

Marlborough Town Council



Finance and Policy Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance & Policy Committee held Monday, 20 July 2026
in the Council Chamber, Marlborough Town Hall at 7pm

PRESENT	Councillor Kelvyn Shantry Councillor Mervyn Hall Councillor Nicholas Awbery Richard Spencer-Williams Dawn Whitehall	Chair Town Clerk Corporate Services Officer
ALSO PRESENT	Kirsten Kerr Nicki Evans	Age UK Wiltshire Manton Village Hall

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions.

111/26 APOLOGIES
Apologies for absence were received from **Councillors Beaumont and Luson (Town Mayor)**.

112/26 DECLARATIONS
There were no declarations of interest.

113/26 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS
There were no announcements.

114/26 MINUTES
RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held 13 April 2026 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair

115/26 ACTION LOG
Members noted the updated action log.

116/26 GRANTS
Members considered two applications for small grants. Both applicants were represented at the meeting, and their representatives summarised their requests and answered questions. Key discussion points were:

- Manton Village Hall: requesting £3,000 towards repair and refurbishment of the hall's roof. £11,000 had already been raised through fundraising.
- Age UK Wiltshire: requesting £1,758 towards publicity, recruitment, training and supervision of additional volunteers to provide community support services which would benefit 30 older Marlborough people and their families
- Members supported both requests, which were considered very worthy causes
- There was £2,150 remaining in the grant budget (the agenda showed £4,850 in error)
- There was not enough remaining grant money to meet both requests in full

The applicants left the room while Members discussed the requests, then returned to hear the decision

RESOLVED: (i) to award £1,350 to Manton Village Hall towards the cost of repair and refurbishment of the roof

RESOLVED: (ii) to award £800 to Age UK Wiltshire towards the cost of recruitment and training of additional volunteers

As the Committee was unable to meet both grants in full, Members recommended that they consider an application to the Area Board.

ACTION: add an agenda item to a future meeting to consider the grants budget for future financial years

Kirsten Kerr and Nicki Evans thanked the Town Council for the grant awards and left the meeting

117/26

YEAR END ACCOUNTS 2025-26

Members noted the year end accounts for 2025-26, expressing concern about the level of the General Reserves. Discussion points included:

- That the General Reserve and Ear Marked Reserves at year end had reduced when compared to year ending March 2025
- Concerns about a trend of declining general reserves over recent years had been raised and discussed at several previous meetings, and members agreed there was a need to prevent this decline continuing when going into the next annual budgeting cycle
- In 2025-26 funds from the general reserve had been used to buy new vehicles for the grounds team and to upgrade the town's CCTV system. These were one-off costs and the overall vehicle costs would be reduced in future years compared to the previous leasing arrangements
- The cost of providing day to day Council services continued to rise, including fuel and office equipment contracts
- There had been unplanned property costs in recent years (e.g. boiler breakdowns at both the Town Hall and Community & Youth Centre) had also impacted the general reserve and maintenance reserves

- The property ear marked reserve was not sufficient to cover future property costs when compared to the Property Committee risk analysis; a property EMR was beginning to address this
- In recent years a desire to keep the precept low had resulted in the Council being unable to top up its general reserves
- If reserves continue to remain low, whilst the Council would meet its commitment to hold in reserve the costs of 4-6 months operational costs, it will be difficult to find funds for new projects for example to replace the town's festive lights
- All of the above should be taken into account in the budget setting cycle later in the year

118/26 QUARTERLY FINANCE REPORTS

Members noted the quarterly finance overview report at Month 3, and Omega reports at month 3 for:

- Detailed income and expenditure by budget heading
- Bank reconciliation, which was signed by the Chair and RFO
- Receipts and payments summary
- Detailed balance sheet

Discussion points included:

- Members noted a decline in venue income from commercial hire and an increase in weddings
- An agreed 3-year, fixed price reduced rent for Marlborough Youth Forum (*Min No. 250/25, Full Council Meeting, 3 November 2025*) had resulted in a reduction in income at the Community & Youth Centre
- Variable costs for vehicle maintenance and diesel prices were hard to forecast, and vehicle maintenance was currently over budget
- There were empty properties on the High Street with many businesses struggling; it could often take a year or more to find and agree new tenancies, and it was understood that many incoming businesses were negotiating lower rents for these premises
- Electrical inspection condition reports had resulted in costs at various properties for electrical works needed in order to be compliant to regulations
- Community Infrastructure Levy unallocated funds were currently £925. This was expected to increase by £17,000 (a CIL payment related to the housing development at the former St Peter's School)

119/26 FESTIVE LIGHTS

Members noted the Town Promotion and Culture Committee's request for an increase of £12,000 in the Christmas Lighting budget for 2027/28 and beyond to be considered later in the year in the annual budgeting process.

120/26 **POLICIES**

Members noted the review status of the Town Council's policies and considered when and how to review any policies where the review date was due.

RESOLVED: (i) to ask the Deputy Town Clerk to liaise with OneWest to review the Data Protection Policy, Subject Access Request Procedure, Special Categories of Personal Data, Data Breach Policy, Data Retention Policy and its appendix, Privacy notice for website and recruitment and the Privacy note for employees

RESOLVED: (ii) to review three policies at the 19 October Committee meeting (Code of Conduct; Environment & Climate Protection Policy Statement and Mayor's Community Awards)

RESOLVED: (iii) to review three policies at a future meeting (Investment; Press and media relations, and Policy and protocol of recording, photography and use of social media at meetings of Marlborough Town Council)

121/26 **ASSET REGISTER**

Members noted the Town Clerk's report and a proposed template intended to strengthen the way assets are recorded.

Members recognised that the proposed format would go some way to answering questions raised at Full Council on 22 June (*Min. No. 70/26*) and at this meeting (e.g. how was the value of an asset arrived at? Does the value take account of depreciation or increase in value? Is the recorded value the replacement cost?).

Members noted the proposed format would provide the Committee with improved information to be able to discuss the Council's assets in future.

RESOLVED: to adopt the proposed format for the asset register, to be reviewed at a future meeting together with any implied resource implications

122/26 **HERBERT LEAF BEQUEST**

Members noted the Town Clerk's report and considered the Herbert Leaf Working Party's recommendation to deposit funds with the Charity Bank, split between an Easy Access account to attract 2.94% AER interest, and a 1-year fixed account at 3.56% interest.

RESOLVED: to deposit £72,000 of Herbert Leaf funds with Charity Bank, comprising £20,000 in an Easy Access account and £52,000 in a 1-year Fixed account

The meeting closed at 8.17 pm

Signed:
Chair

Date: