

HARWICH TOWN COUNCIL

The Guildhall, Church Street, Harwich, Essex CO12 3DS

Tel: 01255 507211

email: info@harwichtowncouncil.gov.uk

MINUTES

of the Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee

held at

The Guildhall, Church Street

on

Tuesday 17th March 2026 at 7.12pm

Present:	Councillors Calver, Fay, Richardson, Saunders and Wade
In the Chair:	Councillor Morrison
Clerk:	Ms Lucy Ballard
Also present:	0 members of the public, 0 members of the press and Estate Supervisor, Matthew Newman

Public questions: None

F071/25	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> Cllrs Armstrong, Chable and Todd
F072/25	<u>DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS</u> None
F073/25	<u>MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING</u> RESOLVED: That the Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Tuesday 9 th December 2025, (previously circulated) be approved by the committee and signed by the chairman as a true record.
F074/25	<u>MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• F61/25 – It was confirmed that the recruitment process was underway for Seasonal Leisure Attendants and the closing date was the end of March.• F64/25 – It was confirmed that the precept payments for 2026/27 will be on 9th April and 8th October.
F075/25	<u>MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES</u> None
F076/25	<u>TENDRING DISTRICT SCOUTS</u> The clerk relayed to members that of those who were invited to partake in the jamboree, only 1 was connected with Harwich & Dovercourt. Only the adult leaders reside within the area. RESOLVED: To award a grant of £600
F077/25	<u>ESTATES SUPERVISOR REPORT</u> Members acknowledged the latest report from Estate Supervisor, Matthew Newman, in which he reported on various matters including progress on the

	handrail project, the need for and updated Asbestos survey and that the High Lighthouse illuminations project was complete. The chair added that Mat pushed for the final arrangements for the illumination to ensure everything was working in time for HMD.
F078/25	<p><u>INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE ACCOUNTS</u></p> <p>Members acknowledged a report from Cllr Smith following a review of the accounts for the periods Oct – Dec on 10th March. No irregularities were found, and everything appeared to be in excellent order.</p>
F079/25	<p><u>LEISURE SEASON 2026</u></p> <p>Members considered the Pricing for the 2026 season. Members acknowledged there had been an increase in 2024 and the need to keep prices affordable. Whilst one member felt an increase wasn't unreasonable, other felt that until it is known what will be happening with the land and with Local Government Reorganisation on the horizon, it was difficult to know what might happen with the facility and it was best to keep the status quo.</p> <p>A proposal to increase the adult cost to £5 had no seconder.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To retain the current prices as follows:</p> <p>Putting Green and Crazy Golf £3 adult; £2 child (up to 16 yrs); Combined ticket £5 adult; £3 child; Pétanque to remain at £3 per person per hour.</p>
F080/25	<p><u>FINANCIAL REGULATIONS</u></p> <p>Following a review of the Financial Regulations, members acknowledged that there were no amendments or updates needed.</p> <p>The committee thanked those involved in reviewing the regulations.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To adopt Financial Regulations for 2026/27.</p>
F081/25	<p><u>FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT AND SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members reviewed the Financial Risk Assessment carried out by the RFO and the measures put in place to mitigate any risk. The clerk drew members' attention to any risks that required addressing. Members thanked the clerk for making everything clear and concise. <p>RESOLVED: To accept the Financial Risk Assessment and confirm that measures taken to mitigate risk are adequate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Wade reported on the current System of Internal Control (the measures in place to safeguard the Council's finances) following a review of its effectiveness on 5th March. He informed members that the working party had worked with the clerk and found that all the necessary safeguards were in place and the only amendments were to tighten up on wording but which didn't change the meaning or intention. He thanked the clerk for her due diligence and the committee thanked councillors Wade, Saunders, McLeod and Chable for their time also. <p>RESOLVED: To accept the System of Internal control with amendments and agree that the systems in place for the prevention and detection of fraud are effective.</p>
F082/25	<p><u>RISK ASSESSMENTS</u></p> <p>Members reviewed the following risk assessments carried out by the Estate Supervisor and the measures put in place to mitigate any risk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health & Safety Risk Assessments (Guildhall and Putting Greens) • Lone Worker Risk Assessments (Guildhall and Putting Greens)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire Risk Assessment (Guildhall) RESOLVED: To accept Risk Assessments and confirm that measures taken to mitigate risk are adequate.
F083/25	<p><u>BAD DEBTS</u> Members considered the write-off of bad debts at year end.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £30 TR28 – This was a small amount remaining from a larger debt which would incur a disproportionate cost in recovering. RESOLVED: to write off. • £35 BC18A – This was a small amount remaining from a larger debt which would incur a disproportionate cost in recovering. RESOLVED: to write off. • £100 – KG04A – This is an ongoing case for recovery. RESOLVED: not to write off. • £160 (£125) – DM14A – This is an ongoing case for recovery. RESOLVED: not to write off.
F084/25	<p><u>SHED</u> Following notification of the need to replace the shed in the yard of the Guildhall in the Estate Supervisor Report, it was RESOLVED: To purchase a replacement shed at a cost of up to £1000 plus £250 for disposal of the existing shed, to be expended from the Guildhall Improvements EMR.</p>
F085/25	<p><u>UNDER SINK WATER HEATER</u> Ascertaining that the current kitchen sink water heater was faulty, it was RESOLVED: To purchase a replacement under sink water heater at a cost of up to £100, to be expended from the Guildhall Improvements EMR.</p>
F086/25	<p><u>AUDIT OF THE GUILDHALL CONTENTS</u> Further to MIN F96/23, it was RESOLVED: To authorise the cost of 2x photo frames plus the digital reproductions of photographs from the Queen’s 2004 visit to enhance the Guildhall as a visitor attraction to be expended from the Guildhall Improvements EMR. FURTHER RESOLVED: To authorise expenditure to a maximum of £500 on future similar purchases to further enhance the visitor appeal, to be expended from the Guildhall Improvements EMR.</p>
F087/25	<p><u>MATTERS RECEIVED IN THE POST OR INFORMATION RAISED BY MEMBERS</u> Letters of thanks/acknowledgement for grants received from: Spring Meadow Primary School with HISF yet to be received. Evaluation forms for grants received from: None</p>
F088/25	<p><u>MATTERS TO BE REPORTED</u> The following matters were reported to Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 137 expenditure limit for 2026/27 is £11.60 per elector. • There was no update on Local Government Pay Claim 2026/27. • Expenditure of £25 was authorised under delegated authority, for the Assertion 10 training for the clerk, expended from the Training budget. • A reduction in interest rate on Barclays Business Premium (Saver) Account from 1.10% to 1.05% WEF 24 March 2026.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reduction in interest rate on NS&I Income Bonds Account from 3.26% to 3.01% WEF 12th February 2026. • The clerk reported a full refund of the £2420 grant awarded to the Colchester United Community Foundation as they were no longer able to deliver the intended project.
F089/25	<p><u>DATE FOR NEXT MEETING</u> The next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee will be held on date to be confirmed in June/July 2026 at The Guildhall, Church Street, Harwich, at 7.00pm.</p>
F090/25	<p><u>EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS</u> Pursuant to Sub-Section 2 of Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it was RESOLVED: to close the meeting to the press and public for the transaction of the under-mentioned business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Leave • Keyholders • Personnel – Clerk’s Salary Review

The chairman closed the public part of the meeting at 8.10pm.

CHAIRMAN

DATE