



Minutes of the meeting of Finance and Governance Committee held on 28/04/2025 in Committee Room at Town Hall

Present: Christine Wheeler (Chair), Joe Athorn, Richard Stubbings, Colin Hill, Peter Shannon and Barry Darch.

In Attendance: Paul Cunningham, Town Clerk
Gary Jones, Finance Officer

Apologies: Nathalie Chidley, Chris Greenhill

Absent: Gillian Birrell

Members of public: No members of the public.

1 - To receive apologies for absence

Received from Chris Greenhill and Nathalie Chidley.
Gillian Birrell was not present.

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

2 - Declarations of interests in and requests for dispensations for items on the agenda

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 24th March 2025 (attached)

Motion to approve minutes: Cllr Athorn.

Seconded by: Cllr Darch.

Councillors voted in favour and it was therefore

RESOLVED To accept for accuracy and adoption the minutes of the Finance and Governance Committee meeting held on Monday 24th March 2025.

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

4 - To receive an update on spend against budget for 2024-25 and Reserves balances

Councillors considered the report, which they received at the meeting.

Town Clerk introduced Gary Jones, new Finance Officer / RFO. Town Clerk noted that Gary's training had been erratic and that it had proved challenging to get the end of year figures together.

Town Clerk noted that the spend against budget report shows a deficit for the year of £3400, rather than the budgeted deficit of £29,350. He noted that this was partly due to £13,796 of CIL income and partly due to a number of underspends or additional income.

Town Clerk noted that the Reserves balance figures are accurate for the individual earmarked reserves but that the general reserves figure may be amended as part of the formal end of year account process.

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

5 - To consider changes to the committee's Terms of Reference, including which budget headings the committee should control

Councillors considered the Terms of Reference for the committee and which budget headings the committee should manage if delegation was restored. They agreed that the headings to add from the town council budget are: audit fees, grants, legal fees, consultancy and insurance.

Town Clerk was asked to communicate this to Delegation Working Party.

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

6 - To consider a grant application from Waveney Enterprises (attached)

Cllr Shannon proposed that the requested grant of £480 be awarded.

Seconded by: Cllr Athorn.

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL To award a grant of £480 to Waveney Enterprises.

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

7 - To receive an update on events budget in 2025 and to consider how to allocate budgets between events in future

Councillors discussed the Events budget update report. They asked for a breakdown of spend for Duck Race and VE Day events.

Councillors discussed the appropriate amount of information that they should receive at the start of planning for each event. Town Clerk noted the need to avoid too prescriptive a plan at the beginning, especially for new (or restarted) events where an organising committee including external members is involved in planning the event.

Councillors asked Town Clerk to provide more detail to DSCP Committee regarding the financial arrangements for the Duck Race, so DCSP can consider what should happen to any income from the event.

What?	By Whom?	By When?
Provide breakdown of spend for VE Day and Duck Race events	Paul Cunningham	13/05/2025
Provide report to DCSP Committee next meeting on finances of Duck race	Paul Cunningham Helen Lower	30/04/2025

8 - To receive a verbal update on the use of 'Congresso' meeting management software

Town Clerk gave a verbal update. He noted that he and Deputy Town Clerk are still awaiting an in-person visit from AStech (who produce Congresso), which should take place in mid-May. He further noted that he is also awaiting a timescale for the software changes to address the issues that have been raised with AStech.

Cllr Stubbings proposed that a deadline of the end of June for the in-person visit and the development schedule be set and that if this deadline was not met, then we should require either an extension to our period of free usage or we would consider ending our contract.

Seconded by: Cllr Athorn

Councillors voted in favour and it was therefore

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL To agree a deadline of the end of June for the in-person visit by AS tech staff and for the development schedule to be set and that if this deadline was not met, then we should require either an extension to our period of free usage or we would consider ending our contract.

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

9 - To receive an update on Health & Safety implementation

Town Clerk reported that the policies and risk assessments (except for the Bell Tower and Friday Market) have been approved by councillors. He noted that he and Deputy Town Clerk had spent some time at Quay with one of the Harbour Masters, assessing the recommendations from the RoSPA report on the Quay from 2018. He noted that some work to implement signs had been completed and that an updated report will be brought to the May meeting of the committee.

Town Clerk noted that there is still some health & safety documentation to sort, as well as checking on the implementation of inspections and the associated reporting from the health & safety training.

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

10 - To receive an update on potential recharge of allotments costs from Town Council to Beccles Fenland Charity Trust

Councillors received the report from Town Clerk. Cllr Stubbings commented that the town council should fund the allotment staffing costs, not Fenland Trust.

Cllr Stubbings proposed that there should be an £11,230 reduction in the cross-charge to the Trust for staff time and an equivalent reduction in the grant to the Trust from the council.

Seconded by: Cllr Darch.

Councillors voted in favour and it was therefore

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL To agree an £11,230 reduction in the cross-charge to the Trust for staff time and an equivalent reduction in the grant to the Trust from the council.

Town Clerk suggested that council investigate taking over the management of the allotments from 2026 and this was agreed.

What?	By Whom?	By When?
Investigate council taking over the management of the allotments from 2026	Paul Cunningham	13/05/2025

11 - To agree the date of next meeting

This was agreed as Monday 19th May at 5.45pm at Town Hall.

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

