

Marlborough Town Council



Finance and Policy Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance & Policy Committee held Monday,
24 November 2025 in the Council Chamber, Marlborough Town Hall at 7pm

PRESENT	Councillor Kelvyn Shantry	Chair
	Councillor Emily Trow	Town Mayor (<i>ex officio</i>)
	Councillor Mervyn Hall	
	Councillor Kym-Marie Cleasby	
	Councillor Peter Morgan	
	Richard Spencer-Williams	Town Clerk
	Dawn Whitehall	Corporate Services Officer
ALSO		
PRESENT	Amanda Black	Phoenix Brass

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions.

278/25

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from **Councillors Fogg, Sheppard and Beaumont.**

279/25

DECLARATIONS

There were no declarations of interest.

280/25

CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

281/25

MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held 20 October 2025 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair

282/25

ACTION LOG

There were no outstanding actions.

283/25 GRANTS

During a suspension of Standing Orders, Amanda Black answered questions and explained the benefits of the Phoenix Brass Training Section, with members ranging in age from 8-80's receiving high quality musical education, about 50% of whom were from Marlborough or the outlying area. Councillors took the opportunity to thank Phoenix Brass for doing a great job on Remembrance Sunday.

RESOLVED: to award £252 to Phoenix Brass to purchase new music stands for the training section which meets each Saturday

A request for a small grant had also been received from Carer Support Wiltshire. However, no representative was available to attend the meeting and so this application would be added to the next meeting agenda.

Amanda Black left the meeting

284/25 INVESTMENTS

Members noted **Councillor Beaumont's** (*Chair of Finance & Policy Committee*) report and considered her proposal to move funds from the current account to both (in part) the CCLA¹ account and a new Unity Trust² savings account:

- All supported the principle of making the best use of available funds
- The Town Council had seen an increase in interest payments since setting up the CCLA account a few years ago under the guidance of former Chair, Andrew Ross
- It was important to understand the risks associated with certain investment funds (e.g. whether they held a British banking licence; that the value of stocks can fall as well as rise; that some Councils had lost money in the Icelandic financial crisis)
- Like CCLA, Unity Trust is used by many local councils

RESOLVED: (i) that the balance in the Barclays current account be maintained at a figure not to fall below £300,000, which is approximately 3 months' worth of expenses

RESOLVED: (ii) that £100,000 be added to the CCLA fund to increase the value in the fund to represent £540,000 (being 6 months of expenses held in general reserve) and £60,000 to be held as surplus general reserve should unexpected outgoings crop up outside the planned budgets and EMRs (current yield ~4%)

¹ <https://www.ccla.co.uk/investments/investor/local-authorities>

² <https://www.unity.co.uk/sectors/local-councils/>

RESOLVED: (iii) that a Unity Trust Bank 32 day deposit account (current interest rate 2.75%) be opened to contain the surplus over and above the £600,000 held in CCLA and minimum £300,000 held in the Barclays accounts

285/25

BUDGET 2026-27

Members noted the Town Clerk's report and considered the Council's budget requirements for 2026-27 for recommendation to Full Council.

Running costs from maintaining existing services, commitments to ongoing projects, projected income and new project work were set out in the report and the Town Clerk explained each. Committees had scrutinized their budget needs and where possible new project work had been accounted for within existing budget provisions. The proposed budget would require a precept of £975,854, equating to a 4.47% precept rise equivalent to an £11.60 annual increase for Band D households. Discussion points included:

- Wiltshire Council had not yet set its budget but was likely to increase the Council tax by the legal maximum of 5%
- A new UK budget was imminent and speculation was that taxes would rise
- Whether a 4.47% increase would be enough to replenish reserves (the projected reserve surplus at year end was likely to be £402,200)
- Whether the current budget proposal was to maintain the Town Council's work at current levels, and whether instead it should be more proactive (examples given included saving to purchase property with an ambition of providing affordable housing, and taking over the street markets)
- Whether there was a need to set funds aside for future devolution of services from Wiltshire Council
- Whether to consider the cost of living crisis and keep the precept as low as possible
- Recognition that the majority of funds would be raised from households in higher tax bands
- If the Town Council proposes an above-inflation rise, whether it could explain to residents why?
- Whether the Town Council should be looking to reduce costs, e.g. staff (approximately two-thirds of the budget)
- That the Town Council had a very large estate compared to other towns, and this would increase when Hawthorn Meadow and the new play area are transferred to it, along with the need to extend the Cemetery. The Grounds Team had conducted a peer review: an example given was Warminster, with a larger population, higher staff salaries, a smaller estate but the same number of staff as Marlborough
- Whether to propose a precept increase of 5%, with the difference between 4.47 and 5% being held in an ear marked reserve for future projects; whether that was enough to make a difference or whether it should be higher still

The Chair was happy with the Town Clerk’s proposal of 4.47%, believing it was justifiable as long as the reserves could be maintained at a healthy level.

The **Town Clerk** noted that if a different figure to 4.47% was to be recommended to Full Council he would need to work out the equivalent in monetary terms and relate it to the budget figures: all projects were already covered in his original proposal. The Council had agreed an ambitious service delivery plan for its 4-year term which was not yet costed: he cautioned that this would likely have an impact on next year’s proposed budget if all projects were to be taken forward.

RESOLVED: to recommend to Full Council a precept rise of 5%, with the difference between 4.47% and 5% going to a new Ear Marked Reserve for future projects

ACTION: The **Chair** asked for reports to future meetings to include a summary and comparison of current reserves (general and EMRs) with previous years.

286/25 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, to exclude the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted

287/25 CCTV REPLACEMENT AND UPGRADE

Members considered proposals and quotations to replace and upgrade the town’s CCTV system.

RESOLVED: that Smart Integrated Solutions are commissioned to conduct the CCTV replacement and maintenance thereafter; and that up to £40,000 of Community Infrastructure Levy funds is used to fund this work

The meeting closed at 8 pm

Signed:

Chair

Date: