



**Minutes of the meeting of Finance & Governance
Committee on Monday 22nd December 2025 at 5.45pm in
Committee Room at Town Hall**

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

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

Members of public: No members of the public.

1 - To receive apologies for absence

All councillors were present.

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 approve the minutes of the committee meeting held on Monday 24th November 2025

Motion to approve minutes: Cllr Wheeler.

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 November 2025.

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

4 - To review draft Town Council budget for 2026-27 and make a recommendation to full council, including precept level

Councillors discussed the draft budget in detail. They agreed the following changes:

<u>Code</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Previous amount exp</u>	<u>Revised amount exp</u>	<u>Previous amount income</u>	<u>Revised amount income</u>	<u>Notes</u>
19	Hospitality	179	0			Any expenditure to be covered from 357 Civic Events
354	Contingency	5000	0			
95	Grants	7800	5000			
110	Salaries	193710	193710			Includes +10 hours Marketing & Events Officer and allowance for overtime but not Minute Secretary role
	Xmas Lights					
193	renewal	5000	5000			To be funded from reserves
271	Tourism	5800	2800			
	New code	0	3000			Screen to be funded from reserves
	Open					
339	Gardens	2000	1500	2000	1500	Moved to Trust
340	Duck Race	5000	0			
342	Soapbox Derby	10000	17000	0	7000	Net costs to be funded from grant / reserves
	Summer					
345	Festival			1000	2000	Event to be self-sustaining
360	Xmas market			0	500	
361	Xmas lights switch on			0	1000	Event to be self-sustaining
	Blyburgate					
	Repairs &					To be funded from earmarked reserve
298	Maintenance	25000	5000			
	New code	0	20000			

Chair proposed that the meeting be suspended in order for the Beccles Fenland Charity Trust budget to be considered. This was agreed.

Following the Trust meeting, councillors then considered the budget and precept levels. They agreed to revise the grant to the Trust from £103,487 to £93,065.

They noted that this revised figure showed an in-year deficit of £109,629, £58,150 of which would be covered from Reserve funds. This left a net deficit of £51,479. Councillors further noted that to cover this deficit figure of £51,479, the precept would need to be set at £326,980. This would equate to a Band D rate of £92.99, an increase of 17.6% on 2025-26 rate.

Cllr Darch proposed that the committee recommend the revised budget to full council, including a precept level of £326,980, equating to a Band D rate of £92.99.

Seconded by Cllr Stubbings.

Councillors voted in favour and it was therefore

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL To agree the revised budget for town council and a precept level of £326,980, equating to a Band D rate of £92.99.

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

5 - To consider a VAT review

Cllr Wheeler proposed that a VAT review be commissioned from Parkinson Partnership at a cost of £1800+VAT.

Seconded by Cllr Athorn.

Councillors voted in favour and it was therefore

RESOLVED To commission a VAT review from Parkinson Partnership at a cost of £1800+VAT.

What?	By Whom?	By When?
Commission VAT review from Parkinson Partnership	Paul Cunningham	07/01/2026

6 - To review council's Reserves

Councillors reviewed the figures provided by Finance Officer. They noted the forecast reduction of £79,000 in the Reserves level in 2025-26.

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

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

Cllr Athorn proposed that the council instruct Norton Peskett to issue a lease with Scouts & Guides for orchard site for a period of 24 years and 11 months.

Seconded by Cllr Shannon.

Councillors voted in favour and it was therefore

RESOLVED To instruct Norton Peskett to issue a lease with Scouts & Guides for orchard site for a period of 24 years and 11 months.

What?	By Whom?	By When?
Instruct Norton Peskett to issue a lease to Scouts & Guides for 'orchard' site for 24 years and 11 months	Paul Cunningham	07/01/2026

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

The next meeting was agreed as Monday 26th January 2026 at 5.45pm.

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