

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee
held in the Town Hall on Wednesday 10 December 2025**

Present Councillor S Abbott (Chair)
Councillors A Brown, J Coward, R Hopkinson and G Ward.

In Attendance Mrs K Gilby (Head of Finance and Administration)
D Martin (Chief Executive)

In Attendance Online Councillor T Ellis

F&A 30/25 Apologies

Apologies had been received from Councillors H Belcher OBE, N Brakspear and J Brook.

F&A 31/25 Public Question Time and Petitions

A representative of Corsham Pétanque Club attended the meeting and asked the Committee to support their grant application.

A representative of Leafy Lane Playing Fields attended the meeting and asked the Committee to support their request for grant funding to be allocated in the 2026/27 budget towards a new, full-sized 3G artificial floodlit football pitch at Leafy Lane.

F&A 32/25 Declarations of Interest

To receive any Declaration(s) of Interest under Corsham Town Council's Code of Conduct issued in accordance with the Localism Act 2011.

There were none.

F&A 33/25 Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Finance and Administration Committee meeting held on 22 October 2025

There were no matters arising.

F&A 34/25 Grant Applications (Fifth Round)

The grants scheme for 2025/26 had been publicised and two grant applications had been received for consideration at this meeting, one of which was for the 2026/27 financial year.

Resolved

- i) That Corsham Pétanque Club be awarded £750 towards improving their playing surface. The Club was encouraged to investigate the possibility of a more formal agreement with the brewery for use of the space at The Royal Oak.

Requested for 2026/27

Leafy Lane Playing Fields had requested £5,000 towards a new, full-sized 3G artificial floodlit football pitch at Leafy Lane. This is in addition to £750 in earmarked reserves and £750 awarded conditionally in 2025/26.

Resolved

- ii) That £5,000 be put in the budget for 2026/27 towards a new 3G artificial pitch.

F&A 35/25 Detailed Income and Expenditure Accounts (including the Town Hall)

The Chief Executive presented a report on the accounts.

The Committee reviewed and noted the Income and Expenditure Accounts, Financial Report and the breakdown of Earmarked Reserves.

The Chief Executive would investigate the VAT position in respect of the proposed works at Arnold House and the Guide Hut. The proposed works may affect the Town Council's partial exemption status for the years in which the works are carried out.

F&A 36/25 Draft Budget 2026/27

Further to previous meetings the Committee considered the budget report with a view to making a recommendation to the Full Council on the 2026/27 budget and precept.

A few budget items had been reduced or removed as they were no longer required or reliant on using earmarked reserves. There were some new/ increased budgets, which were aimed towards delivery of the current and emerging Strategic Plans. The main budget changes, service developments and projects included in the draft budget were as follows:

Committee/Item	Proposed 2026/27
Finance and Administration/General	
<i>Revenue</i>	
Grant – Methuen Hall	£51,200
Grants – Arts Centre	£20,000
Grants – General	£12,000
Environmental Projects*	£10,000
Strategic Plan Delivery*	£10,000

Neighbourhood Planning*	£5,000
Grants – Gastard Village Hall	£5,000
Grants – Leafy Lane Playing Field	£5,000
Corsham Windband Association	£4,500

Total **£122,700**

Property and Amenities Committee

Item **2026/27**

Revenue

Parking Initiatives	£76,667
Service Delegation and Asset Transfer*	£30,000
Public Conveniences	£24,500
Boundary and Tree Maintenance*	£20,000
General Maintenance (inc. play areas)	£15,000

Total **£166,167**

Capital

Skate Park	£100,000
Building Contingency	£85,000
Asset Management	£50,000
Workshop	£50,000
Play Areas*	£45,000
Transport Schemes*	£30,000
Railway Station	£30,000
Grounds Maintenance Equipment	£20,000
Public Realm Improvements*	£20,000

Total **£430,000**

Community Services Committee

Revenue

Youth Activities	£26,966
Fete/Events	£13,500
Destination Marketing	£16,250
Corsham Youth Zone	£10,300
Health/Wellbeing Initiatives	£7,500
Health and Wellbeing Grants*	£7,500
Christmas Lights	£7,000
Creative Corsham	£6,500

Total **£95,516**

Capital

Public Art Strategy*	£10,000
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Total **£10,000**

Note: Items marked * are funded from earmarked reserves.

The allowance for income from Section 106 Agreements had been left at £0 in 2026/27. Projected income from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) had been reduced from £45,000 to £30,000.

Insurance costs were expected to increase significantly in 2026/27. This had been built into the budget and the aim is to re-tender the service in 2027.

Following the triennial valuation, there had been a decrease in the employers' pension contribution rate (*subject to confirmation*).

Financial Implications

The Town Council was mindful of significant cost of living increases and, as always, would not want to increase its budget more than necessary.

The Town Council's overall draft budget showed an increase in spend of £96,709 if the use of earmarked reserves was excluded from both years. The precept increase would be £125,551 (9.41%). If earmarked reserves were not used for the 2026/27 financial year, the Town Council's Precept would increase by 23.47%. Allocating earmarked reserves reduces the increase significantly.

The number of Band D Equivalent properties was increasing in 2026/27 by 10.45 to 4,972.99 (*subject to final confirmation*).

The general budget changes along with the use of the earmarked reserves and the additional Band D Equivalent properties, resulted in an **overall increase in the Band D Equivalent charge from £268.78 to £293.46 (an increase of £24.68 per year (9.18%)). This was just over £0.47 per week.**

Legal Implications

None.

Environmental and Community Safety Implications

The proposals would contribute towards the Town Council's Strategic Plan priorities. The funds were also necessary to maintain the Council's assets in safe and decent order. The Town Council had declared a climate emergency and ecological emergency and was implementing a Climate Action Plan and Biodiversity Action Plan.

Resolved

- i) That the draft budget proposals and precept for 2026/27 be approved for consideration by the Full Council, with a budget of £1,670,657 (excluding allocated earmarked reserves) and a precept of £1,459,398.
- ii) That the Chief Executive would explore whether the 'mansion tax' and changes to the empty homes policy would have financial implications for the Town Council.

F&A 37/25 Internal Audit Report (First Interim) 2025/26

A copy of the report from the first interim visit was attached. There was one recommendation arising from the report, which related to the recording of hanging basket income:

'R1 – The apparent shortfall in income as recorded in the relevant Omega nominal account in relation to hanging baskets should be investigated'

Officers had prepared the following response:

R1 – 'This relates to the hanging baskets at Arnold House and the Town Hall where no invoices are required. This has now been made clear on the hanging basket spreadsheet. The original invoice for hanging baskets was correctly split between the Town Council and the Town Hall. A journal entry has been made in respect of the hanging baskets at Arnold House.'

Resolved

That the draft response to the Internal Audit Report (First Interim) 2025/26 be endorsed.

F&A 38/25 Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the next item of business to consider confidential personal information covered by the Data Protection Act 2018.

F&A 39/25 Staffing Update (*Minute F&A 29/25 and others*)

The Chief Executive gave a verbal update on staffing matters including vacancies, recruitment, flexible working requests and future staffing requirements.

Resolved

- i) That a Staffing Review Working Group comprising Councillors S Abbott, A Brown, T Ellis and G Ward be established to consider proposed and potential staffing changes.
- ii) That the Chief Executive and Head of Finance and Administration prepare a report, including financial implications, for the group to consider.

The meeting commenced at 7.00pm and closed at 8.21pm. There were seven members of the public present in the room at the start of the meeting and none at the end.

CHAIR

DATE