

MINUTES of the SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING of the SWANSCOMBE & GREENHITHE TOWN COUNCIL held on MONDAY 9 FEBRUARY 2026 at 7.15pm

PRESENT: Councillor Dawn Johnston – Town Mayor
Councillor Emma Ben Moussa
Councillor Denise Butler
Councillor Lorna Cross
Councillor Ann Duke
Councillor Peter Harris
Councillor Lesley Howes
Councillor Richard Lees
Councillor Claire Pearce
Councillor Hazel Stephens
Councillor Graham Taylor
Councillor Elizabeth Wickham

ALSO PRESENT: Graham Blew – Town Clerk
x2 Members of the public

ABSENT: Councillor Alan Reach

437/25-26. ARRANGEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS REGARDING FILMING OR RECORDING THE MEETING.

The Town Mayor explained the arrangements and constraints relating to the filming or recording of the meeting.

438/25-26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

There were none.

439/25-26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.

There were none.

As per Standing Order 34 c) the Chairman adjourned the meeting at this point to allow members of the public to address the meeting in relation to the business being transacted at the meeting.

440/25-26. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29 JANUARY 2026.

The attendance list was amended to delete the RFO and a numbering error was also amended.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 29 January 2026, with the above amendments, and be confirmed as a true record and be signed.

441/25-26. **ITEMS DEEMED URGENT BY THE TOWN MAYOR / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND THEIR POSITION ON THE AGENDA.**

There were none.

442/25-26. **ANNUAL ESTIMATES 2026 – 2027**

Further to minute 378/25-26 (*Special Town Council 8 January 2026*) and in accordance with Standing Order 16 b), members were advised of the proposed amendments/increases to the Annual Estimates for the 2026 - 2027 financial year.

Councillor Graham Taylor detailed the reasoning behind the current financial situation of the Town Council and the contents and the rationale behind the proposed amendments (V2 that had been compiled) to the Annual Estimates 2026 -2027 including the items that would need to be cut from the budget.

Members discussed in depth the implications of the proposed amendments and whilst the speed with having to make such an uncomfortable decision was a concern the need to address the issue was paramount. Whilst shocked and disappointed about the position the Town Council faced members were unanimous that the Town Council should be looking at the problems and showing they are taking steps to put things right even if this meant taking very difficult decisions now as well as throughout the coming year.

MOVED BY Councillor Graham Taylor, seconded by Councillor Richard Lees, and put to a vote with nine in favour, and three abstentions.

RESOLVED:

1. That the proposed amendments/increases to the Annual Estimates for 2026 – 2027, as detailed, be approved.
2. Training be provided to Members relating to financial affairs and reporting.
3. The presentation of accounts to the Finance & General Purposes Committee be reviewed to ensure full; sight of all expenditure, variations to budget and the balance of all accounts is available at each Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting.
4. A formal request be made to Dartford Borough Council for an advance of £50,000 from the 2026/2027 precept in the first week of April 2026.
5. A review of accounts (last 5 years) is undertaken by a suitably qualified person.

443/25-26. COUNCIL TAX BASE & PRECEPT 2026 – 2027.

Further to the previous item Councillors discussed the proposed amendment/increase for the level to set the Council Tax Base for Band D properties and the precept figure for 2026 – 2027.

MOVED BY Councillor Graham Taylor, seconded by Councillor Lorna Cross, and put to a vote with nine in favour, and three abstentions.

RESOLVED:

That the Council Tax Base for Band D properties, as detailed in the amended Annual Estimates, and the precept figure be set at £680,610 for 2026 - 2027.

Councillor Hazel Stephens left the meeting at this point.

444/25-26. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC.

MOVED BY Councillor Richard Lees and seconded by Councillor Peter Harris.

RESOLVED:

That, pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, that because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press leave the meeting during consideration of the following item(s).

No members of the press or public were present during discussion of the following item of business.

445/25-26. TO DISCUSS THE RE-DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES WHILST THE LOCUM/RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER IS IN POST.

The Town Mayor updated members on the appointment of a Locum Responsible Financial Officer via the Local Council Consultancy (Society of Local Council Clerks).

Members expressed their concern about how the current situation had occurred and agreed that the biggest issue had been a single point of failure which had to be addressed.

After discussing various options regarding the workload of the Admin Department, it was agreed :

RESOLVED:

That the Locum RFO be asked for his earliest opportunity for a Teams meeting to discuss how he operates and what he can and cannot do in his role.

Contact the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) to seek their recommendations for companies that could outsource the following functions: payroll, processing invoices, HR (employment contracts etc).

Contact KALC to request if they know of anyone that could review the accounts for the last 5 years and provide recommendations for robust reporting.

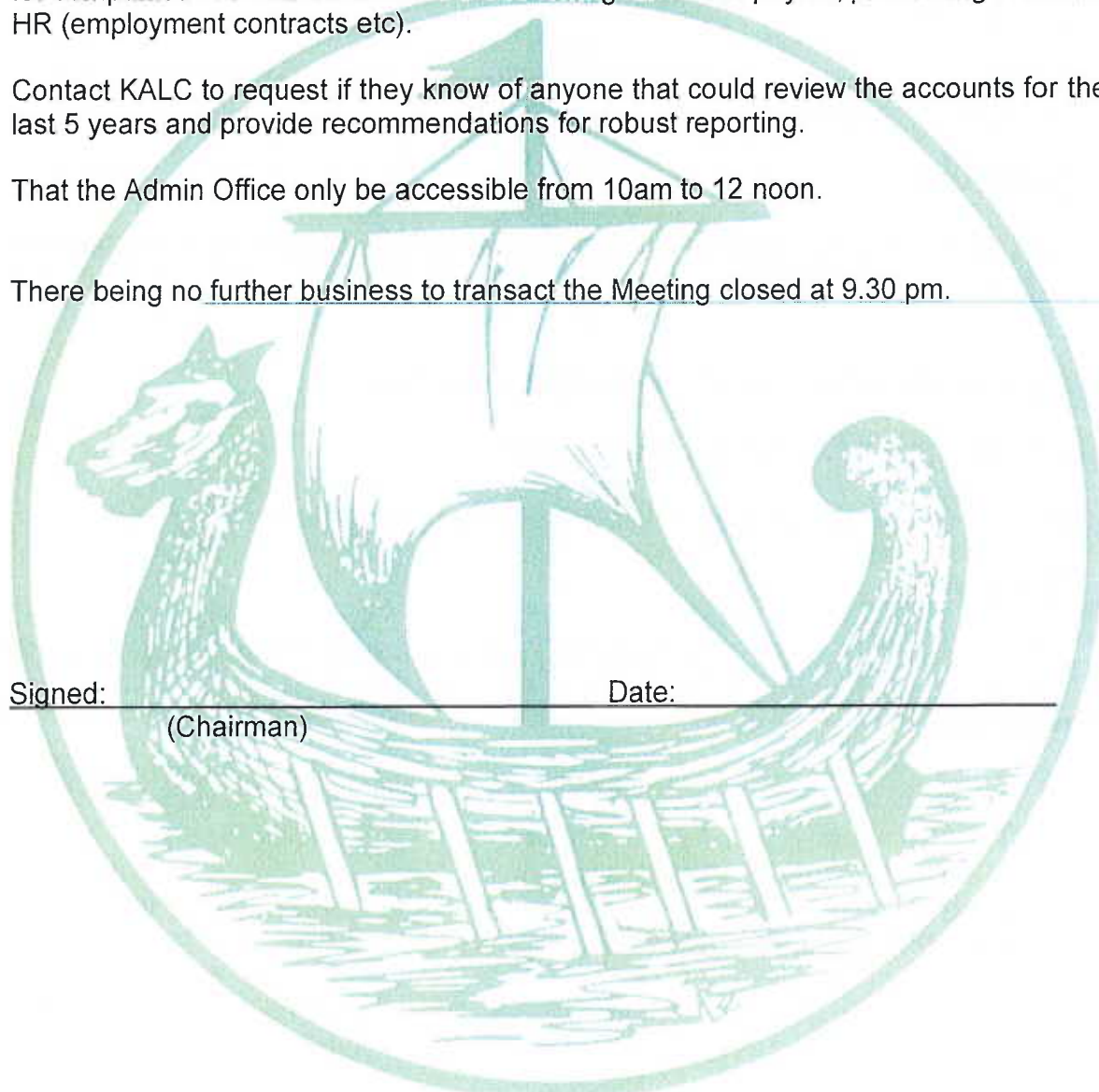
That the Admin Office only be accessible from 10am to 12 noon.

There being no further business to transact the Meeting closed at 9.30 pm.

Signed: _____

(Chairman)

Date: _____



MINUTES OF THE PLANNING, MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS, TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, THE GROVE, SWANSCOMBE ON WEDNESDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2026 AT 7.00PM

PRESENT: Councillor Dawn Johnston – Chair
Councillor Lorna Cross
Councillor Lesley Howes
Councillor Graham Taylor
Councillor Elizabeth Wickham

ALSO PRESENT: Graham Blew – Town Clerk
Indigo Allred – Administration Officer

ABSENT: There were none

425/25-26. ARRANGEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS REGARDING FILMING OR RECORDING THE MEETING.

The Chairman explained the arrangements and constraints relating to the filming or recording of the meeting.

426/25-26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Ann Duke, due to other commitments.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Richard Lees, due to other commitments.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Hazel Stephens, due to other commitments.

Recommended: That the reasons for absence, for the Councillor(s) listed, be formally accepted, and approved.

427/25-26. SUBSTITUTES.

There were none.

428/25-26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.

There were none.

As per Standing Order 34 c) the Chairman adjourned the meeting at this point to allow members of the public to address the meeting in relation to the business being transacted at the meeting.

429/25-26. ITEMS DEEMED URGENT BY THE CHAIRMAN / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND THEIR POSITION ON THE AGENDA.

There were none.

430/25-26. TO CONFIRM AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 JANUARY 2026.

Recommended: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 January 2026 were approved and signed as a true record.

431/25-26. PUBLIC NOTICE – FASTRACK CASTLE HILL - KENT COUNTY COUNCIL (KCC).

Members considered the Public Notice documents for (Speed Limits) (Consolidation) Order 2025 (Amendment No.2) Order 2026 which were received from KCC and will be available for public inspection until 16 February 2026. The deadline for representations is 12 noon on Monday 16 February 2026.

Recommended: No comments.

432/25-26. PUBLIC NOTICE – CASTLE HILL DRIVE - KENT COUNTY COUNCIL (KCC) (p).

Members discussed the Public Notice documents for (Waiting Restriction and Street Parking Places) (Consolidation) Order 2025 (Amendment No.3) Order 2026 which were received from KCC and will be available for public inspection until 16 February 2026. The deadline for representations is 12 noon on Monday 16 February 2026.

Recommended: No comments.

433/25-26. PUBLIC NOTICE – CASTLE HILL DRIVE - KENT COUNTY COUNCIL (KCC) (p).

The attached Public Notice documents for (Various Traffic Movements) (Consolidation) Order 2024 (Amendment No.3) Order 2026 have been received from KCC and will be available for public inspection until 16 February 2026. The deadline for representations is 12 noon on Monday 16 February 2026.

Recommended: No comments.

434/25-26. The following planning applications had been received from Dartford Borough Council / Ebbsfleet Development Corporation / Kent County Council/ Gravesham Borough Council for Members observations (full details of these applications can be viewed via the Town Council, DBC, EDC GBC and the KCC websites).

DA/25/01459/FUL	Change of use of Coach House from office use to residential use as an independent dwelling including the provision of car parking and boundary fencing. Ingress Abbey, Prioress Crescent, Greenhithe.
OBSERVATIONS:	No observations, please ensure all neighbouring properties are consulted prior to the decision of the application.
DA/25/01460/LBC	Application for Listed Building Consent for change of use of Coach House from office use to residential use as an

	<p>independent dwelling including the provision of car parking and boundary fencing.</p> <p>Ingress Abbey, Prioress Crescent, Greenhithe.</p>
OBSERVATIONS:	No observations, please ensure all neighbouring properties are consulted prior to the decision of the application.
KCC/GR/0013/2026	<p>Section 73 application to vary conditions 35 & 37 of planning permission GR/23/376 to allow vehicle movements 7 days a week.</p> <p>Britannia Refined Metals Ltd, Britannia Metal Refinery and Premises Lower Road, Northfleet.</p>
OBSERVATIONS:	<p>There Town Council feel that the proposal would increase traffic flow on Sundays and would result in additional traffic in residential areas.</p> <p>Any permission for the application should include a Condition that all HGV's must be directed to, and use, the strategic road network (by Ebbsfleet International Station) and not local residential roads.</p>

435/25-26. **The following Granted Decision Notices had been received from Dartford Borough Council / EDC for members information.**

DA/25/01358/FUL	<p>Loft Conversion with front window and rear dormer.</p> <p>15 Bevans Close, Greenhithe.</p>
DA/23/00709/FUL	<p>Demolition of existing outbuilding and erection of a detached outbuilding for storage (including cold storage room) related to hot food takeaway (retrospective).</p> <p>Akash Tandoori 54 Milton Road, Swanscombe.</p>
DA/25/01370/FUL	<p>Erection of a single storey rear extension and roof replacement.</p> <p>1 Alkerden Lane, Swanscombe.</p>
DA/25/01392/FUL	<p>Erection of a single-storey rear extension and single-storey front extension.</p> <p>18 Gunn Road, Swanscombe.</p>

DA/25/01424/FUL	Erection of a single storey front extension and loft conversion with rear dormer, roof lights and gable window. 70 Trebble Road, Swanscombe.
DA/25/01353/VCON	Erection of a two storey side/rear extension and single storey rear infill extension to form extended veterinary surgery at the ground floor (use Class E€), pet grooming parlour (ancillary) and formation of 1 no. 2 bed apartment (use Class C3a), plus demolition of rear ancillary outbuildings and provision of associated amenity space and car parking (application for variation of conditions 2, 8, 10 and 12 of planning permission 23/00654/FUL in relation to amendments to approved plans including revised fencing, the omission of terraced area, removal of the pet grooming use and alterations to windows in the east elevation). Swanscombe Veterinary Practice 41-43 Swanscombe Street, Swanscombe.
DA/25/01291/VCON	Demolition of the existing Public House (Sui Generis) and erection of a 3-storey building to provide café (Use Class E) at ground floor and 7 x residential units (Use Class C3) at part ground and upper floors. As well as private and communal amenity space provision and cycle and refuse storage provision (variation of conditions 1, 3, 9, 20, 28 and removal of condition 22 of 24/00174/VCON for variation of ground floor café to general class E to allow retail use or a hairdressers). 60 High Street, Swanscombe, Kent, DA10 0AH.

436/25-26. **The following Refused Decision Notices had been received from Dartford Borough Council / EDC for members information.**

DA/25/01276/FUL	Change of use of land and buildings for tyre fitting, vehicle servicing and repairs with associated office (retrospective). 5A Stanley Road, Swanscombe.
-----------------	---

There being no further business to transact, the Meeting closed at 7.15 pm.

Signed: _____
(Chairman)

Date: _____

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING, MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS, TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, THE GROVE, SWANSCOMBE ON WEDNESDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2026 AT 7.00PM

PRESENT: Councillor Dawn Johnston – Chairman
Councillor Richard Lees -Vice-Chairman
Councillor Lorna Cross
Councillor Graham Taylor
Councillor Elizabeth Wickham

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Peter Harris
Graham Blew – Town Clerk
Indigo Allred – Administration Officer

ABSENT: There were none

457/25-26. **ARRANGEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS REGARDING FILMING OR RECORDING THE MEETING.**

The Chairman explained the arrangements and constraints relating to the filming or recording of the meeting.

458/25-26. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Ann Duke, due to other commitments.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Lesley Howes, due to other commitments.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Hazel Stephens, due to other commitments.

Recommended: That the reasons for absence, for the Councillor(s) listed, be formally accepted, and approved.

459/25-26. **SUBSTITUTES.**

There were none.

460/25-26. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.**

There were none.

As per Standing Order 34 c) the Chairman adjourned the meeting at this point to allow members of the public to address the meeting in relation to the business being transacted at the meeting.

461/25-26. **ITEMS DEEMED URGENT BY THE CHAIRMAN / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND THEIR POSITION ON THE AGENDA.**

There were none.

462/25-26. **TO CONFIRM AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4 FEBRUARY 2026.**

Recommended: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 February 2026 were approved and signed as a true record.

463/25-26. **HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENT PLAN (HiP).**

The Swanscombe Neighbourhood Watch had been trying to get “7.5 Tonne except buses” signs installed at the entrances to Swanscombe (London Road, High Street, Craylands Lane (London Road end) and Southfleet Road as they felt the current signs were confusing HGV drivers as they included “except for loading”

Unfortunately, they had been informed this request could not be considered unless it was on the Town Councils HIP.

Recommended: That the item not be added to the HiP and contact be made with KCC Thomas Mallon to investigate what options are available for signage.

464/25-26. **The following planning applications had been received from Dartford Borough Council / Ebbsfleet Development Corporation / Kent County Council/ Gravesham Borough Council for Members observations (full details of these applications can be viewed via the Town Council, DBC, EDC GBC and the KCC websites).**

EDC/25/0211	Retrospective crushed chalk surfacing of an existing unmade track and creation of a turning/parking area of crushed chalk surface, together with excavation of drainage ditches. PLA Broadness Lighthouse, Swanscombe Marshes, Green Manorway, Northfleet.
OBSERVATIONS:	Members were uncomfortable with the retrospective nature of the application which was made worse by the fact that the site was of a sensitive nature. The Town Council feel that a full Environmental Impact Report should be included.
DA/26/00060/FUL	Proposed roof extension, side dormer, and roof lights to incorporate additional dental surgery and waiting rooms over existing parking area, supported by columns. 23 High Street, Swanscombe.
OBSERVATIONS:	This site has had approximately x10 previous planning applications and the previous application DA/25/01179 was refused.

	<p>The Town Council strongly objects to this application on the same grounds as the previous refusal decision.</p> <p>While there are x3 parking indicated in the proposal this looks very questionable as the area does not look sufficient for vehicles.</p> <p>The proposal would result in a material loss of residential off-street parking. constituting a failure under Dartford Local Plan Policy M1, M2, M10, M15 and M16.</p>
KCC/DA/0019/2026	<p>Erection of a single storey modular building to the north of the existing school building to provide additional classroom space for two additional bulge classes.</p> <p>Ebbsfleet Green Primary School, Ackers Drive, Ebbsfleet Valley.</p>
OBSERVATIONS:	<p>The Town Council note that the application is temporary but object due to the negative impact the proposal would have on transport and parking. The increased capacity for students would impact on the use of vehicles which would increase the pressure on local roads which are already suffering.</p>
DA/26/00177/FUL	<p>Erection of a three-storey front extension, along with alternation to fenestration and internal alterations.</p> <p>Hillside, 119 Mounts Road, Greenhithe.</p>
OBSERVATIONS:	<p>No observations, please ensure all neighbouring properties are consulted prior to the decision of the application.</p>

465/25-26. **The following Granted Decision Notices had been received from Dartford Borough Council / EDC for members information.**

DA/25/01032/COU	Change of use of the site from a residential dwelling (C3 use class) to a children's care home (C2 use class) for a maximum of 2 children. 8 Ingress Gardens, Greenhithe.
-----------------	--

There being no further business to transact, the Meeting closed at 7.20 pm.

Signed: _____
(Chairman)

Date: _____

MINUTES of the MEETING of the RECREATION, LEISURE & AMENITIES COMMITTEE
held at THE COUNCIL OFFICES, THE GROVE, SWANSCOMBE on THURSDAY 22
JANUARY 2026 at 7.00PM

PRESENT: Councillor Emma Ben – Moussa - Chairman
Councillor Peter Harris – Vice - Chairman
Councillor Lorna Cross
Councillor Lesley Howes
Councillor Dawn Johnston
Councillor Hazel Stephens

ALSO PRESENT: Graham Blew – Town Clerk
Dan Usher – Senior Groundsman/Gardener
Indigo Allred – Administration Officer

ABSENT: Councillor Ann Duke

0/25-26. **ARRANGEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS REGARDING FILMING OR RECORDING THE MEETING.**

The arrangements and constraints relating to the filming or recording of the meeting were explained.

391/25-26. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

An apology for absence was submitted by Councillor Elizabeth Wickham, due to illness.

Recommended: That the reason for absence, for the Councillor listed, be formally accepted, and approved.

392/25-26. **SUBSTITUTES.**

There were none

1/25-26. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.**

There were none.

As per Standing Order 34 c) the Chairman adjourned the meeting at this point to allow members of the public to address the meeting in relation to the business being transacted at the meeting.

394/25-26. **ITEMS DEEMED URGENT BY THE CHAIRMAN / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND THEIR POSITION ON THE AGENDA.**

There were none.

395/25-26. **TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 NOVEMBER 2025**

Recommended: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 November 2025 were approved and signed as a true record.

396/25-26. **SENIOR GROUNDSMAN / GARDENER'S REPORT.**

Members considered the report which updated on the work undertaken, by the Parks Department and the work planned which included:

Broomfield, Heritage Park, Knockhall, Saxon Court, Equipment / Staffing and Miscellaneous.

Recommended: That the report be noted.

TOWN CLERK AND RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT.

397/25-26. **RECREATIONAL FACILITY CHARGES 2026 – 2027 (p).**

Members considered the attached proposed price increases, as previously agreed, the Responsible Financial Officer had increased them by 2.5% overall and rounded up appropriately.

** All these figures were considered when members previously agreed the Estimates for the forthcoming 2026 – 2027 financial year (minute 370/25-26 Finance & General Purposes Committee and minute 378/25-26 Special Full Council 8 January 2026).

Members asked that the Ingress park Community Centre proposed charges< in line with the Town Council Community Hall, be included in the Recreational Facility Charges 2026 – 2027.

It was agreed that an item be placed on the 12 March 2026 Recreation, Leisure & Amenities Committee agenda for preliminary discussions regarding the hire charge for the small and larger meeting rooms along with any pro-active actions the Town Council were able to make.

Recommended: That the setting of the Recreational Facility Charges 2026 – 2027 be endorsed.

398/25-26. **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC.**

MOVED BY Councillor Dawn Johnston and seconded by Councillor Lesley Howes.

RESOLVED:

That, pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, that because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press leave the meeting during consideration of the following item(s).

No members of the press or public were present during discussion of the following item of business.

399/25-26. **PAVILION – UPDATE ON INTERNALS**

Members considered the attached correspondences and confidential report regarding the internals of the Pavilion and the anti-social behaviour that had occurred.

Members were extremely disappointed and frustrated regarding the anti-social behaviour that had occurred at the Pavilion.

Recommended: That the item be noted

There being no further business to transact the Meeting closed at 7.20pm.

Signed: _____
(Chairman)

Date: _____

This page is intentionally left blank.

MINUTES of the MEETING of the RECREATION, LEISURE & AMENITIES COMMITTEE
held at THE COUNCIL OFFICES, THE GROVE, SWANSCOMBE on THURSDAY 12
MARCH 2026 at 7.00PM

PRESENT: Councillor Emma Ben – Moussa - Chairman
Councillor Lorna Cross
Councillor Lesley Howes
Councillor Dawn Johnston
Councillor Hazel Stephens
Councillor Graham Taylor (substituting for Councillor Peter Harris)
Councillor Elizabeth Wickham

ALSO PRESENT: Graham Blew – Town Clerk
Dan Usher – Senior Groundsman/Gardener
x1 Member of the public

ABSENT: There were none.

494/25-26. **ARRANGEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS REGARDING FILMING OR RECORDING THE MEETING.**

The arrangements and constraints relating to the filming or recording of the meeting were explained.

495/25-26. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

An apology for absence was submitted by Councillor Ann Duke, due to other commitments.

An apology for absence was submitted by Councillor Peter Harris, due to other commitments.

Recommended: That the reason for absence, for the Councillor listed, be formally accepted, and approved.

25-26. **SUBSTITUTES.**

Councillor Graham Taylor substituted for Councillor Peter Harris.

497/25-26. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.**

There were none.

As per Standing Order 34 c) the Chairman adjourned the meeting at this point to allow members of the public to address the meeting in relation to the business being transacted at the meeting.

498/25-26. **ITEMS DEEMED URGENT BY THE CHAIRMAN / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND THEIR POSITION ON THE AGENDA.**

The Town Clerk confirmed to members the requests received from the two cricket clubs regarding the fees set for 2026 – 2027 and detailed what the requests would mean.

Members agreed that the proposed fees as detailed by the Town Clerk were acceptable.

499/25-26. TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 JANUARY 2026

Recommended: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 January 2026 were approved and signed as a true record.

500/25-26. SENIOR GROUNDSMAN / GARDENER'S REPORT.

Members considered the report which updated on the work undertaken, by the Parks Department and the work planned which included:

Broomfield, Eagles Road, Heritage Park, Knockhall, Swanscombe Park, Valley View, Equipment / Staffing and Miscellaneous.

The Senior Groundsman / Gardener advised members that the cost of the service of the x2 cricket mowers was £460.91 +VAT each and that this included a 15% discount on both labour and parts.

Members discussed the request from the Senior Groundsman / Gardener regarding the purchase of x 2 new standard hand mowers, and it was felt that this should be considered from the 2026 – 2027 budgets.

Recommended: That the report be noted.

TOWN CLERK AND RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT.

501/25-26. ACTIVE KENT AND MEDWAY FUNDING (AKM) (p).

Members considered the correspondence received from AKM regarding an online funding application made by the Town Council towards Children's Summer Entertainment. The application was for match funding (50%).

Members considered the correspondence from AKM and after deliberation and taking into account the current position, the difficult decision to not pursue this project was agreed.

Recommended: That, on this occasion, the project not be progressed.

502/25-26. WATER LEAK – SWANSCOMBE PARK.

Members discussed the report detailing the work undertaken to repair the leak at Swanscombe Park, and the subsequent actions taken with the supplier to request a Leak Allowance.

Members were unhappy regarding the size of the bill from Business Stream especially so as the contractor had reported that the leak was due to poor insulation as the pipe was cut too short when the new meter was installed.

Recommended: That the actions taken to date be endorsed.

503/25-26. ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING POINTS (EVCP) – UPDATE (p).

Further to minutes 38/25-26, 432/24-25 and 172/24-25 Members were pleased to receive the update from Transport Planner / Network Innovations, Kent County Council, regarding the EVCP's.

Members were disappointed to note that the proposed x4 additional EVCP's were no longer available due to KCC having to return the funding.

Recommended: That the item be noted.

504/25-26. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC.

MOVED BY Councillor Graham Taylor and seconded by Councillor Dawn Johnston.

RESOLVED:

That, pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, that because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press leave the meeting during consideration of the following item(s).

No members of the press or public were present during discussion of the following item of business.

505/25-26. THE SWANSCOMBE CENTRE – PERFORMANCE OF SERVICES UPDATE (p).

Further to minute 186/25-26 the Finance Director GCLL had provided the Performance of Services Report which includes details for Health & Safety, Finance and Attendances for August 2025 to January 2026.

Members welcomed the Report and, after discussion, it was agreed that the Management Agreement should be scrutinised and that a meeting arranged with GCLL to discuss any renegotiation.

Recommended: That the Management Agreement be scrutinised and that a meeting arranged with GCLL to discuss any renegotiation.

There being no further business to transact the Meeting closed at 7.45pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chairman)

This page is intentionally left blank.

MINUTES of the MEETING of the FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE held at THE COUNCIL OFFICES, THE GROVE, SWANSCOMBE on THURSDAY 5 MARCH 2026 at 7.00PM

PRESENT: Councillor Richard Lees – Elected Chair for the meeting
Councillor Ann Duke (substituting for Councillor Lorna Cross)
Councillor Peter Harris
Councillor Dawn Johnston
Councillor Hazel Stephens
Councillor Graham Taylor

ALSO PRESENT: Jack Turner – Locum RFO (via Teams)
Graham Blew – Town Clerk
Indigo Allred – Administration Officer
Councillor Denise Butler
DBC Councillor Carol Gale
DBC Councillor David Mote
x1 Member of the Public

ABSENT: There were none.

472/25-26. TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN FOR THE MEETING.

As both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman were unable to attend the meeting it was duly proposed, seconded, and agreed.

Recommended: That Councillor Richard Lees be elected as the Chairman for the meeting.

473/25-26. ARRANGEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS REGARDING FILMING OR RECORDING THE MEETING.

The Chairman explained the arrangements and constraints relating to the filming or recording of the meeting.

474/25-26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

An apology for absence was submitted by Councillor Emma Ben Moussa due to not feeling it was appropriate to sit in the committee meeting without having had training first.

An apology for absence was submitted by Councillor Lesley Howes, due to other commitments.

An apology for absence was submitted by Councillor Lorna Cross, due to other commitments.

475/25-26. SUBSTITUTES.

Councillor Ann Duke substituted for Councillor Lorna Cross.

476/25-26. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.**

There were none.

As per Standing Order 34 c) the Chairman adjourned the meeting at this point to allow members of the public to address the meeting in relation to the business being transacted at the meeting.

477/25-26. **TO RECEIVE ITEMS DEEMED URGENT BY THE CHAIRMAN / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES.**

There were none.

478/25-26. **TO CONFIRM AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 JANUARY 2026.**

Recommended: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2026 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

479/25-26. **MONTHLY BANK RECONCILIATIONS.**

In accordance with Financial Regulation 2.2 a member of the council other than the Town Mayor or a cheque signatory is required to be appointed to verify the bank reconciliations produced by the RFO for all the council's accounts on a regular basis, Councillor Richard Lees was appointed (minute 30/25-26).

Recommended: That the bank reconciliations for January 2026 be noted.

480/25-26. **BANK TRANSFERS.**

In accordance with Financial Regulation 5.5 (c) Members were provided with a list of bank transfers undertaken between December 2025 and January 2026.

The Locum RFO confirmed these were all the Bank Transfers for December 2025 and January 2026.

Recommended: That the bank transfers undertaken between December 2025 and January 2026 be approved.

481/25-26. **TO RECEIVE FINANCE STATEMENTS AND PASS ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT.**

In accordance with Financial Regulation 5.5 (a) Members were provided with details of all receipts and payments for authorisation between December 2025 and January 2026.

Recommended: That the receipts and payments between December 2025 and January 2026 as per the annexed list, be approved.

482/25-26. **SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS.**

Members were provided with details of the Flex-Budget Report balanced to 31 January 2026.

In response to a member enquiry the Locum RFO confirmed that the gaps were due to different codes being used previously and not due to missing information.

Members noted the overspends in some of the Cost centres / Budgets and that these would need to be investigated going forward.

It was also agreed that the Council would need to ensure they used previous years actual positions when setting budgets in the future.

Recommended: That the summary of accounts to 31 January 2026, be noted.

TOWN CLERK & RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER'S (RFO) REPORT.

483/25-26. **TO CONSIDER ANY BUDGET VIREMENTS FOR THE 2026 – 2027 FINANCIAL YEAR.**

Members welcomed the Locum RFO report.

Members discussed the report and highlighted the proposal to remove the RFO/ATC Role, as well as further review the overall staff structure at subsequent Personnel Committee meetings. The Locum RFO advised that proposed virements 2026 – 2027 could be deferred to a budget to be reviewed by the council.

It was proposed, duly seconded and agreed:

Recommended:

1. That the proposed budget virements totalling £74,364.00 be approved.
2. That the creating / strengthening of a contingency budget heading to hold these savings be approved.
3. That the surplus funds be directed towards rebuilding the General Reserve be agreed.
4. That an urgent review of the Old Fire Station Community Café operations be commissioned.
5. That a a staffing structure review during 2026 – 2027 be undertaken.

484/25-26 **TO CONSIDER THE CURRENT AND PROJECTED FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL.**

Members welcomed the Locum RFO's report on the projected financial position of the council and thanked the Locum RFO for his work in producing such a clear and well documented report.

Whilst acknowledging that the council had significant challenges ahead Members wished to record the gratitude to Dartford Borough Council who had significantly helped during this period.

It was proposed, duly seconded and agreed:

Recommended:

1. That the current cash flow position and historic overspend impact be noted.
2. That the reserves are effectively nil entering 2026-2027 be noted.
3. That the £40,383 structural variance identified by the Locum RFO be acknowledged.
4. That the expenditure reductions must be implemented to avoid further reserve erosion be agreed.
5. That a 2–3-year reserve recovery plan to restore General Reserve to at least £170,152 be developed.
6. That a review of income-generation services and staffing levels be continued.

485/25-26 **TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES / COMMUNITY HALL – HEATING SYSTEM.**

During a routine service visit the boiler room was discovered to have 1 to 3 inches of water on the floor from a leaking pressurisation unit In accordance with Financial Regulation 11.1 (iv), and in consultation with the Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, and to ensure continued operation of the Town Council building a quote was obtained and approved for the replacement of the leaking pressurisation unit with a new unit at a cost of £1,795.63 exc VAT.

The pressurisation unit maintains pressure in the system and is a safety device which monitors high and low pressure, without it there is no heating.

Recommended: That the actions taken be noted and endorsed.

486/25-26 TO KONICA MINOLTA – DIGITAL AUTOMATION

Member considered a report detailing the contract situation after the transfer from Konica Minolta to Digital Automation for the printers/photocopier.

Recommended: That Option 2 – Incorporating into Existing Agreement be proceeded with.

487/25-26 CCTV MODIFICATIONS – GROVE CAR PARK.

A quotation had been received regarding the CCTV camera in the Grove Car Park.

Members discussed the quotation and agreed that this item should be deferred for consideration when the 2027 – 2028 budgets were considered.

Recommended: That the item be deferred for consideration when the 2027 – 2028 budgets were considered.

488/25/26. SCHINDLER LIFT.

A quote had been received regarding an GSM SIM upgrade to the lifts auto dialler in the Council Offices (£1,250.00 exc VAT).

Members discussed the possibility of alternative solutions (cabling solutions). After discussion it was proposed, duly seconded and agreed.

Recommended: That quotations be obtained for at least x1 wired solution and one other GSM SIM quotation and for the item to be deferred until the 2027 – 2028 budget considerations.

489/25-26 BUSINESS RATE EVALUATION

An email had been received from gov.uk regarding the Business Rates which would be effective from 1 April 2026. Members were asked to consider how they wished to proceed with this.

Members confirmed that there were x2 factors involved, changes to rateable values and changes to the multipliers used.

Recommended: That a request be made to Dartford Borough Council for when they would be sending out the NNDR bills which would then indicate exactly what properties were being charged for and what the properties were being classed as.

490/25-26 **REQUEST FOR CIL INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING**

The Chairman of the Greenhithe Community Centre had submitted a request for CIL Infrastructure Funding from the Town Council towards Eco Heating.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the Chairman of the Greenhithe Community Centre had since advised that they had obtained the required funding from the National Lottery Fund, so the application had been withdrawn.

Recommended: Members noted the withdrawal of the application and congratulated the Greenhithe Community Centre on obtaining the funding.

491/25-26. **PRECEPT PAYMENT RESTRUCTURING.**

Members were updated on what had happened regarding the request to Dartford Borough Council for the following restructuring of the payments for the 2026 – 2027 Precept.

1 March 2026 – 3120,000
30 April 20236 - £280,305
30 Sept 2026 - £280,305.

Members acknowledged the assistance that Dartford Borough Council had given with this matter.

Recommended: That the actions taken in arranging the precept payment restructuring be endorsed.

492/25-26. **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC.**

MOVED BY Councillor Graham Taylor and seconded by Councillor Dawn Johnston.

RESOLVED:

That, pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, that because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press leave the meeting during consideration of the following item(s).

No members of the press or public were present during discussion of the following item of business.

493/25-26. **FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS DURING THE PERIOD OF THE PREVIOUS RFO LAST BEING IN THE OFFICE AND THE CURRENT LOCUM RFO HAVING SUFFICIENT INFORMATION TO TAKE UP HIS RESPONSIBILITIES.**

The Town Clerk introduced the report and confirmed to Members that the funds from the CCLA Investment Account had been transferred to the Active Saver 1 account during this period.

The Locum RFO advised members that the Town Councils Financial Regulations were adequate.

After discussion it was proposed, duly seconded and agreed:

Recommended: That the recommendation contained in the confidential report be agreed.

There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 8.35pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chairman)

This page is intentionally left blank.

MINUTES of the MEETING of the COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE held at THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, THE GROVE, SWANSCOMBE on WEDNESDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2026 at 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor Peter Harris – Chairman
Councillor Lorna Cross
Councillor Lesley Howes
Councillor Elizabeth Wickham

ALSO PRESENT: Graham Blew – Town Clerk
Lead Co-Ordinator – Swanscombe Neighbourhood Watch
Deputy Lead Co-Ordinator – Swanscombe Neighbourhood Watch

ABSENT: Councillor Dawn Johnston.

446/25-26. **ARRANGEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS REGARDING FILMING OR RECORDING THE MEETING.**

The Chairman explained the arrangements and constraints relating to the filming or recording of the meeting.

447/25-26. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Ann Duke, due to other commitments

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Hazel Stephens, due to other commitments

Recommended: That the reason for absence, for the Councillors listed, be formally accepted, and approved.

448/25-26. **SUBSTITUTES.**

There were none.

449/25-26. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.**

There were none.

As per Standing Order 34 c) the Chairman adjourned the meeting at this point to allow members of the public to address the meeting in relation to the business being transacted at the meeting.

450/25-26. **ITEMS DEEMED URGENT BY THE CHAIRMAN / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND THEIR POSITION ON THE AGENDA.**

There were none.

451/25-26. **TO CONFIRM AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3 DECEMBER 2025**

Recommended: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 December 2025 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

452/25-26. **KENT POLICE REPORT.**

Unfortunately, the beat officer for Ebbsfleet Valley, Swanscombe, Greenhithe and Knockhall, PC Simon Hodge was unable to attend but had provided a written update which was read out by the Chairman and included : recent surgery in the Old Fire Station Café had been successful AS parking at Munford Road, joint working with trading standards regarding illegal cigarettes/vapes etc., closure orders to remove residents in Swanscombe who cause issues for other residents, an individual causing problems linked to accosting (which itself is not a crime) has been arrested, new ward priorities were drug dealing, ASB and dog fouling.

Recommended: That the item be noted.

453/25-26. **KENT COUNTY COUNCIL (KCC) COMMUNITY WARDENS REPORT.**

Unfortunately, the KCC Community Warden was unable to attend but, in her absence, Angela Jarrett had submitted a report which included: ASB such as graffiti, neighbourhood disputes, parking issues, wheel clamps found cut and abandoned, drug dealing and vehicular movements on Stanhope Road.

Recommended: That the item be noted.

454/25-26. **COMMUNITY SAFETY LIAISON.**

Swanscombe Neighbourhood Watch – The Lead Co-Ordinator updated the committee on the ongoing work of the patrol team, the ongoing issues with lorries, liaison with stakeholders on parked cars blocking public footpaths, reporting anti - social behaviour, liaising with residents as part of the ongoing campaign against cars mounting the pavement in Stanhope Road.

Neighbourhood Watch reported that they had been involved with residents reporting criminal damage to properties at night. They had also been involved with reports of a male knocking on doors and then hiding behind bins etc.

Unfortunately, there had been incidents of youths with slingshots/catapults firing at wildlife and residents' properties.

The patrol had also helped a distressed lady and had taken her to her destination in Castle Hill.

It was hoped that a Swanscombe Community Speed watch could be started in the future.

The Neighbourhood Watch had partnered up with I\$ Security to work with local residents to get discounts on CCTV cameras etc.

The presence of the Neighbourhood Watch had been able to stop drug use at All Saints Close.

Lorry Watch – this was hoped to continue in March when the weather had improved. The Lorry Watch continued to get reports from the Swanscombe Neighbourhood Watch, and these were forwarded to Kent Freight.

Community Speed Watch – this had been held up by the wet and cold weather but was hoped to resume in March.

Recommended: That the updates be noted.

455/25-26. **DETAILED ANALYSIS OF CRIME STATISTICS FOR SWANSCOMBE AND GREENHITHE.**

Members were provided with, and discussed, the up-to-date detailed analysis of crime figures for Swanscombe and Greenhithe.

Recommended: That the information be noted.

456/25-26. **OBSTRUCTIVE PAVEMENT PARKING.**

Further to minute 317/25-26 Members noted the response from Jim Dickson MP and welcomed the fact that this issue had been discussed in parliament.

Recommended: That the item be noted.

There were no confidential items to be discussed.

There being no further business to transact, the Meeting closed at 7.50pm

Signed _____
Chairman Date

This page is intentionally left blank.

MINUTES of the MEETING of the PERSONNEL COMMITTEE held at THE COUNCIL OFFICES, THE GROVE, SWANSCOMBE, DA10 0GA on WEDNESDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2026 at 7.25pm

PRESENT: Councillor Dawn Johnston - Chairman
Councillor Elizabeth Wickham – Vice – Chairman
Councillor Lorna Cross
Councillor Peter Harris
Councillor Richard Lees
Councillor Graham Taylor

ABSENT: There were none

ALSO PRESENT: Graham Blew - Town Clerk
Indigo Allred – Administration Officer

466/25-26. **ARRANGEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS REGARDING FILMING OR RECORDING THE MEETING.**

The Chairman explained the arrangements and constraints relating to the filming or recording of the meeting.

467/25-26. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Ann Duke, due to other commitments.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Lesly Howes, due to other commitments.

Recommended: That the reason for absence, for the above Town Councillors, be formally accepted and approved.

468/25-26. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.**

There were none.

As per Standing Order 34 c) the Chairman adjourned the meeting at this point to allow members of the public to address the meeting in relation to the business being transacted at the meeting.

469/25-26. **URGENT ITEMS / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES.**

There were none.

470/25-26. **TO CONFIRM AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 26 JANUARY 2026.**

Recommended: That the minutes from the meeting held on 26 January 2026 be confirmed and signed.

405/25-26. **STAFF MATTERS.**

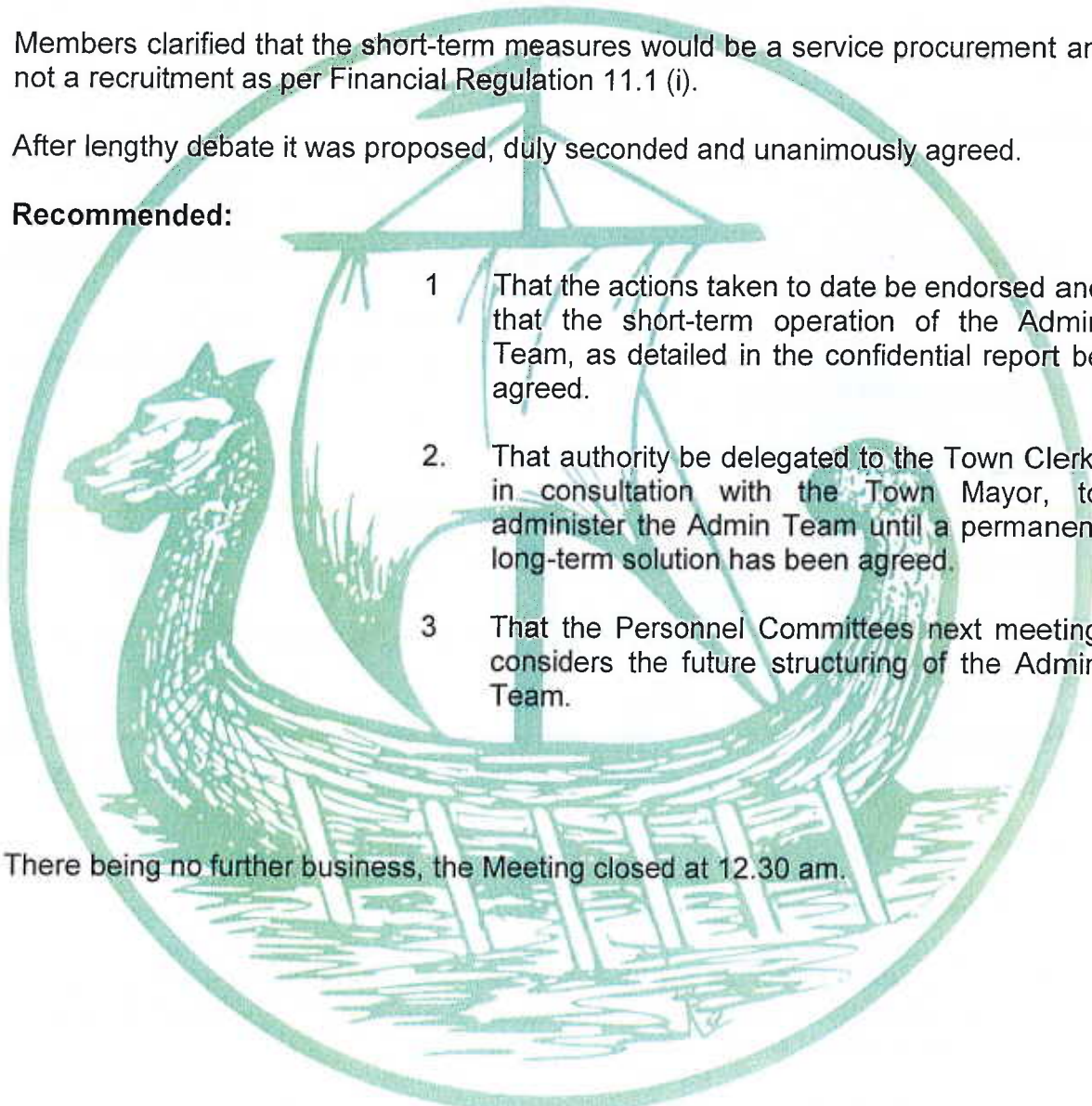
Members were advised that employee 58 had submitted a letter of resignation with a last day of service being 30 January 2026.

Members discussed the serious implications this had for the Town Council and the Chairman / Town Mayor detailed the actions they had undertaken with the Town Clerk to date.

Members clarified that the short-term measures would be a service procurement and not a recruitment as per Financial Regulation 11.1 (i).

After lengthy debate it was proposed, duly seconded and unanimously agreed.

Recommended:

- 
- 1 That the actions taken to date be endorsed and that the short-term operation of the Admin Team, as detailed in the confidential report be agreed.
 2. That authority be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Town Mayor, to administer the Admin Team until a permanent long-term solution has been agreed.
 - 3 That the Personnel Committees next meeting considers the future structuring of the Admin Team.

There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 12.30 am.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(CHAIRMAN)

JT Revised 02/3/26
AGENDA ITEM 6
TC 26-3-26

SWANSCOMBE & GREENHITHE PARISH COUNCIL

INDEPENDENT FORENSIC FINANCIAL INVESTIGATION REPORT (UPDATED DATA REVIEW)

Prepared by: Locum Responsible Financial Officer (Locum RFO)

Workbook reviewed: *Financial Investigation – Feb 2026.xlsx* (all tabs)

Updated data position date references in workbook: incl. 24.02.2026 and 01.03.2026

Date of report: February 2026

For: Finance & General Purposes Committee and Full Council

CONTENTS

1. Executive Summary
 2. Instruction, Sources and Methodology (All Tabs Reviewed)
 3. High-Level Financial Position: Actuals, Reserves, Cash and Risk
 4. Year-by-Year Financial Performance (2022/23 to 2025/26)
 5. Balance Sheet, AGAR Linkage, and Physical Cash Position
 6. Ledger Continuity and Overstatement Risk
 7. Bank Reconciliations: Assurance Gaps and Control Impact
 8. Reserves Integrity: General Reserve, EMR and Sustainability Benchmarks
 9. Three-Year Cost Drivers: Administration, Parks, Pavilion, Café
 10. Payroll Forensic Review: Duplicate Fringe Inclusion (Quantified)
 11. CIL Review: Restricted Funds Misapplied and Required Reallocation
 12. 2026–2027 Budget and Forecast: Detailed Analytical Commentary (Updated)
 13. Governance, Financial Awareness, Oversight and Key Person Dependency
 14. Risk Matrix (Updated)
 15. Recommendations and Recovery Timeline (0–30 / 30–90 / 3–12 months)
 16. Conclusion
 17. Covering Statement to Full Council
-

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (UPDATED)

This updated forensic review (based on the revised workbook figures) confirms there is **no evidence of misappropriation**, but there is **material evidence of weak financial governance, insufficient scrutiny, ledger integrity risk, and unsustainable reserves**.

1.1 Headline quantified findings (from workbook)

A. Cumulative actual net deterioration (2019/20–2025/26):

Actual annual net positions (Budget Review tab):

- 2019/20: **+£19,723.84**
- 2020/21: **-£64,409.02**
- 2021/22: **+£27,992.58**
- 2022/23: **-£86,573.92**
- 2023/24: **-£297,821.59**
- 2024/25: **-£119,252.04**
- 2025/26 (to date / projected in workbook): **-£31,061.39**

The last four years alone (2022/23–2025/26) total: **-£534,708.94**.

B. Reserves position (Reserve Review + Balance and Reserve Rec):

- General Reserve at 31.03.2025: **-£53,771**
- General Reserve projected/positioned for 31.03.2026: **-£84,832.69**
- EMR at 31.03.2026: **£128,474**
- Combined reserves at 31.03.2026 (GR + EMR): **£43,641.31**

C. Minimum General Reserve benchmark (JPAG method shown in workbook):

- Precept 2026/27: **£680,610**
- Monthly equivalent: **£56,717.50**
- 3-month minimum benchmark: **£170,152.50**

Funding gap to reach minimum benchmark (if EMR fully transferred to GR):

$£170,152.50 - £43,641.31 = £126,511.19$

D. Cash and immediate liquidity position (Actual Position tab – updated):

- Total cash across listed accounts as at **24.02.2026: £37,675.77**
- Known immediate outflows: **£55,280.372**
- Cash deficit before precept timing: **-£17,604.602**
- Assumed DBC precept transfer (26/27 precept) brought into 25/26: **£120,000**
- Net cash position shown as at **01.03.2026: £102,395.398**

- Amount effectively used from 26/27 budget to support 25/26: **£17,604.602**

E. 2026–2027 budget affordability is “just” affordable but fragile (2026–2027 Estimates + 26–27 Budget Amendments):

- Council agreed expenditure baseline (budget): **£625,610**
- Planned transfer to GR: **£55,000**
- Precept request: **£680,610**
- Locum RFO estimate of expenditure required: **£720,993**
- RFO precept requirement if fully funded without savings/adjustment: **£720,993**
- Difference (RFO vs agreed): **£40,383**

F. Identified in-year savings options (26–27 Budget Amendments):

Core savings identified: **£74,364**

This would improve projected EOY 26/27 GR to **£84,031.08** (still below minimum benchmark of £170,152), leaving a remaining gap of **£86,120.92**.

2. INSTRUCTION, SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY (ALL TABS REVIEWED)

I reviewed **every tab** of the updated workbook:

- Summary
- Payroll Analysis 25-26
- Balances Review
- Reserve Review
- Budget Review
- 2022-23 Review
- 2023-2024 Review
- 2024-2025 Review
- Three Year Comparison
- Three Year – REMOVE CIL
- Balance and Reserve Rec
- CIL
- Actual Position
- Staff Salary Projecs 26-27
- 2026-2027 Estimates
- 26-27 Budget Amendments

Methodology applied:

- Reconstructed trend and year performance from Budget Review and Review tabs
- Cross-checked reserve trajectory between Reserve Review and Balance/Reserve Rec
- Assessed cash liquidity through Actual Position tab
- Tested sustainability using JPAG benchmark calculations embedded in workbook
- Assessed control environment via evidence statements in Balance & Reserve Rec, and internal consistency across tabs
- Extracted and quantified cost drivers via the Three Year Comparison and 2024/25 variance table

3. HIGH-LEVEL FINANCIAL POSITION: ACTUALS, RESERVES, CASH AND RISK

3.1 Financial direction of travel

The Council's financial history shows:

- Two major deficit years: **2022/23 (-£86.6k)** and **2023/24 (-£297.8k)**
- Continued deficit in **2024/25 (-£119.3k)**
- Further deficit trend continuing into **2025/26 (-£31.1k)**

This is not a single anomaly. It indicates **persistent mismatch between income reality, expenditure baseline, and control maturity.**

3.2 Financial resilience has been exhausted

The Council's combined reserves have reduced dramatically:

- Combined reserves 2019/20: **£614,767**
- Combined reserves 2024/25: **£74,703**
- Combined reserves at 2025/26 position: **£43,641.31**

At the same time, General Reserve is negative, meaning the Council is **functionally relying on earmarked amounts and cash timing** rather than holding a true working balance.

3.3 Cash position indicates operating fragility

The updated Actual Position tab shows that at 24.02.2026:

- cash **£37,675.77** against near-term outflows **£55,280.372**, creating a deficit **£17,604.602.**

The Council is therefore operating with **little or no cash buffer**, relying on the timing of precept inflows.

4. YEAR-BY-YEAR FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE (UPDATED)

4.1 2022/23 (2022-23 Review tab)

- Actual income: **£668,996.85**
- Actual expenditure: **£755,570.77**
- Actual net position: **-£86,573.92**

Material drivers identified in workbook:

- Café loss: **£29,076**
- High Misc (Admin): **£45,988**
- High Office Maintenance: **£21,787**
- Vehicle Costs (Parks): **£19,477**
- Playground Spend: **£23,432**
- Other Projects net cost: **£18,610**
- Heritage + Church Hall net (approx): **£14,000**
- Tree works: **£5,232**

Analytical conclusion: 2022/23 is a broad-based overspend year. Multiple cost centres exceeded reasonable tolerance, indicating insufficient in-year corrective control.

4.2 2023/24 (2023-2024 Review tab)

- Actual income: **£672,942.21**
- Actual expenditure: **£970,763.80**
- Actual net position: **-£297,821.59**

Sports Pavilion (key quantified driver):

- Total pavilion spend shown: **£232,453.99**
 - Professional fees: **£203,825.21**
 - Misc expenditure: **£23,365.91**
 - Utilities: **£2,958.87**
 - Construction: **£2,304.00**

Additional drivers stated:

- Café loss: **£29,796** (approx, per driver list)
- “Structural parks pressure” and other costs remain ongoing.

Analytical conclusion: This deficit is materially driven by a project/capital-type spike which appears not to have been stress-tested against reserve capacity or supported by a robust affordability statement to Members.

4.3 2024/25 (2024-2025 Review tab)

- Actual income: **£704,594.92**
- Actual expenditure: **£823,846.96**
- Actual net position: **-£119,252.04**

This year is explicitly stated as **not a repeat of 2023/24's pavilion spike**. Instead, it is characterised by **structural overspends across core operational lines**, evidenced by the Budget vs Actual table:

Selected examples (Budget → Actual → Variance):

- Admin Wages: **£142,750 → £181,092 → +£38,342 (Over)**
- Admin Misc: **£6,000 → £33,371 → +£27,372 (Over)**
- Election Costs: **£2,000 → £16,943 → +£14,943 (Over)**
- Admin Electricity: **£6,500 → £18,249 → +£11,749 (Over)**
- Office Maintenance: **£12,000 → £22,373 → +£10,373 (Over)**
- IT Services: **£4,000 → £10,004 → +£6,004 (Over)**
- Parks Wages: **£108,250 → £151,290 → +£43,040 (Over)**
- Parks Trees: **£3,000 → £16,546 → +£13,546 (Over)**
- Parks Vehicles: **£2,000 → £10,470 → +£8,470 (Over)**
- Allotments Repairs: **£250 → £9,000 → +£8,750 (Over)**
- Café Total: **£37,870 → £59,528 → +£21,658 (Over)**

Analytical conclusion: 2024/25 evidences weak budget construction and weak in-year budgetary control, with repeated overspends in wages, utilities, maintenance, and loss-making services.

4.4 2025/26 (Budget Review and Balance/Reserve Rec tabs)

- Actual income: **£658,655.48**
- Actual expenditure: **£689,716.87**
- Actual net position: **-£31,061.39**

Analytical conclusion: While smaller than prior years, this continues the deficit trajectory and is occurring while General Reserve is already negative. Even “smaller deficits” are now high risk because the working balance is exhausted.

5. BALANCE SHEET, AGAR LINKAGE, AND PHYSICAL CASH (Balances Review tab)

The Balances Review tab provides:

- Total balances/reserves at YE and linkage to AGAR continuity (Box 1/Box 7)
- Bank balances per reconciliation (Box 8 alignment)

Key figures shown:

- 2020/21 total balances/reserves: **£550,357**
- 2021/22: **£578,350**
- 2022/23: **£491,776**
- 2023/24: **£193,955**
- 2024/25: **£74,702** (note tab shows 74,702/74,703 rounding)

Physical cash at YE via bank balances per reconciliation:

- 2022/23: **£474,143.84**
- 2023/24: **£171,133.96**
- 2024/25: **£62,731.01**

Analytical conclusion: The year-end cash position has collapsed alongside reserves, confirming the financial deterioration is not theoretical—it is reflected in physical liquidity.

6. LEDGER CONTINUITY AND OVERSTATEMENT RISK (UPDATED)

The Balance and Reserve Rec tab explicitly states:

“Scribe accounts do not reconcile and will need re-working to ensure balances are correctly brought forward.”

This aligns with your notion that brought-forward balances were not correctly carried for two years, creating confusion and overstatement of position in reports derived from incorrect opening balances.

Quantified risk basis:

- If deficits were not correctly brought forward and therefore not properly reflected in opening positions, the Council’s “apparent” financial headroom could be materially overstated.

This is not a minor posting issue; it impacts:

- Reserve reporting integrity
- Budget monitoring comparatives
- Members’ understanding of affordability
- Audit confidence in continuity

7. BANK RECONCILIATIONS: ASSURANCE GAPS AND CONTROL IMPACT

You have noted, and the workbook narrative supports, that:

- Bank reconciliations were “evidenced as being done” but were not present for all accounts within Scribe.

Forensic control conclusion:

Where reconciliation packs are missing, Council cannot demonstrate:

- completeness of reconciliation across all accounts,
- existence of a monthly “close discipline”,
- independent review and sign-off,
- that ledger bank balances equal bank statement balances.

This does not imply fraud; it implies **insufficient internal control assurance**, which increases governance and audit exposure.

8. RESERVES INTEGRITY: GENERAL RESERVE, EMR AND SUSTAINABILITY (UPDATED)

8.1 General Reserve review (Reserve Review tab)

- 31.03.2020: **£186,404**
- 31.03.2021: **£127,995**
- 31.03.2022: **£87,421**
- 31.03.2023: **£56,156**
- 31.03.2024: **£35,161**
- 31.03.2025: **-£53,771**
- 31.03.2026: **-£84,832.69**

8.2 EMR review (Reserve Review tab)

- 31.03.2024: **£158,794**
- 31.03.2025: **£128,474**
- 31.03.2026: **£128,474**

8.3 Combined reserves at 31.03.2026 (Balance and Reserve Rec)

- GR **-£84,832.69**
- EMR **£128,474**
- Combined **£43,641.31**

8.4 Proper practice benchmark (Balance and Reserve Rec)

Using precept **£680,610**:

- Monthly: **£56,717.50**
- Minimum GR (3 months): **£170,152.50**
- Funding required to reach minimum (if EMR transferred): **£126,511.19**

Analytical conclusion: The Council is currently operating materially below recommended resilience and must adopt a multi-year reserve rebuilding strategy with disciplined surplus generation.

9. THREE-YEAR COST DRIVERS (Three Year Comparison tab)

9.1 Whole Council expenditure trend

- 2022/23: **£755,570.77**
- 2023/24: **£970,763.80** (increase **£215,193.03**, +28.5%)
- 2024/25: **£823,846.96** (decrease **£146,916.84**, -15.1% vs 23/24 but still well above 22/23)

Interpretation: The Council has not returned to a sustainable base post-pavilion year; expenditure remains structurally elevated.

9.2 Administration cost growth

Admin totals:

- 2022/23: **£315,693.22**
- 2023/24: **£550,416.23**
- 2024/25: **£549,842.59**

Wages:

- 2022/23: **£158,935.66**
- 2023/24: **£166,021.25**
- 2024/25: **£181,092.46**

Utilities (gas+electric):

- 2022/23: **£16,619.77**
- 2023/24: **£23,886.67**
- 2024/25: **£23,845.71**

Election costs (24/25): **£16,943.21**

Interpretation: Administration has sustained a high cost base; wage growth is material; and utilities/elections have compounded pressure.

9.3 Parks cost growth

Total parks spend:

- 2022/23: **£221,543.31**
- 2023/24: **£208,309.87**
- 2024/25: **£240,335.03**

Parks wages:

- 2022/23: **£118,830.34**
- 2023/24: **£139,884.20**
- 2024/25: **£151,289.52**

Trees:

- 2022/23: **£5,231.67**
- 2023/24: **£6,426.64**
- 2024/25: **£16,545.92**

Vehicles:

- 2022/23: **£19,477.35**
- 2023/24: **£3,640.21**
- 2024/25: **£10,470.32**

Utilities:

- 2022/23: **£8,556.69**
- 2023/24: **£8,495.31**
- 2024/25: **£9,429.49**

Interpretation: Parks wages and tree spend show significant upward pressure requiring stronger in-year control and planned maintenance strategies.

9.4 Sports Pavilion project profile

- 2022/23: **£8,372.71**
- 2023/24: **£235,447.21** (professional fees **£203,825.21**)
- 2024/25: **£7,028.88**

Interpretation: 23/24 was a capital spike year and must be treated as a known structural contributor to reserve depletion.

9.5 Café performance

Income vs expenditure (net loss):

- 2022/23: Income **£18,072.24**, Expenditure **£47,148.54**, Net **-£29,076.30**

- 2023/24: Income **£23,841.59**, Expenditure **£53,637.18**, Net **-£29,795.59**
- 2024/25: Income **£22,211.38**, Expenditure **£59,527.79**, Net **-£37,316.41**

Interpretation: Losses are persistent and worsening. This is a structural service subsidy that must be addressed as part of recovery.

10. PAYROLL FORENSIC REVIEW (Payroll Analysis 25-26 + Staff Salary Projecs 26-27)

10.1 Duplicate fringe inclusion (Payroll Analysis 25-26)

The workbook quantifies duplication over Apr 2025–Feb 2026:

- Gross pay difference: **£203.56**
- Fringe duplication: **£1,147.43**
- Total overpayment: **£1,350.99**

This indicates fringe amounts were included in payroll calculations twice (embedded and additionally paid), consistent with configuration weakness rather than fraud.

10.2 Control implication

A duplication of this nature persisting indicates:

- Absence of monthly gross-to-net verification discipline
- No independent payroll scrutiny/sign-off sufficient to detect duplicate pay elements
- Over-reliance on payroll automation without reconciliation

10.3 Staffing cost context (Staff Salary Projecs 26-27)

The staff projections tab provides:

- Annual staff costs p.a. figure shown: **£265,245.888262** (salaried group)
- Additional staff costs p.a. shown: **£36,681.06** (hourly/non-band notes section)
Indicative combined total reflected by this schedule: **~£301,926.95**

Interpretation: Staffing costs are a key baseline cost and must be fully controlled with robust payroll governance, especially given reserve weakness and rising employment costs.

11. CIL REVIEW (CIL tab)

The CIL tab contains:

- A running balance schedule beginning at **£71,674.78** and showing expenditure items reducing the balance to **-£89.05** (indicating overspend vs that running balance basis).
- A year-on-year receipts/payments table showing cumulative totals of:
 - Receipts: **£531,341.88**
 - Payments: **£456,067**

- o Balance at year end (table total): **£75,274.88**
- A note stating **25/26 expenditure not added** due to constraints.

Forensic conclusion: The CIL presentation indicates inconsistencies between:

- running balance mechanism,
- year-on-year receipt/payment table,
- and recorded/assumed 25/26 movements.

This reinforces the need for:

1. a formal CIL reconciliation exercise (restricted fund ledger), and
2. Council action to regularise any prior misapplication.

Required action (as per your instruction and workbook intent)

Where CIL has been mistakenly applied against revenue expenditure, Council must:

- pass a formal reallocation resolution, and
- ensure the CIL position is corrected in line with the workbook strategy so that the Council does **not** have to replace CIL from General Funds.

This is both a compliance requirement and a financial protection measure.

12. 2026–2027 BUDGET AND FORECAST – DETAILED ANALYTICAL COMMENTARY (UPDATED)

This section is based on:

- **2026–2027 Estimates** tab
- **26–27 Budget Amendments** tab
- supporting reserve benchmark calculations in **Balance and Reserve Rec**
- staffing trajectory in **Staff Salary Projecs 26-27**

12.1 Council-agreed budget position (2026–2027 Estimates)

- Budgeted expenditure 26/27: **£625,610**
- Planned transfer to General Reserve: **£55,000**
- Precept request: **£680,610**

This implies the Council's budget is constructed to create a planned contribution to reserves, **but only if income assumptions perform as expected and expenditure is contained.**

12.2 Locum RFO “required expenditure” view (2026–2027 Estimates)

- RFO estimates expenditure: **£720,993**
- Planned transfer to GR: **£0**
- RFO precept request (if fully funded): **£720,993**

- Difference vs Council budget: **-£40,383**

Interpretation: The updated workbook explicitly identifies a **£40,383** gap between the Council’s adopted expenditure view and the RFO’s risk-adjusted/realistic cost expectation. That gap is the “risk margin” that could materialise through:

- cost inflation,
- baseline pressure from wages, utilities, maintenance, contracts, and loss-making services.

12.3 Cashflow starting position feeding into 2026/27 (2026–2027 Estimates)

The Estimates tab shows:

- Anticipated starting balance (adjusted): **£102,395.398** (NETT as of 01/03/2026 from Actual Position)
- Plus adjusted precept for 25/26: **£663,005.398**
- Adjusted position shown: **£765,400.796**
- Less expenditure vs income: **£720,993**
- Estimated year-end surplus: **£44,407.796** represented by General Reserve

This aligns with the “thin margin” conclusion: even on the RFO scenario, year-end GR would be c. **£44.4k**—far below the minimum benchmark.

12.4 General Reserve benchmark gap remains material (2026–2027 Estimates + Balance and Reserve Rec)

- Minimum GR requirement: **£170,152**
- Estimated GR end of year (RFO model): **£44,407.796**
- Remaining requirement to reach minimum: **£125,744.204** (Estimates tab)

A similar calculation in Balance and Reserve Rec (using combined reserves approach) shows funding required **£126,511.19**—the small difference is attributable to whether the starting point is modelled as end-year GR only or total combined reserves.

12.5 In-year savings measures recommended (26–27 Budget Amendments)

The amendments tab states:

“The Council can afford everything they have budgeted for in 2026–2027, just. This is reliant on all income streams being 100% received, something that has not been achieved historically. The RFO believes it would be financially prudent for the Town Council to make in-year savings.”

Identified savings:

- Removal of RFO/DTC role: **£64,364**
- Trees paused (non-emergency): **£3,000**
- Churchyard wall repairs deferred: **£2,000**

- Reduce non-specific admin misc: **£5,000**

Core savings total: £74,364

Resulting impact:

- Adjusted General Reserve EOY 26/27: **£84,031.08**
- Minimum GR requirement: **£170,152**
- Remaining shortfall: **£86,120.92**

Interpretation: Even after the full suite of “core savings”, the Council would still be operating below minimum GR guidance. This means:

- 2026/27 must be treated as the first year of a **multi-year recovery**, not a “balanced budget year”.

12.6 Structural pressure points highlighted for 26/27 (26–27 Budget Amendments + Three Year Comparison)

- Café continues to operate at near **£37k annual loss** (24/25 net loss **£37,316.41**) and has been loss-making since 2022/23.
- Staffing levels and costs remain high relative to precept, and wage inflation risk remains material.

Overall conclusion on 2026/27:

The Council’s 2026/27 budget is *technically* fundable, but **only with high income performance and strict cost control**. The risk is not hypothetical: the workbook itself demonstrates historic underachievement against “perfect income collection” and repeated overspends against budget lines. Therefore, 2026/27 must be managed as an in-year savings and resilience rebuild year.

13. GOVERNANCE, OVERSIGHT, FINANCIAL AWARENESS AND KEY PERSON DEPENDENCY

Financial data existed and was presented. However, this investigation (updated data included) evidences a **complete failure of effective financial oversight**—both at officer level (financial management discipline) and Member level (challenge, scrutiny, and decision-making based on sustainability).

Evidence of oversight failure includes:

- **Multiple years of deficits** not corrected early enough (cumulative -£534.7k since 2022/23)
- **Reserve collapse** into negative General Reserve territory without timely recovery planning
- **Ledger continuity failure** acknowledged in workbook narrative (balances not correctly brought forward)
- **Bank reconciliation assurance gaps** (absence of evidence for all accounts in Scribe)

- **Payroll configuration error persisting** for an extended period without detection
- **CIL restricted fund misapplication**, indicating misunderstanding of restricted funds governance
- **Loss-making café** continuing and worsening without resolution

This is not about whether reports were produced. It is about whether the organisation had:

- sufficient financial literacy to interpret them,
- sufficient governance discipline to challenge them, and
- sufficient control maturity to respond with corrective action.

Mandatory training (High Priority)

As Locum RFO I recommend **mandatory finance training**:

- Officers: SLCC finance / local council accounting training
- Members: CALC (or equivalent) governance and finance training, particularly for F&GP and budget-setting members

Key person dependency

The persistence of errors (ledger continuity, payroll setup, incomplete reconciliation trail) indicates high key-person dependency and insufficient documented processes. This must be addressed with cross-training, written procedures, and independent review structures.

14. UPDATED RISK MATRIX

Risk	Rating	Why (Updated evidence)
Negative General Reserve / weak resilience	High	GR at -£84,832.69 ; minimum benchmark £170,152.50
Ledger integrity risk	High	Brought-forward balance issues; workbook states Scribe needs re-working
Audit qualification risk	High	Bank rec evidence gaps; CIL treatment; reserves governance risk
Cashflow stress	High	Cash £37,675.77 vs outflows £55,280.372
Structural overspend baseline	High	Admin and parks cost growth; wage pressures; café losses
Governance/awareness weakness	High	Repeated issues not corrected early; limited challenge culture
Key person dependency	High	Controls not institutionalised; errors persisted across years

15. RECOMMENDATIONS AND RECOVERY TIMELINE (UPDATED)

15.1 Immediate (0–30 Days)

1. **Ledger correction and continuity rebuild** in Scribe (brought-forward balances corrected and documented).
2. **Bank reconciliations completed and evidenced** for every account, every month; establish signed reconciliation register.
3. **CIL restricted fund reconciliation** and Council resolution to reallocate/correct treatment in line with workbook strategy to protect General Funds.
4. **Payroll correction**: remove duplicate fringe inclusion; implement monthly gross-to-net verification and independent sign-off.
5. **Issue a corrected reserves report** (GR/EMR/restricted), with clear narrative of sustainability position and benchmark gap.
6. **Stop-gap cash management plan**: given low cash buffer and use of 26/27 funds to support 25/26 by **£17,604.602**, implement immediate cash controls and authorisation discipline.

15.2 Stabilisation (30–90 Days)

7. Implement a **standard monthly finance pack**:
 - cash by account,
 - bank recs for all accounts,
 - budget vs actual with explanations,
 - forecast outturn,
 - reserves movements,
 - 12-month cashflow,
 - sustainability commentary.
8. **Formal in-year savings plan for 2026/27**: adopt the core savings package **£74,364** unless Council approves alternatives delivering equal or greater resilience.
9. **Café review**: options appraisal (reduce loss, redesign, lease out, close) due to persistent net losses (24/25 **£37,316.41**).
10. **Staffing review**: align staffing model to precept scale and rising employment costs, supported by workforce plan.

15.3 Structural Recovery (3–12 Months)

11. Adopt a **3-year reserve rebuilding plan** with annual surplus targets and a clear pathway to minimum GR benchmark.
12. Reduce key-person dependency with documented procedures and cross-training.

13. Commission an **independent internal control review** focused on reconciliation discipline, reserve governance, payroll controls, and reporting.

15.4 Training (High Priority, must commence within 90 days)

14. Mandatory SLCC/CALC finance governance training for officers and Members to address proven literacy gaps and strengthen scrutiny.

16. CONCLUSION (UPDATED)

There is **no evidence of misappropriation** from the workbook review.

However, there is clear evidence of:

- sustained structural deficit,
- collapse of reserves and negative General Reserve,
- acknowledged ledger continuity failure,
- incomplete bank reconciliation audit trail assurance,
- restricted fund (CIL) governance weakness,
- payroll configuration weakness, and
- substantial officer/member oversight and financial awareness deficiency.

This is a governance reset moment. Recovery is achievable—but only through disciplined reform, robust control implementation, and measurable uplift in officer and Member financial literacy and challenge culture.

17. COVERING STATEMENT TO FULL COUNCIL

Members of Full Council,

This report is a forensic review of the Council's financial sustainability and control environment using the updated working blotter data. The findings are serious. They do not point to fraud or misappropriation; they point to sustained governance weakness and an inadequate control framework.

The Council is operating with a negative General Reserve and a combined reserves position that is materially below proper practice benchmarks. Cashflow is fragile, and the Council has already relied on precept timing support by drawing **£17,604.602** from the 2026/27 budget to support 2025/26 cash needs. The 2026/27 budget is *just* affordable only if income streams are fully realised and costs are tightly contained—an assumption not historically achieved.

These issues could not have developed without a lack of effective challenge. Financial reports may have been presented, but they were not sufficiently interrogated, stress-tested, or acted upon in a timely manner. That is a collective governance issue, spanning both officer financial management discipline and Member scrutiny responsibility.

The Council must now adopt the recovery timeline in full, implement in-year savings, rebuild reserves through sustained surpluses, and mandate finance training via SLCC and CALC. Without these steps, the Council remains exposed to continued deterioration and heightened audit scrutiny.

As Locum RFO, I consider decisive action essential.

	Date
Review 1	
Review 2	
Review 3	
Review 4	
Review 5	
Review 6	

S>C Action Plan – 20/03/2026

Section 15.1. Immediate Actions (0-30Days)

Ref:	Actions	By	Verified By	Completion Date	Comments and dated actions	RAG
15.1.1 Ledger correction and continuity rebuild in Scribe (brought-forward balances corrected and documented).						
1a	Reconstruct and correct brought-forward balances in scribe for the affected financial years	Locum RFO	Clerk, Asst Clerk or nominated Cllr	30/04/2026		
1b	Produce a reconciliation statement showing corrected opening balances and cumulative impact	Locum RFO	Clerk FGP Cmtee	30/04/2026		
1c	Report formally to Council confirming ledger integrity restored	Locum RFO	Clerk Full Council	30/04/2026		
15.1.2 Bank reconciliations completed and evidenced for every account, every month; establish signed reconciliation register.						
2a	Reconcile every bank and investment account to statement	Locum RFO	Clerk, Asst Clerk	30/04/2026		

Ledger correction and continuity rebuild in Scribe (brought-forward balances corrected and documented).

				Chair of FGP or nominated Cllr		
2b	Produce signed reconciliation packs for each account	Locum RFO	Clerk FGP Cmtee	30/04/2026		
2c	Introduce monthly reconciliation sign-off by RFO and independent Member (e.g., Chair of FGP).	Locum RFO	Clerk Full Council	30/04/2026		
15.1.3 CIL restricted fund reconciliation						
3a	Propose formal Council resolution reallocating CIL expenditure as per RFO workbook or alternative list agreed by all Cllrs. The Locum RFO recommendation is for a Nil balance on 31/03/2026.	Chair FGP All Cllrs	Clerk Full Council	30/04/2026		
3b	Publish agreed 2025/26 CIL income, expenditure and balance as per regs.	Locum RFO Clerk	Full Council	31/03/2026		
3c	Propose a formal Council Resolution to implement a CIL restricted funds register and dedicated bank account for future compliance with appropriate amendments to Financial Regulations	Chair FGP	Clerk Full Council	26/03/2026		
15.1.4 Payroll correction: remove duplicate fringe inclusion; implement monthly gross-to-net verification and independent sign-off.						

4a	Personnel Committee to discuss the implications of the duplicate fringe payments and resolve how to correct the Sage Payroll Configuration in the best interests of Employees and the Council	Mayor	Clerk Personnel Cmtee	18/03/2026	
4b	Propose a formal resolution regularising staff payroll as per 1.4a and implement the required changes	Mayor Personnel cmtee	Clerk Locum RFO Full Council	30/05/2026	
4c	Implement monthly gross-to-net payroll verification sheet	Locum RFO	Clerk FGP Cmtee	12/04/2026	
4d	Introduce secondary sign-off for payroll summaries	Locum RFO	Clerk FGP Cmtee	12/04/2026	
15.1.5 Issue a corrected reserves report (GR/EMR/restricted), with clear narrative of sustainability position and benchmark gap					
5a	Publish a clear reserves breakdown: General Reserve, Earmarked Reserves, Restricted Funds with appropriate amendments to Financial Regs to embed good practice.	Locum RFO Chair FGP	Clerk Full Council	30/05/2026	Issue a corrected reserves report (GR/EMR/restricted), with clear narrative of sustainability position and benchmark gap

5b	Identify unsupported Earmarked Reserves and either evidence properly or unwind	Locum RFO Clerk	Clerk Full Council	30/04/2026		
15.1.6 Stop-gap cash management plan: given low cash buffer and use of 26/27 funds to support 25/26 by £17,604,602, implement immediate cash controls and authorisation discipline.						
6a	Defer non-essential expenditure	Locum RFO	FGP Cmtee Full Council	30/04/2026	CCTV repair Deferred to 2027 (FGP 05/03/2026)	
6b	Target in-year underspends and transfer budget to contingency to remove the temptation for non-essential spending	Locum RFO	FGP Cmtee Full Council	30/04/2026 ongoing to 31/03/2027		
6c	Amend Financial regulations to include a clause that no major spending decisions are to be taken without a written affordability and reserve impact statement.	Clerk Chair FGP	FGP Cmtee Full Council	31/05/2026		






S>C Action Plan – 20/03/2026

Review 1 ??/??/2026

Section 15.2. Stabilisation (30-90 Days)

Ref:	Actions	By	Verified By	Completion Date	Comments	RAG
15.2.7 Implement a standard monthly finance pack:						
7a	Cash summary by Bank Account	Locum RFO	Clerk, FGP Cmtee	30/04/2026		■
7b	Full bank reconciliation for each account	Locum RFO	Clerk FGP Cmtee	30/04/2026		■
7c	Budget vs Actual with variance explanation	Locum RFO	Clerk FGP Cmtee	30/04/2026		■
7d	Forecast outturn for year end	Locum RFO	Clerk FGP Cmtee	30/04/2026		■
7e	12-month rolling cashflow forecast	Locum RFO	Clerk FGP Cmtee	30/04/2026		■
7f	Report on Reserves Movements	Locum RFO	Clerk FGP Cmtee	30/04/2026		
7g	Sustainability commentary	Locum RFO	Clerk FGP Cmtee	30/04/2026		■

15.2.8 Formal in-year savings plan for 2026/27: adopt the core savings package £74,364 unless Council approves alternatives delivering equal or greater resilience.

		Locum RFO FGP cmtee	Full Council	30/04/2026	Summer entertainments, Hanging Baskets, Christmas lights, Civic reception all cancelled First stage of admin team restructure reduces head count to 2.4FTE	
8a	Implement identified core savings (£74,364) See also 8b.	Locum RFO FGP cmtee	Full Council	30/04/2026	Summer entertainments, Hanging Baskets, Christmas lights, Civic reception all cancelled First stage of admin team restructure reduces head count to 2.4FTE	
8b	Scrutinise administration baseline expenditure growth and identify overspends, cost pressures, poor coding and recommend improvements to the budgeting and monitoring process	Clerk Asst Clerk 2/3 nominated Cllrs	FGP Cmtee Full Council	30/04/2026		
8c	Target in-year underspends and transfer budget to contingency to remove the temptation for non-essential spending	Locum RFO	FGP Cmtee Full Council	30/04/2026		
8d	Review occupancy, hire charges and costs of the halls and sports pitches to see if any improvements in overall income can be achieved.	Asst Clerk Admin Asst 2/3 Cllrs	FGP Cmtee Full Council	30/04/2026		
8e	Open discussions with GCLL about the level of the current management fee for operating the Leisure Centre given its current patronage and how could we work together to raise patronage further and reduce GCLL reliance on the current level of management fee subsidy.	Clerk Chair of RLA	RLA Cmtee Full Council	30/04/2026	RLA asked for meeting	

8f	Initiate a review of the Parks operations to include major tasks undertaken by season, Outside contractors costs, routine costs, forecast emergency costs based on past precedent and staffing	Clerk Senior Groundsman 2/3 nominated Cllrs	FGP Cmtee Full Council	30/06/2026		
15.2.9 Café review: options appraisal (reduce loss, redesign, lease out, close) due to persistent net losses (24/25 £37,316.41).						
9a	Initiate an urgent review of the Old Fire Station Café operation to include an analysis of patronage, sales, cost of sales/profit margins, fixed costs and staffing.	Asst Clerk	Locum RFO Full Council	30/05/2026		
9b	Use data from 9a to model café operation under different operating models as per outline given by RFO	Asst Clerk RFO 2/3 Cllrs	FGP Cmtee Full Council	30/06/2026		
9c	Initiate outcomes of the review	Clerk Asst Clerk	Full Council	30/07/2026		
15.2.10 Staffing review: align staffing model to precept scale and rising employment costs, supported by workforce plan.						
10a	Personnel Cmtee to review admin staffing structure relative to required tasks, precept scale and rising employment costs	Mayor Personnel cmtee	Full Council	30/04/2026	Personnel Cmtee meeting 18/03	
10b	Personnel Cmtee to review staff salaries and London Fringe payments with reference to NJC scales and similar jobs in neighbouring councils	Mayor Personnel cmtee	Full Council	30/04/2026	Personnel Cmtee meeting 18/03	
10c	Personnel Cmtee to review outcomes of Café, Halls Hire, Sporting Hire and Parks Reviews to inform future staffing structure	Mayor Personnel cmtee	Full Council	30/09/2026		

This page is intentionally left blank.

S>C Action Plan – 20/032026

Review 1 ??/??/2026

Section 15.3. Structural Recovery (3-12 Months)

15.3.12 Reduce Key Person Dependency with documented procedure and cross training					
12a	Cross-train staff on Scribe, payroll and reconciliation process	Locum RFO Clerk, Asst Clerk Admin Asst	Mayor Deputy Mayor	30/09/2026	
12b	Document all financial procedures	Locum RFO	Clerk FGP Cmtee	30/09/2026	
12c	Ensure at least two officers understand core financial system structure	Locum RFO Clerk Asst Clerk	Mayor Deputy mayor	30/09/2026	
15.3.13 Commission an Independent Internal Control Review focused on reconciliation discipline, reserve governance, payroll controls, and reporting.					
13a	To appoint a suitably qualified external person to review the financial control environment focussing on governance maturity rather than tick box compliance	Clerk Mayor	Full Council	31/12/2026	

This page is intentionally left blank.

S>C Action Plan – 20/03/2026

Section 15.4. Training (High Priority, must commence within 90 days)

Date
Review 1
Review 2
Review 3
Review 4
Review 5
Review 6

Ref:	Actions	By	Verified By	Completion Date	Comments and dated actions	RAG
15.4.14 Training (High Priority, must commence within 90 days)						
14a	All relevant officers to complete SLCC financial management training	Clerk Asst Clerk Admin Asst	Mayor Full Council	30/06/2026		Red
14b	All Members (especially FGP) to undertake SLCC or CALC financial governance training	Clerk Mayor	Full Council	30/06/2026	4 sessions made available March/April	Yellow
14c	Review all committees terms of reference and standard agendas to embed financial literacy expectations within procedures.	Clerk Mayor	Full Council	30/06/2026		Red

This page is intentionally left blank.



IN COLLABORATION WITH SLCC, NALC, OYW, COUNTY ASSOCIATIONS

UNIT 4

Recruitment Manual – step by step guide

PREPARING THE JOB DESCRIPTION

4.1 Why does the Council need to prepare a job description?

No job can be filled successfully unless it has been accurately defined and such clarity is just as important for candidates as for the Council - not only as part of the recruitment process but to help monitor performance after appointment.

Whilst it is not a legal requirement, an accurate, precise and up-to-date job description is therefore essential for sound recruitment. It is the starting point in defining the scope of the work and enables a person specification, the advert, a short-listing matrix and selection assessment criteria, all of which are discussed in this Manual, to be drawn up and the remainder of a successful selection process to be undertaken. This also reduces the possibility of a dispute arising later on during the employment about what is expected of the postholder.

In addition, it will be key as part of the implementation of the Council's performance management or appraisal arrangements with the Clerk to the Council once they are in post.

The job description for the Clerk to the Council should therefore include in a structured manner the scope and purpose of the job, the main duties and responsibilities and give the potential candidate a clear indication of how the job fits into the Council and the relationships attached to it.

4.2 What should be included in the job description?

When revising or drawing up a new job description the Council should remember that it is not a description of the person performing the role but an outline summary of the job and a list of the main duties and responsibilities.

This is a key document in the recruitment process and will form part of any subsequent contract of employment and subsequently as part of the performance management process.

The creation of a new job needs a proper job description to be prepared and when a job becomes vacant it offers a good opportunity to look at the duties and responsibilities and

see whether the existing job description needs to be updated to reflect changes in the role.

The following operational and legal considerations should be taken into account when preparing a job description:-

- do not draft it to recruit an identical replacement to the person leaving or with a certain person in mind
- remember that it is not intended to be an exhaustive list of tasks but needs to be sufficiently comprehensive to describe the key job duties and responsibilities
- ensure the wording is accurate and the duties reasonable in relation to the intended status, rate of pay etc
- do not restrict the wording too much and use broader language
- do not use jargon, abbreviations or technical data unless necessary and above all make it understandable and achievable
- build in flexibility with a "such other duties etc" clause
- ensure that the job description does not discriminate directly or indirectly against any potential applicant or unnecessarily restrict suitable candidates applying, unless there is a justifiable reason for this.

Job descriptions of existing staff should be reviewed:-

- periodically with the post holder and updated in agreement with them particularly as part of a performance management or appraisal scheme
- when a change occurs to responsibilities
- when a vacancy occurs and prior to commencing recruitment

Job descriptions, once agreed, become part of the offer of employment and then can be included as an Appendix to the Statement of Main Terms and Conditions of Employment or at least referred to it within that document.

The following guidance is offered when preparing a new job description for the key headings and information required are as follows:-

- **Job Title**
- **Location** – outline whether home-working or office-based or a flexible mix
- **Responsible to** – reporting structure
- **Responsible for** - list the staff, premises and resources for which the job is responsible including where required for the level of budget involved
- **Job Purpose** - what is the purpose of the job and how is this purpose meant to be achieved? State the objectives of the job in concise, clear and unambiguous terms.
- **Duties and Responsibilities** - list the key duties and responsibilities of the job
- **Special Terms of Employment** – for example evening meeting attendance
- **The number of hours per week** – Councils must be careful to ensure that sufficient hours are contracted to fully cover all the requirements and responsibilities of the

role, taking into consideration the findings of the report "Clerk's working hours", **Appendix 5**. Please note, the recommendations on hours were based on a 2012 survey; councils should consider adding at least 15% to the previously recommended hours.

- **Date** - the date from which the job description is effective

4.3 Specimen Job Descriptions

Alternative specimen job descriptions for the post of Clerk to the Council and Responsible Financial Officer follow at **Appendix 4 (a)** and **Appendix 4 (b)** which may be customised and adapted to suit your Council's circumstances. A specimen job description is attached at **Appendix 4 (c)**.

As the same principles apply to any job and so a specimen blank pro forma job description is enclosed at **Appendix 4 (d)**.

4.4 Further Help

If you require training, help or any other assistance with your recruitment and selection processes or have any questions on anything in the Recruitment Manual please email your county association.

Updated September 2022

This page is intentionally left blank.

DRAFT



Appendix 4 (a) - Specimen job description for the post of Clerk to the Council and Responsible Financial Officer

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX COUNCIL

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Clerk to the Council and Responsible Financial Officer
Responsible to: Full Council
Responsible for: All Council staff, property and financial resources
Employment Status: Full-time (37 hours per week) including some evening work
Salary scale: Enter salary range

Job Purpose

1. To ensure that the Council's civic and administrative functions and services are performed professionally and in accordance with all relevant statutory obligations.
2. To carry out all the functions required by law of a local authority's Proper Officer in a timely manner and to issue all statutory notifications.
3. To ensure that the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations are correctly observed and implemented.
4. To manage the Council's employees effectively and to be the Council's principal adviser on policy matters, to be responsible for all aspects of Health and Safety, manage the provision of Council services, buildings, land and resources and to promote the Council.
5. To be responsible for ensuring that the instructions of the Council in connection with its function as a Local Council are carried out and to produce all the information required for making effective decisions and to implement constructively all decisions.

Duties and Responsibilities

1. To ensure that statutory and other provisions and notices governing or affecting the running of the Council are observed and to advise the Councillors on all meeting procedures and regulations.
2. To be the Council's principal adviser on all policy issues, to keep services and activities under continuous review and to identify, plan and implement improvements in quality, efficiency and effectiveness.
3. To keep up to date with changes in legislation and forthcoming changes and advise the Council accordingly ensuring that all Council policies and procedures meet statutory requirements.
4. To prepare and publish, in consultation with appropriate Members of the Council, agendas for meetings of the Council and Committees in accordance with all statutory

DRAFT

- requirements and prepare minutes for approval, other than where such duties have been delegated to another Officer.
5. To ensure that all meetings of the Council and all meetings of its Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Parties are clerked, attending personally other than where such duties have been delegated to another Officer, and to maintain Councillor's attendance records.
 6. To action all necessary and appropriate correspondence and documents on behalf of the Council as a result of the instructions, or the known policy of, the Council or, when appropriate, bring relevant items to the attention of the Council.
 7. To sign, seal and deliver any agreements, contracts, conveyances, licences, consents, approvals etc on behalf of the Council. To ensure the Council's planning obligations are met.
 8. To provide general advice to the Council on the budget preparation process and ensure that all Management Reports are presented to the Council and the statutory External Audit requirements are completed each year.
 9. To ensure that Council's budget is prepared and balanced and accounts raised and invoices paid and prepare records for audit purposes and VAT.
 10. To prepare and publish the Council's Annual Report.
 11. To study reports and other data on activities of the Council and on matters bearing on those activities and where appropriate, to discuss such matters with consultants and specialists in particular fields and to produce reports for circulation and discussion by the Council.
 12. To head the Council's paid service and manage all other members of staff in keeping with the policies of the Council and employment law and to ensure they perform to expected standards.
 13. To arrange and/or undertake staff annual performance appraisals or reviews and deal with any redundancy, disciplinary, capability or grievance issues in accordance with the Council's policies and procedures.
 14. To undertake all necessary activities in connection with the management of salaries, conditions of employment and work of other staff.
 15. To apply the principles of equality and equal opportunities as embodied in the Council's policies and practices in order to promote equality of opportunity and treatment and the appropriate attitude and behaviour for all employees.
 16. To monitor the implemented policies of the Council to ensure they are achieving the desired result and where appropriate suggest modifications.

DRAFT

17. To be responsible for the management, maintenance and use of all the Council's properties and facilities, whether through direct management or through contracts, agreements or partnerships with other parties or providers.
18. To act as the official representative of the Council at meetings of other relevant organisations as required.
19. To issue notices and prepare agendas and minutes for the Annual Parish Meeting, attend the Annual Parish Meeting and to implement the decisions made by the Council.
20. To maintain effective and positive press and public relations and prepare, in consultation with key Councillors, press releases about the activities of, or decisions of, the Council.
21. To take appropriate public relations action to enhance the profile and image of the Council and promote and protect the views/interest of the Council with all relevant external organisations or individuals.
22. To develop effective liaison and an effective working partnership with other relevant City/District/Borough/County Councils/Unitary Authorities, other public authorities, statutory and voluntary bodies and other agencies as the Council's representative, to ensure that the Council plays a full and effective role in issues affecting the area.
23. To work to improve, develop and up-date the Council's website.
24. To lead the development and publication of the Parish Plan and produce a rolling business plan, as required.
25. To have an understanding of planning and development issues as they affect the Council area, in particular Neighbourhood Plans, the Local Development Plan, the Local Strategic Partnership, economic strategies and the Emergency and Resilience Plan and advise Councillors accordingly.
26. To ensure the casual vacancy process is followed when a Councillor vacancy arises. To explain the requirements of Ordinary Elections to all Councillors and undertake publicity for recruitment.
27. To ensure that the Council's obligations for financial risk assessment and insurance are properly met and that health and safety obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act and other related legislation are met.
28. To be the principal adviser to the Council on matters of ceremony, civic protocol, and develop relevant cultural, community and commercial links.
29. To make appropriate arrangements for civic functions and occasions and attend the Council on any ceremonial occasions.
30. To attend training courses or seminars on the work and role of the Clerk and the Council's activities as required by the Council.

31. To obtain the Certificate in Local Council Administration (if not already gained) as a minimum requirement for effectiveness in the role.
32. To manage the arrangements to comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General data Protection Regulations 2018.

Duties and Responsibilities: Responsible Financial Officer

1. As the Council's Responsible Financial Officer to be responsible for all financial procedures and records, and the careful administration of its finances, in compliance with all statutory obligations or other laws, provisions and notices governing or affecting the running of the Council including:
 - (a) being responsible as and carry out all the functions required by law of the Council's Responsible Financial Officer under S151 of the Local Government Act 1972 for all financial matters and records of the Council;
 - (b) acting as the Council's principal adviser on financial matters, and to be responsible for the careful administration of the Council's finances, and the proper application and maintenance of the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations;
 - (c) ensuring that the Council's finances are effectively managed and monitored, and to advise the Council on its financial forward plan, strategy and policies;
 - (d) advising the Council and its Committees on and prepare the annual budget estimates of income and expenditure for revenue services, the capital budget programme and annual Precept requirements;
 - (e) monitoring and managing the Council's budget expenditure and income, and to provide the Council and Committees with a regular statement of income and expenditure under each heading in the approved annual revenue and capital budgets;
 - (f) ensuring that all Management Reports are reported to the Council, and the statutory internal and external audit requirements are undertaken and completed each year, and any consequential action taken;
 - (g) issuing and reporting on invoices for goods and services to be paid for by the Council, and to ensure such accounts are met and that: -
 - all necessary activities in connection with the management and payment of salaries and expenses are administered accurately and legally
 - all payments made to the Council are recorded, any necessary receipts issued, all cash and cheques received banked, all associated records kept and any queries are investigated
 - invoices are prepared and issued on behalf of the Council for goods and services to ensure payment is received
 - all necessary records in connection with the above are maintained
 - all necessary administration and banking procedures are arranged to ensure that all full- and part-time staff wages and salaries are paid
 - petty cash accounts are operated properly, and all associated records of purchases are maintained
 - all relevant rents or charges are collected for relevant Council services and facilities
 - all necessary Revenue and Customs, VAT, SSP and pension financial returns and/or payments are completed and dispatched on time

- records, returns and public notices for the annual audit are prepared and the necessary public notices displayed
- appropriate financial IT systems are in place and operated securely;
- (h) monitoring and ensuring that the Council's accounts are controlled, and the Council is informed of the ongoing financial situation;
- (i) ensuring all necessary records are prepared for audit and VAT purposes;
- (j) ensuring that the Council's obligations for financial risk management, including risk assessments, are properly met and where necessary risks are properly insured;
- (k) ensuring that adequate financial security, and internal financial and accounting controls, are in place and periodically reviewed, and the accounting records of the Council are maintained and kept up to date in accordance with proper practices;
- (l) ensuring that an annual equipment inventory and asset register are in place;
- (m) advising the Council on and assist in the raising of funds by way of grants and sponsorship etc by following the necessary consultations and processes.
- (n) ensuring that all surplus Council funds are invested securely and income maximized;
- (o) to ensure that the Bribery Action requirements are complied with.

General Duties

1. To continue to acquire the necessary professional knowledge required for the efficient management of the affairs of the Council and to attend training courses or seminars on the work and role of the Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer and the Council's activities as required by the Council.
2. To attend the Conference of the National Association of Local Councils, Society of Local Council Clerks, and other relevant bodies, as a representative of the Council as required.
3. To undertake such other duties commensurate with the level of the post and job purpose as required by the Council from time to time.

DRAFT

This page is intentionally left blank.



Appendix 4 (b) - Specimen alternative job description for the post of Clerk to the Council and Responsible Financial Officer

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX COUNCIL

JOB DESCRIPTION

Key Terms

Job Title:	Clerk to the Council and Responsible Financial Officer
Responsible to:	Full Council
Responsible for:	All Council staff, property and financial resources
Employment Status:	Full-time (37 hours per week) including some evening work
Salary scale:	Enter salary range

Job Purpose

As Head of the Paid Service to develop and manage policy, strategy and operations across the Council's services by working with Councillors, external bodies and staff and to carry out functions required by law as the Council's Proper Officer whilst providing inspirational leadership to all Council staff and seeking opportunities to develop the Council's services and facilities to meet the needs of the community.

Duties and Responsibilities: Clerk

In compliance with all statutory obligations or other laws, provisions and notices governing or affecting the running of the Council:-

1. To carry out all the functions required by law as the Proper Officer of the Council, and in particular to serve or issue all the statutory notifications required of a Local Authority's Proper Officer in a timely manner, including:-
 - (a) ensuring that all meetings of the Council and of its Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Parties are clerked and minutes approved, attending personally other than where such duties have been delegated to another Officer, and maintaining Councillors' attendance records;
 - (b) understanding planning and development issues as they affect the Council, and ensuring the Council's planning application obligations are met;
 - (c) ensuring the confidentiality of those Council matters which are not in the public domain to comply with all relevant law;
 - (d) preparing and publishing the Council's Annual Report;
 - (e) taking appropriate action to ensure that all Council elections are arranged and held successfully;
 - (f) ensuring that all health and safety obligations required by the Health and Safety at Work Act and other related legislation are met and all necessary risk assessments are undertaken.
2. To advise the Council on, and assist in the formation of, all necessary procedures and policies to be followed in respect of the Council's activities, and in particular to produce all the information required for the Council to make effective decisions,

including:-

- (a) being the Council's principal adviser on all policy issues, including keeping up to date with current and forthcoming changes in legislation, advising the Council accordingly, and ensuring that all Council policies and procedures meet statutory requirements.
 - (b) receiving, issuing and drawing to the attention of the Council all correspondence and documents relevant to the activities, instructions or policies of the Council;
 - (c) evaluating reports and other data relating to the activities of the Council, drawing up proposals and preparing reports for consideration by the Council (where appropriate drawing on external expertise), and advising on both the practicability and likely effects of the proposed courses of action;
 - (d) ensuring that, in consultation with appropriate Councillors, agendas for meetings of the Council and Committees are prepared and published;
 - (e) being the principal adviser to the Council on matters of ceremony and civic protocol, making appropriate arrangements for civic and/or ceremonial functions and occasions, and attending such occasions to support the Chair of Council.
3. To record and ensure the implementation of the instructions of the Council in connection with its function as a Local Council, in accordance with its policies, including:-
- (a) monitoring the implementation of the policies of the Council to ensure they are achieving the desired result and where appropriate suggesting modifications;
 - (b) undertaking all necessary actions required by the Neighbourhood Plan and similar exercises affecting the Council, including all necessary consultations;
 - (c) organising and managing complex Parish Council projects, including arranging all necessary actions including consultations, communications, and legal and technical requirements to achieve the objectives required by the Council;
 - (d) applying the principles of equality and equal opportunities as embodied in the Council's policies, in order to promote equality of opportunity and treatment, the appropriate attitude and behaviour of its employees.
4. To be accountable to the Council for the effective management of all its resources and staff, and to ensure that the Council's civic and administrative functions and services are performed professionally, reporting to the Council as and when required, including:-
- (a) managing the Council's business planning process effectively including workforce planning;
 - (b) keeping services and activities under continuous review, and identifying, planning and implementing improvements in quality, efficiency and effectiveness;
 - (c) heading the Council's paid service, and supervising all staff to ensure they perform to expected standards in keeping with the policies of the Council and within employment law and the Equality Act 2010;
 - (d) Undertaking all necessary activities in connection with the conditions of employment and work of the staff, including undertaking all staff annual performance appraisals to develop them into an effective and cohesive team.
 - (e) being responsible for the management, maintenance, cleanliness, use and security of all the Council's properties and facilities, whether through direct management or through contracts, agreements or partnerships with other parties

- or providers;
- (f) instigate and manage disciplinary, redundancy, capability and grievance policy and procedures reporting to the relevant Committee/Sub-committee as required;
 - (g) ensuring that the Council's IT systems and hardware is sufficient, up-to-date and secure, and kept under review for operational effectiveness;
 - (h) ensuring that the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Act 2018 are complied with;
 - (i) maintaining such records and systems as are necessary for the effective administration of the affairs of the Council;
 - (j) producing and maintaining all deeds, leases, contracts, conveyances, licences and other legal or confidential documents, and ensuring that they are kept in a safe and secure manner.
5. To represent the Council on and to appropriate external bodies, and to ensure effective and mutually beneficial relations with Parishioners and others, including:-
- (a) acting as the official representative of the Council at relevant meetings of other relevant organisations as required;
 - (b) attending meetings as required and developing effective working partnerships with other relevant Local Authorities, other public, statutory and voluntary bodies, and other agencies, and ensuring that the Council plays an informed and effective role in local issues;
 - (c) developing relevant cultural, community and commercial links;
 - (d) promoting the Council through its website and ensuring that the information is regularly and accurately updated, and producing and issuing the Council's periodic newsletter or other communications to the agreed deadlines;
 - (e) issuing notices and preparing agendas and minutes for the Annual Parish Meeting and attending such assemblies;
 - (f) Maintaining effective and positive press and public relations and preparing and issuing press releases and other communications (mindful of potential liability and litigation, and in consultation with the Chair of the Council) about the Council's activities and/or decisions.

Duties and Responsibilities: Responsible Financial Officer

1. As the Council's Responsible Financial Officer to be responsible for all financial procedures and records, and the careful administration of its finances, in compliance with all statutory obligations or other laws, provisions and notices governing or affecting the running of the Council including:
- (a) being responsible as and carry out all the functions required by law of the Council's Responsible Financial Officer under S151 of the Local Government Act 1972 for all financial matters and records of the Council;
 - (b) acting as the Council's principal adviser on financial matters, and to be responsible for the careful administration of the Council's finances, and the proper application and maintenance of the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations;
 - (c) ensuring that the Council's finances are effectively managed and monitored, and to advise the Council on its financial forward plan, strategy and policies;
 - (d) advising the Council and its Committees on and prepare the annual budget estimates of income and expenditure for revenue services, the capital budget

- programme and annual Precept requirements;
- (e) monitoring and managing the Council's budget expenditure and income, and to provide the Council and Committees with a regular statement of income and expenditure under each heading in the approved annual revenue and capital budgets;
 - (f) ensuring that all Management Reports are reported to the Council, and the statutory internal and external audit requirements are undertaken and completed each year, and any consequential action taken;
 - (g) issuing and reporting on invoices for goods and services to be paid for by the Council, and to ensure such accounts are met and that: -
 - (h) all necessary activities in connection with the management and payment of salaries and expenses are administered accurately and legally
 - (i) all payments made to the Council are recorded, any necessary receipts issued, all cash and cheques received banked, all associated records kept and any queries are investigated
 - (j) invoices are prepared and issued on behalf of the Council for goods and services to ensure payment is received
 - (k) all necessary records in connection with the above are maintained
 - (l) all necessary administration and banking procedures are arranged to ensure that all full- and part-time staff wages and salaries are paid
 - (m) petty cash accounts are operated properly, and all associated records of purchases are maintained
 - (n) all relevant rents or charges are collected for relevant Council services and facilities
 - (o) all necessary Revenue and Customs, VAT, SSP and pension financial returns and/or payments are completed and dispatched on time
 - (p) records, returns and public notices for the annual audit are prepared and the necessary public notices displayed
 - (q) appropriate financial IT systems are in place and operated securely;
 - (r) monitoring and ensuring that the Council's accounts are controlled, and the Council informed of the ongoing financial situation;
 - (s) ensuring all necessary records are prepared for audit and VAT purposes;
 - (t) ensuring that the Council's obligations for financial risk management, including risk assessments, are properly met and where necessary risks are properly insured;
 - (u) ensuring that adequate financial security, and internal financial and accounting controls, are in place and periodically reviewed, and the accounting records of the Council are maintained and kept up to date in accordance with proper practices;
 - (v) ensuring that an annual equipment inventory and asset register are in place;
 - (w) advising the Council on and assist in the raising of funds by way of grants and sponsorship etc by following the necessary consultations and processes.
 - (x) ensuring that all surplus Council funds are invested securely and income maximized;
 - (y) ensuring that the requirements of the Bribery Act are complied with.

General Duties

1. To continue to acquire the necessary professional knowledge required for the efficient management of the affairs of the Council and to attend training courses or seminars on the work and role of the Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer and the

DRAFT

Council's activities as required by the Council.

2. To attend the Conference of the National Association of Local Councils, Society of Local Council Clerks, and other relevant bodies, as a representative of the Council as required.
3. To undertake such other duties commensurate with the level of the post and job purpose as required by the Council from time to time.

DRAFT

This page is intentionally left blank.

Listed below are the **personal attributes** required to fulfil the duties listed in the Job Description.

Essential Personal Attributes	Desirable Personal Attributes
<p>Qualification & experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Must hold the Certificate in Local Council Administration or be prepared to work towards obtaining it on appointment within 1 year of commencement. <input type="checkbox"/> At least 5 GCSE's at Grade C or above or equivalent (inc. English & maths) <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of policy and strategy advice and development. <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant organisational and administrative experience in a structured environment. <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership and staff management experience. <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrable experience of formal Committee work, agenda preparation and minute taking. <input type="checkbox"/> Experience of budget setting, monitoring processes, controls and financial management reports. <input type="checkbox"/> Successful implementation of equality and performance management systems. <input type="checkbox"/> Project management experience. <input type="checkbox"/> A high level of IT skills – MS Office, Excel and Windows packages <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic financial management experience in a complex environment. <input type="checkbox"/> Sound budget preparation, management and financial control systems experience. <input type="checkbox"/> Experience of financial forward planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Educated to degree or HND level <input type="checkbox"/> CiLCA or the achievement of the qualification as soon as practicable - registration within an year <input type="checkbox"/> Previous experience of working for local authority or similar body. <input type="checkbox"/> Experience of dealing with the public and working on own initiative. <input type="checkbox"/> Experience of Committee work or similar.
<p>Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge of local government responsibilities, financial systems and procedures. <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge of governance, operational and legal and financial framework in which the Council operates including local authority planning procedures. <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge of employment and health and safety law and data protection. <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge of relevant accounting procedures and software. <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge of budget setting, audit and monitoring processes and financial management reports. <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge of insurance procedures and financial risk assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Working knowledge of accounts and payroll systems and procedures and computer packages. <input type="checkbox"/> Implementation of financial systems and controls to prevent bribery and corruption. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge of local area. <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge and understanding of importance of good public relations and how to raise the Council's profile in the community. <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge of the operating environment of the Council.

DRAFT

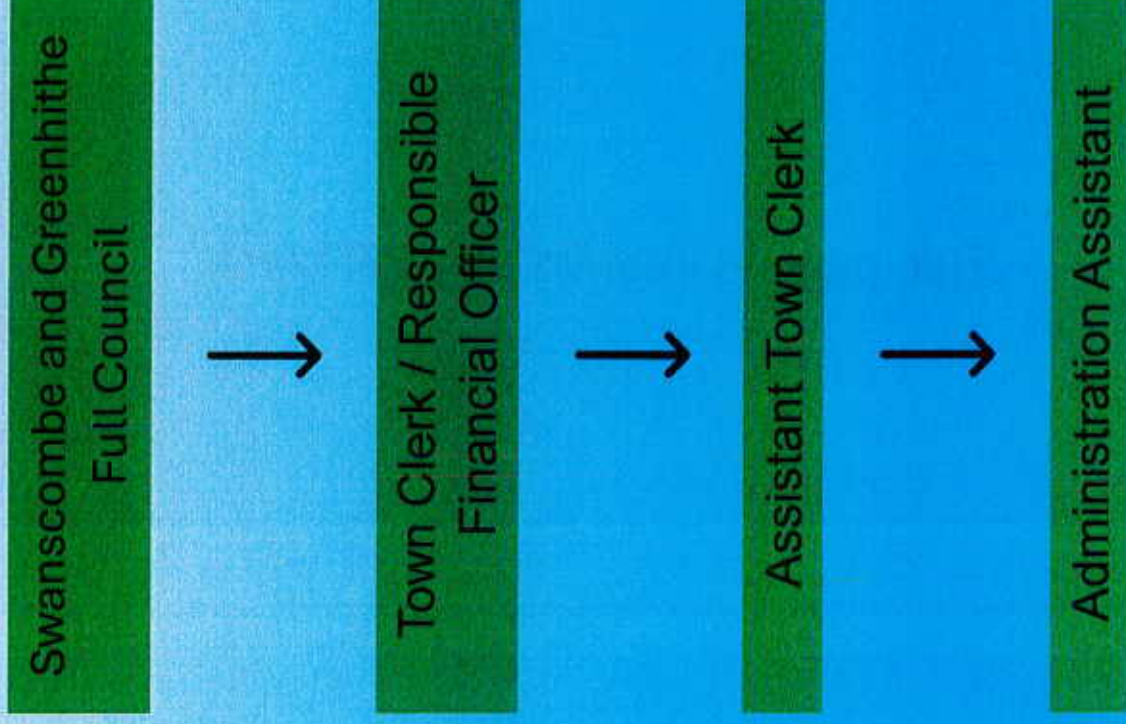
Listed below are the **personal attributes** required to fulfil the duties listed in the Job Description.

<p>Qualities & Attributes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Self-reliant and self-motivated with the drive, determination and initiative to achieve results and motivate others with minimal supervision. <input type="checkbox"/> Flexible, pro-active and hands on approach to tasks. <input type="checkbox"/> Supportive – demonstrating loyalty and commitment to the organisation and staff in past employment. <input type="checkbox"/> Trustworthy with confidential information. <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to demonstrate tact and diplomacy. <input type="checkbox"/> Community focussed. <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to develop and maintain good relationships with staff, councillors, external bodies, contractors and the public. <input type="checkbox"/> Commitment to the delivery of quality service. <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrable ability to work as part of a team. <input type="checkbox"/> Experience of Payroll and accounting system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ability and enthusiasm to adapt to change. <input type="checkbox"/> Enthusiastic with innovative qualities. <input type="checkbox"/> Business perspective and acumen. <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to interpret political drivers.
<p>Skills & Abilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to communicate effectively with others at all levels both internally and externally. <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent written and oral communication and presentational skills. <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to form and maintain sound working relationships. <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic level organisational and administrative skills. <input type="checkbox"/> Formal agenda preparation and minute taking skills. <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to produce understandable and concise written reports on complex topics. <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to develop, implement and monitor effective systems and procedures. <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to organise and prioritise own and others work. <input type="checkbox"/> Management skills with ability to monitor performance of others to achieve targets and meet deadlines. <input type="checkbox"/> Be able to show ability to work in a logical manner and to strict deadlines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Articulate speaker in public. <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to develop, implement and monitor effective systems and procedures. <input type="checkbox"/> Good presentational and reporting skills using relevant IT programmes. <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility and ability to respond quickly o situations.
<p>Special Conditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Willingness to work and / or attend Committees and other meetings and functions in the evening. <input type="checkbox"/> Prepared to work varied hours to meet the needs of the post. <input type="checkbox"/> Willingness to undergo training to acquire relevant new skills or knowledge relevant to the job. 	

The post is subject to reference checks and a legal entitlement to be employed in the UK

DRAFT

Swanscombe and Greenhithe Town Council Admin Staff Structure



This page is intentionally left blank.

What is Martyn's Law?

Martyn's Law is designed to encourage public spaces to consider security risks and implement sensible precautions. It applies to venues, events, and locations where the public gathers, such as town halls, community centres, parks, and markets.

The legislation categorises locations and events based on their capacity (including staff):

- Standard Tier (200 - 799 capacity) — Requires basic security measures and staff training. The Security Industry Authority (SIA) must be notified of the premises.
- Enhanced Tier (800+ capacity) — Involves more detailed risk assessments, security protocols, and collaboration with authorities. If an organisation is responsible for the premises, they must assign a senior individual to oversee compliance.

Why is Martyn's Law important?

While the likelihood of a security threat in smaller towns and villages may be low, taking steps to improve awareness and preparedness can make a big difference. This law promotes a proactive approach to safety, ensuring that communities have clear plans in place should the unexpected happen.

Types of venues parish and town councils manage that may be affected

Parish and town councils oversee a range of public spaces that may need to consider Martyn's Law requirements, including:

- Town and village halls — Often used for meetings, events, and community gatherings.
- Community centres — Spaces that regularly host activities and events open to the public.
- Parks and open spaces — Areas used for festivals, fairs, and other large-scale outdoor events.
- Markets — Including farmers' markets, seasonal fairs, and Christmas markets.
- Sports and leisure facilities — Such as playing fields, sports halls, and public gyms.

- Libraries — Places of learning and community engagement with regular visitors.
- Public squares and local landmarks — Locations used for celebrations, vigils, and public gatherings.

How might Martyn's Law affect parish and town councils?

If your parish or town council operates venues or organises events that meet the capacity thresholds, some additional planning and measures may be required. This could include:

- Carrying out risk assessments to identify potential security considerations.
- Offering security awareness training for staff and volunteers.
- Developing clear emergency response plans to ensure readiness.
- Working with local authorities and emergency services for guidance.
- Installing practical security measures where appropriate, such as CCTV or bag checks for larger events.

Steps parish and town councils can take now

Even though Martyn's Law is still in the early stages of implementation, councils can start preparing by:

- Reviewing venues and events — Identify which spaces may be covered by the law.
- Raising awareness — Ensure council staff, event organisers, and volunteers understand basic security considerations.
- Engaging with local authorities — Seek advice from police and security professionals.
- Developing contingency plans — Create clear procedures for handling security-related situations.
- Staying informed — Keep up with official guidance to ensure compliance when the law is fully enacted.

Ⓜ At least 24 months from 3/4/25 before the Act comes into force: to enable plan + prepare

Who is the responsible person for qualifying premises?

For qualifying premises, the responsible person is the person who has control of the premises in connection with their relevant Schedule 1 use (e.g. the use of a venue as a sports ground or a hotel). Where there is more than one Schedule 1 use (e.g. a church that also has a creche), it will be the person in control of the premises in connection with whichever Schedule 1 use is the principal use.

Who is the responsible person for qualifying events?

For qualifying events, the responsible person is the person who has control of the premises at which the event will be held for the purposes of the event. The circumstances of the event will need to be considered to determine who the responsible person is. For example, if a concert is to be held in a park and the company putting on the event takes control of an area of the park for the purposes of that concert, the company putting on the event will be the responsible person. Conversely, if a stately home puts on a concert in its grounds and maintains control of the site for the purposes of that concert, the stately home will be the responsible person. This would be the case even if the stately home contracted organisations to do aspects of the event (e.g. to provide door security or ticketing).

What are the requirements for standard tier premises?

Some requirements in the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 apply to all qualifying premises and events. Those core requirements are the only requirements that apply to standard duty premises, which are also referred to as the "standard tier".

The standard tier is for premises where it is reasonable to expect that between 200 and 799 individuals (including staff) may be present at the same time.

When the requirements come into force, the person responsible for standard duty premises will have to:

- notify the Security Industry Authority (SIA) of their premises; and
- have in place, so far as reasonably practicable, appropriate public protection procedures.

These public protection procedures are those which should be followed by people working at the premises if an act of terrorism were to occur at the premises, or in the immediate vicinity. They are procedures which may be expected to reduce the risk of physical harm being caused to individuals relating to evacuation, invacuation (moving people to a safe place), locking down the premises, and communicating with individuals on the premises.

The requirements for standard tier premises are centred around simple, low-cost activities with costs relating primarily to time spent. There is no requirement to put in place physical measures.

<https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2025/04/03/martyns-law-factsheet/>

**POLICY FOR USE OF TOWN COUNCIL PARKS / OPEN SPACES.
BY EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

**TABLE 1
EVENT SCALE**

Classification of proposed event.	Size and definition of event.	Number permitted in financial year.
Major	<p>Likely to be over 1,000 attendees at any one time.</p> <p>Will involve a large footprint (up to 30% of the park / open space area).</p> <p>A potential need for ground reinstatement.</p> <p>Major impact on surrounding area.</p> <p>Temporary structures with a build / take down period of up to 3 days.</p>	2
Large	<p>Likely to be between 500 and 1000 attendees at any one time.</p> <p>Will involve a footprint of up to 20% of the park / open space.</p> <p>Impact on the surrounding area.</p> <p>May need some ground reinstatement.</p> <p>Temporary structures with a build / take down period of 1 or 2 days.</p>	3
Medium	<p>Between 50 and 500 attendees at any one time.</p> <p>Footprint of up to 10% of the park / open space.</p> <p>Unlikely to involve any reinstatement of ground.</p> <p>Temporary structures with a build / Take down period of 1 day.</p>	12
Small	<p>Likely to be no more than 49 attendees at any one time.</p> <p>Minimal use of the park / open space area.</p> <p>Unlikely to have any impact on surrounding areas.</p> <p>Minimal impact on the park.</p> <p>Minimal infrastructure.</p>	At the Town Councils discretion.
Minor	<p>Any event which does not meet the criteria above but does meet the event criteria as set out in 1.1.</p>	At the Town Clerks discretion.

Terrorism Risk Assessment



clear
councils

Company name: Swanscombe and Greenhithe Town Council

Event Description: Community Event in park/open space

Assessment carried out by:

Date assessment carried out:

Review Date:

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done
<p>1. Marauding Terrorist Attack (an attack by an individual or group of individuals using a gun or a bladed or blunt force weapon)</p>	<p>Each of these attack types could cause death or injury to participants and staff. In all cases the festival would likely be cancelled which would have severe financial impact on the organisers.</p>	<p>All volunteer staff are briefed on security awareness. Applicable to all attack types. There is a procedure in place to identify concessions and approved vehicles. Applicable to attack types 1,2, 4 and 5 [Where existing measures exist, such as fire plans or Health and Safety measures, a reference to the document should be included to ensure alignment] Search and screening is in place for all access points. This is supervised by SIA licence holders and has a clear prohibited items policy</p>	<p>Assess options for and feasibility of introducing CCTV monitoring at key locations such as stages and arenas. Run a tabletop exercise with multi agency participants and amend security plan as appropriate</p>			

2. Improvised Explosive Device (a bomb that can be placed, posted or carried into or close to the site)	Failure to properly identify risks and mitigating measures could lead to reputational damage and possibly prosecution.	Key locations on site (e.g. the stages) are monitored and patrolled by SIA accredited security staff. Crowd monitoring is also carried out by volunteer stewarding staff.	Assess whether there are sufficient SIA accredited security staff on site and how they are used and adjust as necessary.			
---	--	---	--	--	--	--

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done
3. Vehicle as a Weapon (deliberate use of a vehicle to kill, maim or injure people)	In addition, attacks of type 2 (bomb), 3 (vehicle) and 4 (fire) could cause significant damage to the stages which might result in further hazards.	There is a public communication strategy covering the use of the tannoy system in emergency situations.	Assess options for and feasibility of introducing road traffic control measures, including road closures, beyond the site perimeter			
4. Fire as a Weapon (deliberate use of fire to kill, maim or injure people or to cause damage to the site)	Note, any of the impacts of the attack types could be exacerbated if they resulted in a crowd surge.	There is an ambulance and paramedic team on site throughout with facilities for a triage site.	introduce deterrence communications on the event website.			

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done
5. CBRN (use of chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear means to poison or otherwise cause harm to people)			Improve access control to staff, concession and performer areas.			

DATE:.....

FINANCIAL TRAINING

NAME	Thursday 19 March Income & Expenditure	Thursday 26 March Year End & Audit	Tuesday 28 April Finance for Councillors	Wednesday 6 May Internal Controls
BEN MOUSSA Emma				
BUTLER Denise				
CROSS Lorna				
DUKE Ann				
HARRIS Peter				
HOWES Lesley				
JOHNSTON Dawn				
LEES Richard				
PEARCE Claire				
REACH Alan				
STEPHENS Hazel				
TAYLOR Graham				
WICKHAM Elizabeth			21-May-26	
BLEW Graham				
ALLRED Indigo				

This page is intentionally left blank.

DATE:.....

FINANCIAL TRAINING

NAME	Thursday 19 March Income & Expenditure	Thursday 26 March Year End & Audit	Tuesday 28 April Finance for Councillors	Wednesday 6 May Internal Controls
BEN MOUSSA Emma				
BUTLER Denise				
CROSS Lorna				
DUKE Ann				
HARRIS Peter				
HOWES Lesley				
JOHNSTON Dawn				
LEES Richard				
PEARCE Claire				
REACH Alan				
STEPHENS Hazel				
TAYLOR Graham				
WICKHAM Elizabeth			21-May-26	
BLEW Graham				
ALLRED Indigo				

AGENDA ITEM

TC 26-3-26

13

31

This page is intentionally left blank.