by the appropriate meeting of the Council or a committee or sub-committee with delegated responsibility.
- e. Neither the Council, nor a committee or a sub-committee with delegated responsibility for considering tenders, is bound to accept the lowest value tender.
- f. **Where the Value of a contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Office of Government Commerce from time to time, the Council must consider whether the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016 apply to the contract and if either of those Regulations apply, the Council must comply with procurement rules.**

19. HANDLING STAFF MATTERS

- a. A matter personal to relating to an officer being considered by a meeting of Council, or HR Committee is subject to standing order 11.
- b. Subject to the Council's policy regarding absences from work, the Town Clerk shall notify the Leader of the Council or, if they are not available, the Chairman of the absence occasioned by illness or other reason and that person shall report such absence to the HR Committee at its next meeting. The Deputy Town Clerk will follow the same process should the Town Clerk be unavailable.
- c. The chairman of the HR Committee or, in their absence, the vice-chairman shall, upon a resolution, conduct a review of the performance of the Council officer appraisals, job descriptions and pay arrangements. The reviews and appraisals shall be reported in writing and are subject to approval by resolution by the HR Committee.
- d. The Leader and Chairman of the HR Committee shall, upon a resolution,

conduct an annual review of the performance of the Town Clerk. The appraisal will be reported in writing and is subject to approval by resolution of the HR Committee.

- e Subject to the Council's policy regarding the handling of grievance matters, the Council's most senior officer shall notify the chairman of the HR Committee or in their absence, the vice-chairman of the HR Committee in respect of an informal or formal grievance matter. This matter shall be reported back and progressed by resolution of the HR Committee, or Appeals Committee.
- f Any persons responsible for all or part of the management of staff shall treat as confidential the written records of all meetings relating to their performance, capabilities, grievance or disciplinary matters.
- g In accordance with standing order 11(a), persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records referred to in standing order 19(f).
- h The council shall keep all written records relating to employees secure. All paper records shall be secured appropriately, and electronic records shall be password-protected and encrypted.
- i Only persons with line management responsibilities shall have access to staff records referred to in standing orders 19(f) and (g) above if so justified.
- j Access and means of access by keys and/or computer passwords to records of employment referred to in standing orders 19(f) and (g) above shall be provided only to employees authorised by Town Clerk or the HR Committee.
- k The Leader and Deputy Leader will not be on the Appeals Committee.

20. RESPONSIBILITIES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION

See also standing order 21.

- a **In accordance with freedom of information legislation, the Council shall publish information in accordance with its publication scheme and respond to requests for information held by the Council.**
- b. **The Council shall publish information in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015.**

21. RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION

(Below is not an exclusive list).
See also standing order 11.

- a **The Council shall have policies and procedures in place to respond to an individual exercising statutory rights concerning his personal data.**
- b **The Council shall have a written policy in place for responding to and managing a personal data breach.**

- c **The Council shall keep a record of all personal data breaches comprising the facts relating to the personal data breach, its effects and the remedial action taken.**
- d **The Council shall ensure that information communicated in its privacy notice(s) is in an easily accessible and available form and kept up to date.**
- e **The Council shall maintain a written record of its processing activities.**

22. RELATIONS WITH THE PRESS/MEDIA

- a Requests from the press or other media for an oral or written comment or statement from the Council, its councillors or officers shall be handled in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media.

23. EXECUTION AND SEALING OF LEGAL DEEDS

See also standing orders 15(b)(xii) and (xvii).

- a A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the Council unless authorised by a resolution.
- b **Subject to standing order 23(a), any two councillors may sign, on behalf of the Council, any deed required by law and the Proper Officer shall witness their signatures.** Documents relating to matters reserved for the Town Council in the scheme of delegations should be signed by the Leader and the Town Mayor. Other documents should be signed by two councillors from the relevant standing committee, ideally including the committee chairman.

24. COMMUNICATING WITH UNITARY COUNCILLORS

- a An invitation to attend a meeting of the Council shall be sent, together with the agenda, to the ward councillors of the Unitary Council representing the area of the Council.
- b Unless the Proper Officer or Council decides otherwise, a copy of each formal letter sent to the Unitary Council shall be sent to the ward councillors representing the area of the Council.

25. RESTRICTIONS ON COUNCILLOR ACTIVITIES

- a. Unless duly authorised, no councillor shall:
 - i. inspect any land and/or premises which the Council has a right or duty to inspect; or
 - ii. issue orders, instructions or directions.

26. LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER

- a** The primary functions of the Leader and the Deputy Leader shall be to facilitate the definition of the Councils policy and to work with the Town Clerk to progress council business in accordance with the council's formal decisions.
- b** The Leader and Deputy Leader are expected to act as uniting figures within the council, leading with influence, working with councillors and officers to build consensus and encouraging communication.
- c** The Leader and Deputy Leader are appointed by the Council at the annual statutory meeting and serve for a term of two years to match the term of the Council.
- d** The Leader and Deputy leader shall be ex-officio voting Members on all Standing Committees.
- e** Any councillor may submit a written motion of no confidence in the Leader and/or Deputy Leader to the Proper Officer, which must be signed by three councillors.
 - i.** The motion will be considered at the next meeting of the Council. Should the motion be carried, the Leader and/or Deputy Leader will be immediately removed from office and a new Leader and/or Deputy Leader will be immediately elected following the process set out in standing order 8.
 - ii.** Should the motion of no confidence in the Leader or Deputy Leader fall, it will not be possible to submit another motion of no confidence for three months unless the Leader or Deputy Leader are subsequently found to have broken the code of conduct by the Monitoring Officer of the Unitary Authority as detailed in standing order 14.

27. QUESTIONS

- a** A Councillor may ask the Town Mayor or Leader any question or request a statement on any matter related to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the parish.
- b** While not mandatory, written notice of the question should be submitted to the Proper Officer at least 3 clear working days prior to the date/time of the meeting to allow the delivery of an appropriate response at the meeting.
- c** Every question shall be put and answered without discussion. An answer may take the form of:
 - i.** A direct oral answer
 - ii.** Where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication, or
 - iii.** Where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer

circulated later to the questioner within 10 working days.

- d Questions or statements not related to items of business on the agenda for a meeting shall only be asked during the part of the Council meeting set aside for such questions.
- e Any question or statement made by a Councillor with the consent of the Chairman should not exceed 3 minutes.

28. CO-OPTION

- f In the event of a co-option arising to fill a casual vacancy caused by the death, resignation or disqualification of a Councillor, the Council's co-option policy shall apply.

29. GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE

- a Before exercising the General Power of Competence, the Council must resolve at a meeting of the Council and each subsequent relevant annual meeting that it meets the conditions in paragraph b below.
- b At the time a resolution under paragraph a is passed:
 - i. The number of ordinary members of the council that have been declared to be elected, whether at ordinary elections or at a by-election, is equal or greater than two-thirds of the total number of members of the council;
 - ii. The Town Clerk holds one of: the Certificate in Local Council Administration, the Certificate of Higher Education in Local Policy, the Certificate of Higher Education in Local Council Administration or the first level of the foundation degree in Community Engagement and Governance awarded by the University of Gloucestershire or its successor qualifications; and
 - iii. The Town Clerk has completed the relevant training, unless such training was required for the purpose of obtaining a qualification of a description mentioned in paragraph b. "Relevant training" means training provided in the exercise of general power; or provided in accordance with the national training strategy for parish councils adopted by the National Association of Local Councils, as revised from time to time.

30. STANDING ORDERS GENERALLY

- a All or part of a standing order, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, may be suspended by resolution in relation to the consideration of an item on the agenda for a meeting.
- b A motion to add to, vary or revoke one or more of the Council's standing orders, except one that incorporates mandatory statutory or legal requirements, shall be proposed by a special motion, the written notice by at least 3 councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order

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9.

- c The Proper Officer shall provide a copy of the Council's standing orders to a councillor as soon as possible.
- d The decision of the chairman of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.

These Standing Orders were adopted on the 18/03/25.

Signatures:

Town Mayor

J.Roberts

Town Clerk

S.Lockey

Balance Sheet as at 28th February 2026

31st March 2025

31st March 2026

Net Value	Fixed Assets	Cost of Asset	Depreciation	Net Value
<u>0</u>		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

Long Term Assets

<u>0</u>			<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
	0			0

Current Assets

92,680	DEBTORS	28,499		
5,599	Burial Grounds & Cemeteries	1,510		
19,462	VAT Control Account	16,850		
28,835	PREPAYMENTS	32,844		
8,166	Mthly Business Prepays	14,528		
53,989	PrePayment for Land Sale	68,932		
4,532	Accrued Income	0		
3,298	Stock Held - Bar	3,043		
4,346	Stock Held - Food	3,778		
5,569	Current Bank Ac Barclays 009	5,000		
42,231	Barclays Business Reserve 106	166,556		
0	Prepayment Cards: Equals	2,289		
1,000	PDQ Account	4,104		
46,550	Tenants Deposits Account	5,095		
400	Petty Cash Control (YE)	400		
400	Float - Main Safe (YE)	200		
400	Float - Cafe Safe (YE)	600		
15	Float - Reception Safe (YE)	15		
80	Float - Cafe Till Drawer	80		
1,133,095	CCLA Deposit Fund	750,595		
<u>1,450,647</u>			<u>1,104,917</u>	

1,450,647 Total Assets**1,104,917**

Current Liabilities

15,997	DEBTORS Control: Functions	4,729
3,441	CREDITORS	41,363
7,943	ACCRUAL - Loan Interest (YE)	0
12,119	ACCRUALS (YE)	0
17,763	PAYE/NIC Due	17,718

Balance Sheet as at 28th February 2026

31st March 2025

31st March 2026

10,568	LGPS Pension Control	9,148
3,128	NEST Pension Control	3,988
6,400	Income in Advance (YE)	0
0	Income in Advance: Rufus Event	2,782
0	Income in Advance: NT Live	198
0	Ticket Sales Return Due (NT)	1,872
4,722	Past Yr TM Charity (YE)	0
2,291	Past Yr TM Allow & Civic Recep	0
77	Past Yr Leader Expenses (YE)	0
52,188	Tenants Rent Deposits	63,506
500	Refundable Deposits: Functions	0
1,079	Barclaycard Year End balance	0
<u>138,217</u>		<u>145,305</u>
1,312,429	Total Assets Less Current Liabilities	959,612
	Long Term Liabilities	
<u>0</u>		<u>0</u>
1,312,429	Total Assets Less Long Term Liabilities	959,612
	Represented By	
397,766	GENERAL RESERVE	258,059
914,664	Earmarked Reserves	701,554
<u>1,312,429</u>		<u>959,612</u>

The above statement represents fairly the financial position of the authority as at 28th February 2026 and reflects its Income and Expenditure during the year.

Signed :
Chairman _____ Date : _____

Signed :
Responsible
Financial _____ Date : _____

FTC Projects Review 2025-26

(315)	Central Project Fund	Opening Balance	£	92,164	
315	PLUS 2025/26: Agreed CPF Precept Funding		£	89,747	(1st instal E44,874 rec'd April & 2nd instal E44,873 received Sep)
800s	LESS: 25/26 Projects Opening Balance		£	186,576	25/26 temporary balance of EMR 315
	LESS Projects Overspend from CPF		£	-	
	PLUS Projects Underspend		£	4,665	
(315)	Central Project Fund /TD Funds Available		-£	0	Working balance (315) less 2nd precept instal (Oct)- Complete

Accepted Project budget variance at 5%.

Last Updated: 28 February 2026

2025-26 Capital Projects Funding

As at April 25, the Central Project Fund is committed spend to 3 Station Road project.
All identified capital projects to be considered on a case-by-case basis and funded through the Operations Reserves (EMR 319).

Project Code	PROJECT Details					Project Details										24/25 FUNDING Details				Comments
	N/C	Project Description	Committee	Minute Ref	Project Start Date	Whole Project Funds Committed	Previous Year's Project Spend	25/26 Opening Project Balance	GRANT Received	Ops Reserves Funding	25/26 Project Spend to Date	Overspend Funded by CPF/Ops Reserve	Underspend Returned to CPF	Project Commitment Remaining YTD		TOTAL Approved Grants/ Funding	Prev Yrs Funds Received	25/26 Funds Received	Grants/ Funding Budget Remaining	
Ongoing Projects	800	4212 110	Proj - Nature Park	Community	Del. Auth	Apr-21	£ 3,000	£ 13,490	£ -		£ -			£ -	0%	£ 283,385	£ 10,490	£ -	£ 272,895	S106 remaining: Phase 1 E7,106.89, Phase 2 E274,728 & Plans E1,550 (CBC to be invoiced for S106 once works completed). SL 7/9/22. Planning Consultant RCF approved July 23. Jan 25 : CPF Fund & 24/25 Grant Instal complete. Outstanding approved grant fund (E272,895) not yet claimed. No further CPF spend committed. £10,490 received on ETC8584 June 2024.
	801	4819 110	Proj - Flitwick Town Sq Defib	Community	5213d	Feb-22	£ 1,770	£ 1,048	£ 722		£ 292			£ 430	24%					Defib Purchased and installed March 2024. Further costs anticipated due to possible relocation fees.
	802	4823 110	Proj - Heritage Website	Corporate	753a 5252ajj	Jun-23	£ 3,800	£ -	£ 3,800		£ 1,580			£ 2,220	58%					
	803	4837 110	Proj - Rural Match Fund Benches	Community	5226e	Mar-22	£ 2,000	£ -	£ 2,000		£ -			£ 2,000	100%					Resolution made at Council March 2022 confirmed March 2023 to be match funded by CBC - amount TBC
	808	4853 110	Proj - Nature Park Planning	Community	5622c	Apr-24	£ 23,673	£ 21,859	£ 1,814		£ 1,814			£ -	0%					PROJECT COMPLETED & CLOSED - Oct 25
	814	4859 110	Proj - Skate Park Extension	Community	5681gii	Jul-24	£ 9,600	£ 9,600	£ 36,100		£ 36,100			£ -	0%	£ 64,900	£ 64,900	£ -	£ -	E38,400 match funding from CBC UKSPF Community Grant E26,500 from CBC S106 Funding PROJECT COMPLETED & CLOSED - June 25
NEW Projects: 2025/26	106		3 Station Road Project	FTC			£ 126,395		£ 126,395		£ 32,559			£ 93,836	74%					Please refer to full project schedule for details
			Historic Project Refund										£ 4,665							Refund from UKPN (Chq rec'd, paying in reference 201765) for historic project dated 25/10/2022 in relation to feeder pillar installation credited to CPF. Refurbishment works to Tractor Store and Play Areas (Fir Tree Close Park & Station Rd Park) funded by: E54,059.80 CBC S106 invoice FTC9193 E12,000 Ops Reserves EMR 319 transfer (journal 4263). PROJECT COMPLETED & CLOSED - Dec 25
	817	4862 110	Proj - Public Realm Improvements	Community	Del Auth	Jul-25	£ 66,060				£ 54,060	£ 12,000	£ 66,060	£ -	0%	£ 54,060	£ 12,000	£ 66,060	£ 66,060	Refurbishment works to Room 21 of Rufus Centre funded by E6,445 from Ops Reserves EMR 319 transfer (journal 4303). PROJECT COMPLETED & CLOSED - Nov 25
	818	4863 110	Proj - Room 21 Refurb	Business	5886c	Sep-25	£ 6,445				£ 6,445	£ 6,717	£ 272	£ -	0%			£ 6,445	£ 6,445	Refurbishment works to Room 21 of Rufus Centre funded by E6,445 from Ops Reserves EMR 319 transfer (journal 4303). PROJECT COMPLETED & CLOSED - Nov 25
	819	4864 110	Proj - Community Fridge Door	Business	5934c	Dec-25	£ 5,000				£ 5,000	£ 4,742		£ 258	0%			£ 5,000	£ 5,000	Funded by E5,000 from Ops Reserves EMR 319 transfer (journal 4462). PROJECT COMPLETED & CLOSED
	820	4865 110	Proj - Manor Park Carriageway	Community	5934h	Dec-25	£ 16,250				£ 16,250	£ 16,250		£ -	0%			£ 16,250	£ 16,250	Funded by E16,250 from Ops Reserves EMR 319 transfer (journal 4463). PROJECT COMPLETED & CLOSED
	329	4866 110	Proj - Rufus Boilers	Council	5920b	Nov-25	£ 117,231		£ 60,181	£ 57,050		£ 114,523		£ 2,708	0%			£ 57,050	£ 57,050	Funded by E60,181.25 from CPF + E57k from (mvtv from EMR 331 StepRd Legal Fees on Jnl 4182) deducted EMR 329 in line with delegated authority decision. PROJECT COMPLETED & CLOSED
	821	4867 110	Proj - Stocksfield Renovation	Council	5964a	Feb-26	£ 15,434				£ 15,434			£ 15,434	0%					Funded by E15,433.30 from Ops Reserves EMR 319 transfer (journal).