



Minutes of the meeting of Finance & Governance Committee on Monday 24th November at 5.45pm in Committee Room at Town Hall

Present: Joseph Athorn, Barry Darch, Peter Shannon, Richard Stubbings, Christine Wheeler (Chair).

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

Apologies: None.

Absent: Gillian Birrell

Members of public: No members of the public.

1 - To receive apologies for absence

There were none.

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 in relation to any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items on the agenda

There were none.

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

3 - To consider taking part in a Peer Review process in 2026

Chair welcomed Sally Longmate, CEO of Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC), who spoke about the benefits of the peer review process. Sally noted that the peer review process could help the council to update its Strategic Plan and to prepare for Local Government Reorganisation. She suggested that council would get the most out of the process by focussing on a small number of areas of focus. She also stressed the need for councillor involvement and that, as a pilot for the

use of the framework, Beccles TC would be able to shape the process to suit our needs.

Councillors discussed the issue. Cllr Darch proposed that the committee recommend to full council to agree in principle to proceed with the Peer Review process, subject to further investigation, and that a Working Party be set up to plan the process.

Seconded by Cllr Stubbings.

Councillors voted in favour and it was therefore

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL To agree in principle to proceed with the Peer Review process, subject to further investigation, and that a Working Party be set up to plan the process.

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

4 - To approve the minutes of the committee meeting held on Monday 27th October 2025

Motion to approve minutes: Cllr Wheeler.

Seconded by: Cllr Stubbings.

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 27th October 2025.

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

5 - To review draft Town Council budget for 2026-27

Councillors reviewed the draft budget in detail. They made a number of suggestions for changes to the budget. They asked Finance Officer to amend the draft budget accordingly and to present a revised draft budget at the December meeting of the committee.

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

6 - To consider granting a lease to Scouts & Guides for the 'Orchard site'

Councillors deferred this item to the next meeting, as the Clerk's report had not been included in the meeting pack.

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

7 - To agree SALC as Internal Auditor for 2026-27 (2025-26 accounts)

Motion to agree SALC as internal auditor for 2026-27 (2025-26 accounts) proposed by Cllr Stubbings.

Seconded by Cllr Darch.

Councillors voted in favour and it was therefore

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL To agree SALC as internal auditor for 2026-27 (2025-26 accounts).

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

8 - To consider setting Mayor's Appeal up as a separate charity

Town Clerk noted that a separate charity would be unlikely to have income exceeding £25,000 and therefore that the charity's accounts would not need to be externally audited.

Cllr Darch proposed that it be recommended to full council to set the Mayor's Appeal up as a separate charity.

Seconded by Cllr Athorn.

Councillors voted in favour and it was therefore

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL To set the Mayor's Appeal up as a separate charity.

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

9 - To consider a grant application from Beccles Twinning Association

Cllr Stubbings proposed that the committee recommend to full council to award a grant to the Twinning Association of £1716.50 towards the planning and permission costs of setting up the petanque pitch at Beccles Quay.

Seconded by Cllr Wheeler.

Councillors voted in favour and it was therefore

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL To award a grant to the Twinning Association of £1716.50 towards the planning and permission costs of setting up the petanque pitch at Beccles Quay.

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

10 - To receive an update on the use of Congresso software

Town Clerk reported that Congresso is now working well for agendas and that the minutes elements of the software has been improved, including adding a watermark to the template. However, he noted that the software remains a problem when there are confidential items, as there is currently no way to generate a set of confidential minutes, only the full minutes of the whole meeting.

Town Clerk suggested that the software was value for money at the current cost of under £600 pa.

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

11 - To receive an update on electricity charges at Ambulance Station

Finance officer reported that the costs on the most recent invoice have reduced by c70%.

Councillors asked Finance Officer to continue to monitor these costs.

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

12 - To agree the date of the next meeting of the committee

The next meeting was agreed as Monday 22nd December 2025 at 5.45pm.

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