



BECCLES
TOWN COUNCIL

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Minutes of the meeting of Finance & Governance Committee held on 24/02/2025 in Committee Room at Town Hall

Present

Councillors: Gillian Birrell, Nathalie Chidley, Barry Darch, Chris Greenhill, Colin Hill, Peter Shannon, Richard Stubbings, Christine Wheeler

In Attendance: Paul Cunningham (Town Clerk)

Apologies: Gillian Birrell, Nathalie Chidley, Christine Wheeler

Absent:

Members of public: No members of the public.

1 - To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were received from councillors Wheeler, Chidley and Birrell.

What?	By Whom?	By When?
There are no actions for this item.		

2 - To receive Declarations of Interest or any requests for the granting of dispensations

There were none.

What?	By Whom?	By When?
There are no actions for this item.		

3 - To approve the minutes of the committee meeting held on Monday 27th January 2025

RESOLVED To accept for accuracy and adoption the minutes of the Finance and Governance Committee meeting held on Monday 27th January 2025.

What?	By Whom?	By When?
There are no actions for this item.		

4 - To consider the following draft Health & Safety related policies

(attached)

Becky Battledore (H&S consultant) updated councillors on the work that she had done to implement the findings of her audit report. This involved drafting and refining policies, drafting risk assessments related to individual council buildings and job roles (which are being reviewed by the relevant members of staff before being brought to the committee for approval at the March meeting) and delivering a training session for all staff on 19th February, which includes both background to Health & Safety legislation and a practical session on inspecting hazards and reporting on them. Becky noted that a number of on-line forms have been created to allow staff to carry out inspections and report hazards, with the results going to Candi as Deputy Town Clerk, thus ensuring that we have a log of the checks that we have carried out.

Chair thanked Becky for her report and her work in supporting the council and he invited questions from councillors.

Cllr Shannon asked about lone working arrangements, especially for the Ranger when working alone on the marshes. Becky explained that lone working amelioration measures are covered in risk assessment for each role. She commented that a tracking app or device of some kind should be provided for each member of staff working on their own.

Chair asked about First Aid qualifications and cover when people are absent. Becky explained that a First Aid Needs Assessment has been carried out to evaluate the level of training needed. Town Clerk reported that Deputy Town Clerk, all three Harbour Masters, both Town Cleaners and David as Ranger had all completed Emergency First Aid at Work one-day courses. David has also completed job-specific first aid training and he has been provided with additional resources in his First Aid kit.

Cllr Athorn asked what provision there was for keeping up-to-date with new legislation. Becky suggested that Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk sign up for updates from Health & Safety Executive.

Cllr Athorn also asked about reviewing the process to assess workload implications and councillors agreed to receive an update from Town Clerk after six months.

Cllr Stubbings proposed that the ten Health & Safety policies be recommended to full council for approval.

This was seconded by Cllr Shannon.

Councillors voted in favour and it was therefore

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL To approve the ten draft Health & Safety policies.

What?	By Whom?	By When?
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Report to F&G August meeting on Health & Safety system implementation.	Paul Cunningham	15/08/2025
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5 - To agree a standard for the posting of draft and confirmed minutes onto the council's website

Cllr Stubbings proposed a standard that draft minutes are added to the website before the date of the next meeting and that agreed minutes are posted within a week of the meeting at which they are confirmed.

Seconded by Cllr Hill.

Committee members voted in favour and it was therefore

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL That draft minutes are added to the website before the date of the next meeting and that agreed minutes are posted within a week of the meeting at which they are confirmed.

What?	By Whom?	By When?
There are no actions for this item.		

6 - To consider how to improve budget monitoring by committee members

Chair proposed that all committees, including full council, be provided with a budget update for the relevant budget heading alongside any request to spend money.

This was seconded by Cllr Shannon.

Councillors voted in favour and it was therefore

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL To require a budget update for the relevant budget heading to be included in agenda packs for all meetings alongside any request to spend money.

What?	By Whom?	By When?
There are no actions for this item.		

7 - To consider how council decision making processes impact on officer implementation

Councillors noted that this issue was partly about assessing officer workload and partly about how councillors can view and monitor the progress of actions. Town Clerk noted that an action log is now being maintained within Congresso but that at present there is no mechanism for viewing actions by other people. He agreed to ask Congresso about whether this could be made available within the software.

Councillors agreed that this issue should be considered as part of the target setting in the Town Clerk's appraisal.

What?	By Whom?	By When?
There are no actions for this item.		

8 - To review the following policies

i Press and media

Cllr Stubbings proposed that the draft Press & Media Policy be recommended to full council for approval.

This was seconded by Cllr Darch.

Councillors voted in favour and it was therefore

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL To approve the draft Press & Media Policy.

ii Vexatious correspondence

Cllr Darch proposed that the draft Vexatious Correspondence Policy be recommended to full council for approval.

This was seconded by Cllr Darch.

Councillors voted in favour and it was therefore

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL To approve the draft Vexatious Correspondence Policy.

iii Grant awarding

Cllr Shannon asked if council was implementing the part of the policy regarding receiving feedback from grantees. Town Clerk replied that reports are generally received where this is a statutory obligation (for individual grants of over £2,000) but less frequently for smaller grants. Councillors asked Town Clerk to ensure that the need for a report is included in grant award decision letters.

Cllr Stubbings proposed that the draft Grant Awarding Policy be recommended to full council for approval.

This was seconded by Cllr Greenhill.

Councillors voted in favour and it was therefore
RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL To approve the draft Grant Awarding Policy.

iv Finance & Governance Risk Assessment

Cllr Stubbings proposed that the draft Finance & Governance Risk Assessment be recommended to full council for approval.

This was seconded by Cllr Darch.

Councillors voted in favour and it was therefore
RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL To approve the draft Finance & Governance Risk Assessment.

Councillors agreed that the Risk assessment should be reviewed by the new RFO.

What?	By Whom?	By When?
There are no actions for this item.		

9 - To approve the appointment of SALC as internal auditor for 2025

Chair proposed that SALC be recommended to full council as the council's Internal Auditors for 2024-2025 accounts.

Seconded by Cllr Greenhill.

Councillors voted in favour and it was therefore
RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL To appoint SALC as the council's Internal Auditors for 2024-2025 accounts.

What?	By Whom?	By When?
There are no actions for this item.		

10 - To consider an annual grant of £500 to Beccles Food Festival

Cllr Darch noted that the Food Festival budgets show annual donations paid out by the festival of £1100. He commented that he could not support a grant to the festival whilst the organisers were themselves giving donations to other organisations.

Cllr Greenhill proposed a recommendation to full council not to award a grant to Food Festival.

Seconded by Cllr Darch.

Councillors voted in favour and it was therefore

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL To not award a grant to Beccles Food Festival.

What?	By Whom?	By When?
There are no actions for this item.		

11 - To agree the date of the next meeting as Monday 24th March 2025 at 5.45pm

The next meeting date was confirmed as Monday 24th March 2025 at 5.45pm.

What?	By Whom?	By When?
There are no actions for this item.		