

# Marlborough Town Council

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28 October 2025

Dear Councillor

## Full Town Council

I hereby **summon** you to a meeting of **Marlborough Town Council** which will be held on **Monday, 3 November 2025 at 7pm** in the **Court Room, Marlborough Town Hall**.

Yours sincerely

*Richard Spencer-Williams*

Richard Spencer-Williams, PSLCC

**Town Clerk**

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If members of the public wish to attend they should notify the Town Clerk of this by noon on the Friday prior to the meeting,

If members of the public wish to attend and ask a question they should also notify the Town Clerk of this by noon prior to the meeting and provide their question in writing at the same time, If members of the public wish to ask a question, but not attend, they can provide the question in writing to the Town Clerk by noon on the day of the meeting, and a written response will be provided.

Places will be allocated on a first come first served basis. Organisations and interest groups are asked to send one delegate. Some people may not be allowed to attend if all the allocated seats are taken.

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## MOMENT OF QUIET REFLECTION

## YOUTH COUNCIL

Introducing the newly formed Youth Council

## PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

In accordance with Standing Order 3(f), members of the public may ask questions of the Council. The time allocated for this should not exceed 10 minutes and be limited to one question per person unless directed otherwise by the Chair. A full response may not be possible without further research, and the Chair may direct that a written or oral response be given.

## CRIME AND DISORDER

A member of Wiltshire Police will be invited to give a report and answer questions from Councillors and members of the public (not to exceed 10 minutes)

## TO RECEIVE QUESTIONS TO AND FROM WILTSHIRE COUNCILLORS

Not to exceed 10 minutes

## AGENDA

### 1. Apologies for absence

### 2. Declarations of interest

- a) To receive any Declaration(s) of Interest under Marlborough Town Council's Code of Conduct issued in accordance with the Localism Act 2011
- b) To consider any dispensation requests received by the Town Clerk

Members are reminded that they are obliged to notify the Monitoring Officer of a change to disclosable interests, or a new interest as defined in Appendices A and B of the Code of Conduct within 28 days of becoming aware of it. These should be passed on to the Town Clerk to register online.

### 3. Mayor's Announcements

### 4. Minutes

To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held 1 September 2025

### 5. Action Log

To review the Action Log

### 6. Marlborough Area Youth Forum

To consider the request by Marlborough Area Youth Forum to reduce their hire charges

### 7. Kennet Place Community Garden

To consider a request for the Council to apply to Wiltshire Council for a Community Asset Transfer for Kennet Place 'community garden'

- 8. Chains on The Green**  
To receive an update report on the chains on The Green
- 9. Postern Hill Campsite**  
To receive an update report on Postern Hill campsite
- 10. AGAR Conclusion of Audit**  
To note the Conclusion of Audit for the 2024 25 Annual Governance and Accountability Review
- 11. Interim Internal Audit Report**  
To note the first interim internal audit report
- 12. Housing Working Party**  
To consider a proposal by Councillor Cleasby to create a working party
- 13. Community Governance Review**  
To note a communication from Wiltshire Council
- 14. Outside Bodies**  
An opportunity for Members to provide verbal updates on their representational roles to outside bodies
- 15. Committee Minutes**  
In accordance with para 3.1 of the Scheme of Delegation, to note the approved minutes of the following committee meetings: **Planning** – 26 August, 15 September and 6 October 2025, **Property** 28 July, Amenities and Open Spaces 16 June, and **Finance and Policy Committee** 30 June 2025. These minutes have been approved by committees and circulated to Members and are available to download from <https://www.marlbrough-tc.gov.uk/council/meeting-dates-agendas-and-minutes-2025-26> or from the Town Council offices. Other meetings have taken place, but minutes are not yet approved so remain in draft form.
- 16. Common Seal**  
To authorise the fixing of the Common Seal of Marlborough Town Council to all documents necessary to give effect to the decisions of the meeting

To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held 1 September 2025

## Marlborough Town Council



### Full Town Council

#### Minutes of a meeting of Marlborough Town Council held Monday, 1 September 2025 in the Court Room, Marlborough Town Hall at 7pm

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<b>PRESENT</b>	Councillor Emily Trow	Town Mayor
	Councillor Mark Luson	Deputy Mayor
	Councillor Nicholas Fogg	
	Councillor Mervyn Hall	
	Councillor Mark Cooper	
	Councillor Kymee Cleasby	Wiltshire Councillor – Marlborough East
	Councillor James Sheppard	
	Councillor Kelvyn Shantry	
	Councillor Susannah O'Brien	
	Councillor Caroline Sadler	
	Councillor Caroline Wrench	
	Councillor Nicholas Awbery	
	Richard Spencer-Williams	Town Clerk
	Dawn Whitehall	Corporate Services Officer
<b>ALSO</b>		
<b>PRESENT</b>	Councillor Jane Davies	Wiltshire Councillor – Marlborough West
	Neil Goodwin	Marlborough.News
	Plus five members of the public	

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#### **MOMENT OF QUIET REFLECTION**

The **Town Mayor** asked Members to take a quiet moment to themselves to reflect on how Councillors can best serve their community, on anyone suffering at this time or experiencing loss or any problems.

#### **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

##### **Savernake Forest – Camp Site**

**Nick Beere, Nicola Birkett, Caroline Dale and Phil Birkett** – had done some research into the recently announced closure of the Postern Hill camp site in Savernake Forest which Neil Goodwin would be able to corroborate, and asked:

- Were the Town Council formally consulted about the closure prior to the announcement by Sherwood Pines Ltd?
- What was the Town Council's understanding of the nature of the leasing agreement for the camp site and Forestry England's plans for its future? There seemed to be a conflict between what they were saying to the public and the reality.
- What was the Town Council's view on the closure of the camp site and the potential impact on the culture, facilities and economy of the town? Residents hoped the Town Council would support the campaign to keep it open to support local businesses.
- Could the camp site be considered as an asset of community value?

The Town Council had not been consulted about the closure.

The Town Council did not know the detail about any lease arrangements, It was not a party to it: the lease was a matter between the landowner, the Savernake Estate, and Forestry England who would need to answer those questions. Questions about Savernake Forest had come up before concerning the land management plan. Questions would need to be directed to Forestry England or the landowners. The camp site and forest were not in the Marlborough Parish; they were in Savernake Parish, so technically this wasn't something that the Town Council would be privy to.

Councillors shared concerns about the economic impact on the town and the loss of a healthy activity, and the long term plans for the forest and felt they had some responsibility to secure the future of the site. The decision appeared to have been made without any reference to the wider constituency. Several years ago, it had invited Forestry England to a Council meeting to make a presentation and answer questions and would like to ask them to come to another meeting to explain how the decision was made and outline their future plans for the forest.

The Town Council had successfully applied to have the former Methodist Church, Christ Church, listed as an asset of community value. It wasn't known whether a camp site would be eligible for this. **Councillor Cleasby** was also a Wiltshire Councillor, and the Savernake Parish falls within the Marlborough East area. She undertook to investigate whether it would meet the criteria as an asset of community value. While the campsite didn't fall within the Town Council's parish it could have a view.

The **Mayor** confirmed that the Town Council would conduct more research into the residents' questions and add an item to the next Full Council meeting agenda, inviting Forestry England to attend.

**Neil Goodwin** asked whether, rather than inviting Forestry England to present at a Full Council meeting, an open meeting could be set up involving Savernake Parish Council and all members of the public, perhaps in the Assembly Room at the Town Hall. The site closes for winter on 5 October, so there may not be much time: it would be great to have the campsite up and running again for next Spring. The

**Deputy Mayor, Councillor Luson** acknowledged Mr Goodwin's suggestion and supported the idea of a consultation with Forestry England but questioned whether that was the best way to elicit an open conversation about the future of the forest. He reassured him that the Town Council would seek to find the best way to have a conversation before the next Full Council meeting with the aim to ensure some kind of public camp site would be retained on the boundaries of the parish. The **Mayor** stated that Full Council would need to give this more consideration before calling an open meeting.

ACTION: At **Councillor Sheppard's** suggestion, to ask Savernake Parish Council to apply to list the site as an asset of community value

### The Green

**Nigel Kerton** asked where the antique wrought iron chains that were previously attached to posts around The Green had gone; where they were now; whether there had been a motion passed to remove them, or whether they were removed as a decision made by staff; whether they had been sold; whether they had otherwise been disposed of (and the same applied to a gate and railings removed from the Cemetery). In his view they were worth tens of thousands of pounds. Were there minutes to confirm what had been done, or to show on whose authority they had been removed? He implied that a lot of things went into the Town Council's storage building and never came out again, including the blue Charter signs and said that if the Town Council was unable to answer his questions, he would raise the matter with the police and ask them to investigate. Mr Kerton wasn't concerned that they had been taken down if they were in safe storage. He said, "show me where they are and I'll drop the issue".

The **Mayor** referred to a photograph (displayed at the meeting) taken in July 2015 showing that the chains were not present at that time. A member of the public could see them on an image on Google maps dated 2011.

Longer serving Councillors had no recollection of this as it was a long time ago, nor of where they might be now.

**Councillor Sheppard** asked whether there was a statute of limitations on things that have happened in Councils many years before that present Councils couldn't be held responsible for as this seemed to be something that had been missing for many years and only just brought to Members' attention. He hoped they could be found but would still like to know whether there was any limitation.

The **Town Clerk** had already made some enquiries. The **Grounds Manager** had joined the staff in 2012 and did not remember there being any chains present at that time. As part of the project to extend the workshop, a big clear out had been undertaken very recently and he assured Mr Kerton that the chains were not in the workshop: the Town Clerk himself had been part of the clear-out. To answer the questions more fully the archives would have to be searched.

**Mr Kerton** then referred to an old photograph but the **Mayor** said that he had asked his question and it had been answered. He stated he was trying to give more background information but if the Mayor didn't want it he would resort to other means to bring this to the attention of the public. The Mayor said she did not appreciate Mr Kerton threatening the Council.

**Councillor Fogg** recalled Walter Lawrence – born 1895 – telling him that he had fallen over the chains (present in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century) and cut his leg open very severely, so wondered if there were plans to replace them, whether there could be chains without the dangerous spikes.

**Councillor Shantry** suggested asking former Mayors from the period in question whether they had any memory of the chain removal.

**ACTION:** The **Town Mayor** confirmed the matter would be investigated as best as possible and reported back to Council

*All members of the public left the meeting*

#### **CRIME AND DISORDER**

In answer to a question from the **Mayor**, **PC Jason Steele** wasn't sure how far their records went back, but he would check whether there was any record of the chains being reported as stolen.

PC Steele introduced himself and thanked Councillors for their service. He outlined changes to personnel in the team: new members included Sergeant Debbie Lacock who would try to attend a future meeting. It was hoped that more posts would be filled in due course too.

Ongoing work included Marlborough Shop Watch which was going really well – he thanked the Town Clerk for his support with the scheme. Retail crime was still a priority for the neighbourhood team.

On community engagement, regular sessions took place at Nationwide, and the team had used the mobile unit, particularly to allow access for rural communities. If dates lined up it may be possible to have it over one of the Mop weekends.

Rural crime week would be w/c 8 September for the whole force, with a potential event on Wednesday 10 September being planned.

The team continues to work with housing associations to assist with action regarding tenant antisocial behaviour. They also continue to patrol areas where ASB has been raised as a concern: recently this included Plume of Feathers garden. Wiltshire Council's new ASB officer had joined the police to patrol the town and raise her awareness to potential hot spot areas.

He gave some updates on recent arrests and crimes, including a stop and search and an attempted ATM break in. Between June and August 107 crimes had been reported, a reduction on the same period last year at 130. A quarterly report would be produced in October with more detail.

*PC Steele left the meeting*

#### **TO RECEIVE QUESTIONS TO AND FROM WILTSHIRE COUNCILLORS**

**Councillor Davies** referred to work by the previous Council, which had been unsuccessful in obtaining a banking hub for Marlborough, and wondered whether it would be minded to appeal the decision? Having got more involved with the Jubilee Centre, she knew that the manager was not comfortable queuing with cash at the Post Office, and having heard about the Tesco ATM being attacked having an alternative option for the town would be good and she would support Councillors in any way she could.

**Councillor Hall** noted that Lloyds Bank provided a service at the Library every Wednesday. They were unable to deal in cash or handle business accounts.

**Councillor Sadler** supported the call for a banking hub; many shops still take cash but there were also already some shops that would only take card payments. She didn't want the town to become cashless and hoped the appeal would go in their favour.

The **Town Clerk** knew the appeal request was pending and agreed to investigate.

**Councillor Shantry** asked about proposals to change how Utility street permits were issued, and the suggestion about charging 'lane rental' in an effort to reduce disruption times. Were Wiltshire Councillors optimistic this could be achieved? Both Wiltshire Councillors were attending a meeting later in the month with the Leader of the Council to discuss this and other matters and would raise the question. Cllr Thorn agreed with the suggestion in principle; it had been tested in some rural authorities and been proven to reduce congestion at peak times as well as the length of time for roadworks. **Cllr Davies** may be able to provide some figures. There were about 18 councils in the process of applying so it may take some time but the Wiltshire Councillors would continue to push for it. Officers currently had limited powers and when roads were as congested as they are these days there is no silver bullet but it was hoped lane rental might help.

**Councillor Cleasby** was liaising closely with officers about local conditions on traffic flow which had helped improve traffic light phasing in recent works; she hoped they would continue to involve the Wiltshire Councillors at early stages so this could continue.

*Councillor Davies left the meeting*

**156/25**

#### **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from **Councillors Farrell, Beaumont and Morgan**.

**157/25 DECLARATIONS**

There were no declarations.

**158/25 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The vacancy for an East Ward Town Councillor had been advertised earlier in the day, Applications close on 31 October, and the co-option would take place at an Extraordinary Full Council meeting on 10 or 12 November.

She reminded Members about the (*Wild Marlborough*) biodiversity event on Saturday 6 September, 10:30-12:30 and would welcome any Councillors who were able to attend and asked them to encourage others to go along.

The Mayor gave way to **Councillor Lusson, Deputy Mayor**. He apologised in advance for a prolonged absence from late September to late March 2026 when he would be absent because of work purposes. He would write to all Councillors, hoped that on his return they would allow him to continue to serve, and looked forward to seeing the town's progress from afar. The **Town Clerk** would add an agenda item to the November meeting for Councillors to consider granting an extended period of absence.

**159/25 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** the minutes of the meetings held 23 June and 7 July 2025 were approved as true records and signed by the Town Mayor

**Councillor Wrench** questioned whether the minutes of the meeting on 23 June accurately reflected her update on Marlborough Music Month, believing an action was missing about inviting organisers to an informal meeting. The Town Clerk agreed to meet Councillor Wrench to help clarify how this might be progressed.

**160/25 ACTION LOG**

Members considered the action log.

#276: housing crisis and empty properties – **Councillors Cleasby** and **Farrell** were in regular discussion on this topic to gather data. Kennet and Avon Medical Practice had agreed to provide anonymous statistics of cases that related to overcrowded or unsuitable living conditions. However, both Councillors were facing time pressures, and **Councillor Cleasby** asked whether anyone could spare some time to help them collate data and move forward: **Councillor Awbery** agreed to get involved.

**161/25 SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN**

Members considered the draft Service Delivery Plan for the council term 2025-29.

**Councillor Shantry** thanked the Town Clerk and all involved in producing a very comprehensive document, and the **Town Mayor** thanked all those Councillors who had attended the workshops to provide their input.

**RESOLVED:** that the Service Delivery Plan is adopted with no amendments

**162/25 CIVIC WORKING PARTY**

Members considered reinstating the Civic Working Party and its membership, and whether to reinstate the Ale Tasting event.

It was agreed that membership of the Working Party would comprise Town Mayor Councillor Trow, Deputy Mayor Councillor Luson (with Councillor Cleasby standing in for the Deputy Mayor during his absence) and Councillors Fogg, Farrell and Hall together with the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk and Civic, Cemetery & Engagement Officer.

**Councillor Fogg** was very supportive of the ale tasting event because as well as the traditional alternative title of the Town Crier as Official Ale Taster it was an opportunity for Councillors to meet residents in an informal setting.

**RESOLVED:** that the Civic Working Party is restated for 2025-26 with membership as agreed, and the annual Ale Tasting event will be reinstated

**163/25 WILTSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS**

Members noted an article by Ian Nockolds, the County Adviser, Wiltshire Association of Local Councils entitled "Disagreeing Agreeably: A Guide to Respectful Challenge in Local Councils".

**164/25 OUTSIDE BODIES**

**Councillor Cooper** reported on continued liaison with the three separate Allotment Committees, with a focus on Stonebridge Lane allotments which were now looking really good after the floods in 2024. Another meeting was arranged for 23 September to discuss plans. He felt this was a good example of the Town Council and local community working together.

**165/25 COMMITTEE MINUTES**

In accordance with para 3.1 of the Scheme of Delegation, Members noted the approved minutes of the following committee meetings: **Planning** – 9 June, 14 July and 4 August 2025, and **Property** – 7 April 2025

**166/25 COMMON SEAL**

Proposed by **Councillor Fogg** and seconded by **Councillor Hall** and

**RESOLVED:** that the Common Seal of Marlborough Town Council be affixed to all documents necessary to give effect to the decisions of the meeting

The meeting closed at 8.08 pm

To note and review the Action Log

Ref	Action	Owner	Minute No. & status	Meeting date
293	Wiltshire Councillors to investigate whether a parking compromise can be reached for future years re summer solstice at Avebury	Cllrs Cleasby and Sheppard	Questions to/from Wiltshire Councillors  In Progress	23 June 2025

## ITEM 6 HIRE CHARGES FOR MARLBOROUGH AREA YOUTH FORUM

To consider the proposal to reduce the hire charges for Marlborough Area Youth Forum (MAYF)

### Purpose

The purpose of this report, at the request of **Councillors Shantry** and **Wrench**, is to ask the Council to consider the request from Marlborough Area Youth Forum (MAYF) to reduce the council's hire charges (Appendix 1).

### Status

MAYF is currently charged the set standard community rate of £18 per hour, the same as all other groups who use the centre. This has generated income of £4,884 between September 2024 and July 2025 (no invoices have been issued for August at the time of writing this report).

### Considerations

- Barnardo's also regularly use the community and youth centre twice a week for a mixed ability inclusion youth group and young carers group.
- The caretaking cost for the session is £20.21 plus employer NI and pension costs.
- The matter has been considered by the Property Committee on 29 September, and the Finance and Policy Committee on 21 October. Both Committees supported the proposal as stated:
  - The Property Committee considered it could absorb the loss of income within its budget.
  - The Finance and Policy Committee agreed there should be some charge to MAYF, and that the agreement should be for a fixed term that falls within a council term e.g. 3 years, at which point the agreement can be reviewed.
- If the Council supports the proposal, the requested sum charged (£500-£1,000) as part of an annual agreement will then be presented back to the Finance and Policy Committee, to be considered on 24 November as part of the budget setting process and proposal to **Full Council** on 15 December.
- The Council may want also to clarify the extent of the proposed agreement; currently identified as x2 sessions per week and x2 activity days per year, to include:
  - Duration and times of sessions (and include reasonable allowance for set up and packing up)

- Maximum number of weeks per year
- Due notice required for booking and cancellation. Currently the booking terms require 4 weeks cancellation. However, usual practice for regular users seeks where possible 48hrs notice, not least to ensure caretaking and venue bookings can be managed effectively.

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## Proposal

Members are asked to consider the matter and instruct the Town Clerk accordingly.

**Town Clerk 21 10 25**

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## ITEM 7

## KENNET PLACE COMMUNITY GARDEN

To consider a request for the Council to apply to Wiltshire Council for a Community Asset Transfer for Kennet Place 'community garden'

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## Purpose

The purpose of this report is to ask the Council to consider applying to Wiltshire Council for an asset transfer of Kennet Place 'community garden' (or to adopt responsibility for part of the verge).

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## Background

At Full Council on 23 June 2025 Val Compton asked whether the Town Council would consider applying to Wiltshire Council to request a community asset transfer of the roadside verge, better known as the 'Waterfront Garden', in Kennet Place.

[Minutes of a meeting of Marlborough Town Council held 23 June 2025](#)

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## Status

The 'Waterfront Garden' is currently tended by Val Compton and a few other volunteers. The 'garden' sits on a land parcel (grass verge) owned by Wiltshire Council. This is shared with Krumbz Café who occupy roughly 50% of the verge to offer outdoor seating for their patrons.

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## Considerations

- **Asset transfer** - despite attempts, WC Estates have yet to confirm whether an asset transfer is required, or simply whether a s142 licence would suffice (Licence to plant trees etc on Highways), and that if it is only the latter could this be for part of the land parcel?
- **Flood Defence** - If a WC Asset transfer is required, can this be done to exclude the flood defences as this could have very costly implications for the council?
- **Krumbz Café** - On 16 10 25 WC confirmed that Krumbz has never been issued with a pavement licence, but it is not clear this is relevant as the pavement is not used. Despite requests for clarity on the legal status. WC Estates are yet to confirm if there is any agreement in place with Krumbz, and as such it is hard to assess what bearing this may or may not have on the council assuming responsibility (wholly, or in part) for the site. Krumbz also holds a licence to serve alcohol, for which the Town Council is a consultee.

- **Long term volunteer engagement** - how will current interest be sustained for the planting and flower arrangements?
- **Expectation** - should the volunteer interest be lost over time, whether the work will be expected to be picked up by the grounds team; and would they be expected to offer the same type of outcome, which may be time consuming as opposed to how verges are currently managed by the council?
- **Water supply?** - The water supply currently comes via Val Compton's own domestic supply.

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## Proposal

Members are asked to consider the matter and whether it is something it wishes to progress and instruct the Town Clerk accordingly.

**Town Clerk 23 10 25**

## ITEM 8

## CHAINS ON THE GREEN

To receive an update report on the chains on The Green

### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update the Council on the investigation into why the 'chains' are no longer present and attached to the posts on The Green.

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### Background and Status

At the Full Council meeting on 1 September (*minutes at item 4*) under 'public questions' Nigel Kerton asked about the whereabouts of the chains which were historically present and attached to the posts on The Green.

The Town Clerk undertook to look into the matter.

Following the meeting, PC Jason Steele emailed the Town Clerk on 4 September to state:

*'I have checked our crime recording system for any report relating to the historic chains around the perimeter of The Green, Marlborough, I've checked the crime reports we appear to have on local systems for The Green that go back as far as 2006 and can find no report relating to the theft or damage of the chains.'*

From reading archived minutes it is clear the issue of the condition and refurbishing of the posts and chains was considered by the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee on 13 March 2009, 28 June 2010 and 20 December 2010.

On 20 December, the relevant report details how the chains were '*rusty and unsightly*', and '*It is not the intention to install chains on the new posts*'. These are the only references to the chains specifically.

At the 20 December 2010 meeting it was resolved:

**'RESOLVED: Unanimously that the posts be purchased for the Green'**. The resolution is as stated and makes no specific reference to the chains themselves.

No other records can be sourced on the matter. Therefore, it may reasonably be assumed that the chains were deemed to be of low value, and a health and safety risk, and therefore disposed of.

**Town Clerk 23 10 25**

## ITEM 9

## POSTERN HILL CAMPSITE

To receive an update report on Postern Hill campsite

### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update the Council on the matter of Postern Hill Campsite.

### Background

At the Council meeting on 3 9 25 following representations by members of the public the Council undertook to look into the matter, and specifically:

- to invite Forestry England to meet the Town Council to discuss the matter, and
- whether the site would be eligible for an application as an Asset of Community Value (AVC)

### Status

#### Forestry England

The Town Clerk emailed Forestry England on 15 9 25 to ask:

1. The reason behind the decision to close the campsite?
2. Was there a consultation process about the proposed closure of the campsite, and/or is there a consultation process in place about its future?
3. What is the legal position for the site i.e. is it a concern of Forestry England, or another party?
4. Would someone from Forestry England be prepared to come to the Full Council here to discuss the site viability, and the issues involved please? (Or should the Council best direct this invitation to another party?)

Forestry England replied on 25 9 25 to state:

*‘Thank you for sharing the council’s interest in the Forestry England Camping site at Postern Hill, I’ve addressed the council’s questions in order below:*

**1. The reason behind the decision to close the campsite?**

*Forestry England has a small number of camping and caravanning sites operated on our behalf by business tenants under the banner ‘Forestry England Camping’. See [Forestry England Camping | Forestry England](#). Unfortunately, the operator for the Postern Hill site has chosen not to renew their lease agreement with us and announced their withdrawal at the end of the current camping season. We understand that their decision was a commercial one, based upon the costs of running and maintaining the site against the income derived. Further information can be found on our website here: [Winter Closure](#)*

**2. Was there a consultation process about the proposed closure of the campsite, and/or is there a consultation process in place about its future?**

Forestry England did not consult on the withdrawal of the site operator. It was a matter for the operator alone to make the decision to renew their lease or not. Forestry England recognises the strength of local affection for the campsite, and we are actively looking at a range of options for its future when the current lease ends. We're exploring solutions that will be sympathetic to the site, beneficial for the community, and financially viable for the tenant, but it wouldn't be appropriate to share speculative details at this stage.

**3. What is the legal position for the site i.e. is it a concern of Forestry England, or another party?**

Forestry England (part of the Forestry Commission) has leased Savernake Forest since 1939 under a 999 year lease. As is normal for leases of this length and scale, there have been a number of variations agreed in the intervening years, including agreements to operate a campsite at Postern Hill.

Forestry England's long-term management approach for Savernake Forest is set out in the 'Our Shared Forest' document which can be found here: [Our shared forest - Savernake Forest | Forestry England](#). This is guided by Forestry England's 'Growing the Future' strategy, set out here [Forestry England | Growing the future | Forestry England](#). The revised Forest Plan for Savernake Forest, which will prescribe more specific management for the coming decades, is currently in draft. We hope to share this for public consultation during the winter.

We have noted your request for a member of the Forestry England team to attend a Full Council meeting to discuss 'the site viability and the issues involved'. However, as the decision not to renew the lease was made by the operator, we are not in a position to speculate regarding their decision making process. We are actively exploring options for the future of the site and look forward to sharing more information in due course.'

## Asset of Community Value

- For expediency this matter was put before the Planning Committee on 15 9 25.
- The Committee resolved to apply for Postern Campsite to become an ACV.
- On 18 9 25 the process of applying to register the site as an ACV was started with Wiltshire Council (WC). This requires land registry documentation.
- An application to Land Registry for title documents was filed on 18 September, one of which is a hard copy map of the site. The hard copy map requires cheque payment, which was also sent at this time.
- We await the map to submit the full set of necessary documentation to WC.
- On 20 October this was followed up with Land Registry for an update as the map is yet to be received.

**Town Clerk 23 10 25**

To note the Conclusion of Audit for the 2024 25 Annual Governance and Accountability Review (AGAR)

Please see Appendix 2

To note the first interim internal audit

Please see Appendix 3

To consider a proposal by **Councillor Cleasby** to form a Housing Working Party

### Rationale/Background

Marlborough faces an escalating housing crisis. Social housing is being sold off and not replaced, while no new social or affordable homes are being built locally. This leaves many residents unable to afford to live in the community.

The Town Council currently lacks a formal mechanism to monitor housing issues, engage with housing associations, or influence Wiltshire Council's decisions on housing and planning. A dedicated Working Party will allow the Council to take a proactive, coordinated role in addressing the housing emergency and ensuring that local needs are properly represented.

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### 1 Purpose

This briefing paper provides background and supporting information for a motion to establish a Housing Working Party of Marlborough Town Council. The Working Party would coordinate local action, partnership engagement, and policy input on housing issues following the Council's previous declaration of a Housing Emergency.

### 2 Context and Need

#### 2.1 The Local Housing Emergency

Marlborough Town Council has previously recognised that the town faces a severe housing crisis, characterised by escalating house prices, a shortage of affordable rental properties, declining availability of social housing, and rising pressure on vulnerable residents, including young people, families, and older people on fixed incomes. In 2023, the Council expressed support for declaring a Housing Emergency in response to local concern and evidence presented by residents and community groups<sup>1</sup>. That declaration was subsequently referenced in Council documents and policy plans in 2025.

#### 2.2 Social Housing Loss

Across Marlborough and the wider Wiltshire area, social housing stock has been steadily reduced through right-to-buy sales, disposals, and reclassification of housing association properties. Local

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.marlborough-tc.gov.uk/images/your-council/Approved\\_FTC\\_Mins\\_6\\_November\\_2023.pdf](https://www.marlborough-tc.gov.uk/images/your-council/Approved_FTC_Mins_6_November_2023.pdf) Min. No. 313/23

social homes sold are not being replaced, resulting in a net loss of affordable homes. Current planning and development activity in Marlborough includes no significant provision of social or affordable housing units. Waiting lists for affordable housing continue to lengthen, with many residents unable to access secure, long-term accommodation.

### **2.3 Lack of New Delivery**

No major housing development within Marlborough parish has delivered genuinely affordable or social housing in recent years. Local land values, planning constraints, and viability arguments have restricted on-site affordable provision. The Wiltshire Council Local Plan has not brought forward specific, deliverable sites for social or community-led housing in Marlborough, leaving key workers, young adults, and lower-income families priced out of remaining local homes.

### **2.4 Accountability of Housing Associations**

Housing associations own and manage a significant portion of the remaining social housing in the area, yet there is limited transparency or accountability to the Town Council or the community. Residents frequently report issues around repairs, maintenance delays, poor communication, disposal of homes without consultation, and lack of clarity on future investment in Marlborough stock. The Town Council currently lacks a formal mechanism to raise or track these concerns collectively.

### **2.5 Relationship with Wiltshire Council**

Wiltshire Council retains statutory responsibility for housing strategy, homelessness, and planning policy. However, as a local representative body, Marlborough Town Council has an important advocacy and scrutiny role: it can ensure that the voice of Marlborough residents is heard in county-level decisions, contribute local evidence to shape Wiltshire's housing policy, and support community-led or partnership housing initiatives.

## **3. Proposed Role of the Housing Working Party**

The proposed Housing Working Party would provide focus, continuity, and accountability on housing matters by:

- Monitoring local housing need, including data on affordability, availability, and homelessness
- Mapping existing housing stock and understanding ownership, condition, and changes to social housing numbers
- Engaging stakeholders such as Wiltshire Council, housing associations, developers, and community groups
- Identifying opportunities for new social and affordable housing
- Making representations to Wiltshire Council and national consultations
- Supporting residents and ensuring housing issues are followed up appropriately
- Reporting to Full Council on progress and recommendations.

## **4. Membership and Operation**

Membership: 2–4 Town Councillors, the Town Clerk (or nominated officer), and up to 3 invited community or housing representatives (non-voting).

Meetings: Quarterly or as required.

Reporting: Summary updates to each Full Council meeting; detailed reports as needed.

Duration: Ongoing, with a review after 12 months.

## 5. Financial and Resource Implications

Officer time will be required to support meetings, correspondence, and reporting. No immediate budget requirement is proposed; any future recommendations with cost implications will be brought to Council for approval. Potential access to external grants or partnership contributions may be explored.

## 6. Expected Outcomes

- Improved understanding of Marlborough's housing needs
- Constructive engagement with Wiltshire Council and housing providers
- Identification of opportunities for new social and affordable housing
- Better representation of residents affected by housing issues
- Greater transparency and accountability in housing delivery
- Enhanced public confidence that the Council is acting on its housing emergency declaration.

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## 7. Proposal

That Marlborough Town Council:

1. Notes that the Council has previously declared a Housing Emergency.
2. Recognises that:
  - a) Social housing stock is being sold off and not replaced
  - b) No new social or affordable homes are being built in the Marlborough area
  - c) Housing associations must be held accountable for their existing local stock
  - d) The Council needs a formal mechanism to make strong, structured representations and suggestions to Wiltshire Council on housing matters.
3. Resolves to establish a Housing Working Party with the following purposes:
  - To monitor housing need, affordability, and the loss of social housing in Marlborough
  - To engage with Wiltshire Council, housing associations, developers, and community groups
  - To develop and recommend proposals for delivering new social and affordable housing
  - To hold housing associations accountable for the management and quality of their local stock
  - To make representations to Wiltshire Council and other relevant authorities on housing policy and delivery
  - To report regularly to Full Council on progress.
4. Agrees that membership shall include:
  - Councillor Kym-Marie Cleasby (Chair)

- [Two or more additional Councillors]
- The Town Clerk (or nominated officer)
- Up to [two or three] invited non-voting community or housing representatives.

5. Requests that the Working Party's first report be brought back to Full Council within six months of its first meeting.

6. That Full Council approves the establishment of a Housing Working Party with the remit and structure set out above.

**Proposed by: Councillor Kym-Marie Cleasby**

**Seconded by: Town Mayor Councillor Emily Trow**

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## Recommendation

Members are asked to consider the matter and instruct the Town Clerk accordingly.

**Town Clerk 21 10 25**

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## ITEM 13

## COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

To note the communication from Wiltshire Council received on the 16 10 25

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*Dear Members*

*' at its meeting today the Electoral Review Committee of Wiltshire Council agreed areas to be included in its next Community Governance Review.*

*A Community Governance Review is a process to provide opportunity to review and make changes to governance arrangements for cities, towns, and parish councils and parish areas. Some past information can be found at [Community Governance Reviews - Wiltshire Council](#).*

*The Committee resolved to review all the parishes within the Royal Wootton Bassett & Cricklade, Marlborough, and Devizes Area Boards. The review will take place approximately between November 2025 and July 2026.*

*This does not mean that there will be changes made to your parish's boundaries or arrangements. However, it means the arrangements will be reviewed to ensure they align to the statutory criteria for reviews, namely that they reflect the identity and interest of local communities, and that they are as efficient and effective in their governance as can be.*

*Your parish will be kept updated and involved with the process, and if the Committee makes any recommendations for changes, these will be consulted upon publicly.*

*More information will follow when the review is formally launched sometime next month, and we will also seek further information from you, for example whether there are any suggestions or comments you wish the Committee to consider during the review.*

Town Clerk 23 10 25

## ITEM 14

## OUTSIDE BODIES

An opportunity for Members to provide verbal updates on their representational roles to outside bodies

## ITEM 15

## COMMITTEE MINUTES

In accordance with para 3.1 of the Scheme of Delegation, to note the approved minutes of the following committee meetings: **Planning** – 26 August, 15 September and 6 October 2025, **Property** 28 July, Amenities and Open Spaces 16 June, and **Finance and Policy Committee** 30 June 2025, These minutes have been approved by committees and circulated to Members and are available to download from <https://www.marlborough-tc.gov.uk/council/meeting-dates-agendas-and-minutes-2025-26> or from the Town Council offices. Other meetings have taken place, but minutes are not yet approved so remain in draft form.

## ITEM 16

## COMMON SEAL

To authorise the fixing of the Common Seal of Marlborough Town Council to all documents necessary to give effect to the decisions of the meeting.

## Marlborough Area Youth Forum Rent Reduction Proposal

### Background

Many young people in Marlborough face significant challenges, including limited access to positive activities, poor mental health, and disrupted education. The pandemic worsened school readiness and social skills, contributing to a rise in anti-social behaviour. Marlborough is just 10 miles from Swindon and east of Devizes - both affected by County Line gangs and serious youth violence. We have experienced our first stabbings and Marlborough has now been listed by the Wiltshire Police & Crime Commissioner as a priority market town for extra policing this summer.

We believe in giving young people better options: safe spaces, trusted adults to talk to, and support in making positive choices. Our goal is to help them build confidence and resilience by taking responsibility and having a sense of belonging.

In mid-2022, the Forum was set up as a charity and we re-launched the local youth club with funding from the National Lottery, local government, and community grants. We employ an experienced Youth Worker who has successfully recruited volunteers and engaged third parties to offer a variety of activities.

Located near the town's main area of social housing - identified by Wiltshire Intelligence as an area of deprivation - the club reaches many young people facing multiple challenges, some at risk of exploitation. Initially attracting around 25 young people once a week, the club now runs twice weekly, with 50–70 attending each night. Success comes from offering a variety of activities, a safe place to relax, and free hot food.

We also host holiday activity days, open to everyone in the community age 5 and upwards, supported by local sports clubs, boosting awareness of our offer to encourage engagement. Wiltshire Council's FUEL programme now recognises our contribution, and two FUEL events have been arranged via the Forum this summer.

We make no charge for our services to ensure the club is as inclusive as possible.

To sustain this vital support, we are seeking help from Marlborough Town Council, representing the local community, to keep the club running through a contribution to our running costs, the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest of which is the rent we pay Marlborough Town Council.

## Marlborough Area Youth Forum Rent Reduction Proposal

### Financials

The Forum books the MC&YC in advance for the Wednesday and Friday club sessions. Over our financial year September 24 – August 25, the Forum has paid £5,181 to MTC in rent.

It does benefit from a charity rate of £16.50 an hour (so £49.50 a session) but is subject to the same T&Cs as other renters so a cancellation (for example due to a shortage in volunteers) with less than 2 weeks' notice is charged at the full rate.

We are aware that MTC has several properties that are used by organisations such as the rugby, golf, bowls and boxing clubs; all of these derive an income from member subscriptions and the first 3 by operating a bar, 2 of which have a public license.

The Finance Committee will be aware of the rent payable by the rugby and golf clubs and know that neither are set at a commercial level and both benefit from extended set rate periods (i.e. no annual inflation-based rises). Bowls and boxing pay no rent, however, all four are responsible for maintaining their premises (though the boxing club has not done so). MTC, therefore, benefits from the rental income with no on costs.

The Merchants House also pay just a peppercorn rent. I think most would agree it is an exceptional case as the arrangement enables MTC to support the MH Trust for the wider community benefit.

The key points here are that

- Marlborough benefits from some great for profit and not for profit clubs and charities supporting the wider community
- MTC operate different rental models, but the effect is to provide indirect financial support to the clubs (including commercial ones) and charities. The local precept/taxpayers are therefore subsidising their operations.
- The Forum does not receive any financial support to run the youth club and provide activity days that benefit so many young people on an ongoing basis.

### Proposal

Given the important role the Forum plays in supporting the Marlborough's young people, particularly those from the more deprived areas of town, it is proposed that MTC reduces the rent payable by the Forum for its 2 sessions per week to a fixed amount – say £500 or £1,000 pa reviewed every 3 years.

## Marlborough Area Youth Forum Rent Reduction Proposal

This arrangement will provide certainty for the Forum in terms of its financial planning and support its ongoing viability.

The subsidy, as with the other clubs mentioned, will ultimately be a cost for the taxpayer.

- The current precept (for 25/26) will raise £931,251
- An extra £4,500 in 26/27 onwards represents less than 0.5%.

In return, the Forum will be better placed to continue what has become an essential services for many young people of Marlborough where every youngster is treated the same because there are no charges, no barriers or exclusions, contributing to their wellbeing and avoiding what for some would be alternative antisocial behaviour.

Thank you.

Kelvyn Shantry 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2025

Caroline Wrench 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2025

## Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2024/25

In respect of **MARLBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL – WI0158**

### 1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/>

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2025; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

### 2 External auditor’s limited assurance opinion 2024/25

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

None.

### 3 External auditor certificate 2024/25

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2025.

External Auditor Name

**PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP**

External Auditor Signature

*PKF Littlejohn LLP*

Date

17/09/2025



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# **Marlborough Town Council**

*Internal Audit Report 2025-26 (First Interim)*

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*Stuart J Pollard*

*Director  
Auditing Solutions Ltd*

## Background

Statute requires all town and parish councils to arrange for an independent internal audit examination of their accounting records and systems of internal control and for the conclusions to be reported each year in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

This report sets out the initial work undertaken in relation to the 2025-26 financial year, both in advance of and during our first visit for 2025-26 which took place on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2025. We thank the Office Manager and the Town Clerk for providing the necessary records to facilitate commencement of the year's review. Further reports will be issued following our further visits which will take place in January 2026 and subsequent to closure of the year's Omega accounts.

## Internal Audit Approach

In commencing our review, we have continued to pay due regard to the materiality of transactions and their susceptibility to potential misrecording or misrepresentation in the year-end Statement of Accounts / AGAR. Our programme of cover is designed to afford appropriate assurance that the Council's financial systems remain robust and operate in a manner to ensure effective probity of transactions and to afford a reasonable probability of identifying any material errors or possible abuse of the Council's own and the national statutory regulatory framework. The programme is also designed to facilitate our completion of the 'Internal Audit Report' in the Council's AGAR.

## Overall Conclusion

Based on the work undertaken to date, we are pleased to record that the Council continues to maintain effective internal control arrangements. Detail of the work undertaken in the areas examined to date are set out in the following detailed report with any issues identified also set out accordingly with resultant recommendations reiterated in the appended Action Plan.

We have discussed any issues arising with the Town Clerk and Office Manager also reminding them of the additional box 10 disclosure requirement in the 2025-26 AGAR Governance Statement relating, inter alia, to the publication of appropriate information on the Council's website and will review the Council's standing in that respect at our next visit.

In line with best practice, the report should be presented to Council and, ideally, also be posted on the Council's website.

**This report has been prepared for the sole use of Marlborough Town Council. To the fullest extent permitted by law, no responsibility or liability is accepted by Auditing Solutions Ltd to any third party who purports to use or rely, for any reason whatsoever, on this report, its contents or conclusions.**

## Detailed Report

### Maintenance of Accounting Records & Bank Reconciliations

The Council uses the Rialtas Omega software to maintain its accounting records with two operational bank accounts in place with Barclays, the Business Current and Business Saver Accounts with transaction detail on each recorded in a single combined account cashbook in Omega.

A further account is in place with the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund with the Council's surplus reserves held therein with the monthly earned interest automatically transferred / deposited in the Barclays Current account.

Our objective here is to ensure that the accounting records are being maintained accurately and currently and that no anomalous entries appear in the cashbooks or financial ledgers. Consequently we have to date this year: -

- Agreed the opening trial balance detail for 2025-26 as recorded in Omega to the closing detail contained in the 2024-25 AGAR;
- Ensured that the cost centre and nominal ledger income and expenditure coding structure remains appropriate for purpose;
- Checked and ensured that the Omega accounts remain "in balance" on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025;
- Checked and agreed detail in the combined Barclays account cashbooks, examining and agreeing transactions for April and September 2025 to supporting bank statements;
- Agreed the combined Business Current and Business Saver Account bank reconciliation as of 30<sup>th</sup> April and September 2025; and
- Noted that members of to the Finance and Policy Committee review bank reconciliations during the course of the year.

#### *Conclusions*

*We are pleased to record that no issues arise in this area currently warranting formal comment or recommendation: we shall examine two further months' transactions at our subsequent visits, also ensuring the accurate disclosure of the combined cash and bank account balances in the AGAR Section 2 Box 8.*

### Review of Corporate Governance

Our objective here is to ensure that the Council has a robust series of corporate governance documentation and controls in place; that Council and Committee meetings are conducted in accordance with the adopted Standing Orders (SOs) and that, as far as we are reasonably able to ascertain, no actions of a potentially unlawful nature have been or are being considered for implementation, although it is for the Council to determine the legality of its transactions.

Consequently, we have commenced our review of the Council's minutes, examining those for the Full Council and its Standing Committee meetings (except for Planning) held during the financial

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**Auditing Solutions Ltd**

year to date in 2025-26 with a view to identifying whether any issues exist that may have an adverse effect on the Council's future financial stability, both in the short and longer term.

We are again pleased to note that the Council continues to keep its corporate policies under review with Full Council adopting revised Standing Orders and Financial Regulations at the Meeting held in May 2025 in line with the latest NALC model documents. We also note that the General Power of Competence has been re-adopted.

We note that the Council continues to post detail of all payments over £500 on the website, also noting the appropriate posting of the 2024-25 Notice of Public Rights for the requisite 30 working days and the completed and signed AGAR together with the "clear" external audit certificate.

The 2025-26 Practitioner's Guide refers to a new assertion to be built into the year's AGAR Governance Statement: we have discussed the implications of this additional requirement with the Clerk noting that he is fully aware of the new requirement: consequently, we shall ensure compliance at our next and final review for the year.

### ***Conclusions***

***No issues arise in this area currently warranting formal comment or recommendation. We shall continue to review the Council's approach to Corporate Governance issues, also continuing our review of minutes at our next interim and subsequent final visits.***

## **Review of Expenditure**

Our aim here is to ensure that:

- Council resources are released in accordance with the Council's approved procedures and budgets;
- Payments are supported by appropriate documentation, either in the form of an original trade invoice or other appropriate form of document confirming the payment as due and/or an acknowledgement of receipt, where no other form of invoice is available;
- Members are provided with and approve, the regular schedules of payments made;
- All discounts due on goods and services supplied are identified and appropriate action taken to secure the discount;
- The appropriate cost centre and nominal account codes have been charged, and
- VAT has been appropriately identified and coded to the control account for periodic recovery.

We have again checked the controls over the processing of payments and have, at this first review visit, for a selected sample of 45 individual payments individually in excess of £3,000 plus every 40<sup>th</sup> payment made in the year to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025 to ensure compliance with the above criteria. Our test sample totals £446,930 equating to 71% of non-pay expenditure to that date. We are pleased to record that all payments in the test sample were appropriately supported.

We have also confirmed that VAT due for recovery from HMRC at the end of 2024-25, together with that due on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025 has been reclaimed and repaid accordingly.

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### *Conclusions*

*We are pleased to record that no issues arise in this area currently: we shall extend our test sample to include payments over the remainder of the financial year at future review visits also ensuring the continued regular preparation and submission of VAT reclaims to HMRC for repayment.*

## **Assessment and Management of Risk**

Our aim here is to ensure that the Council has put in place appropriate arrangements to identify all potential areas of risk of both a financial and health and safety nature, whilst also ensuring that appropriate arrangements exist to monitor and manage those risks to minimise the opportunity for their coming to fruition.

The Council's Risk Management Scheme and register of assessed risks has been reviewed and re-adopted by the Council in May 2025: we have reviewed the resultant document and consider that it remains appropriate for the Council's present requirements.

We have examined the Council's current year's insurance schedule as provided by Zurich and are pleased to note that appropriate cover remains in place relating to buildings, vehicles and equipment, with Public and Employer's Liability standing at £15 million and £10 million respectively, together with Hirers Liability at £2 million and Fidelity Guarantee cover also set at £2 million, all of which we consider appropriate for the Council's present requirements.

As in prior years, the insurance includes an inspection contract to ensure the safety of plant such as play equipment.

### *Conclusions*

*No issues arise from our work in this area this year: we shall continue to monitor the Council's approach to risk management at future visits reporting our findings accordingly.*

## **Review of Income**

The Council receives income, in addition to the Precept, primarily from Town Hall lettings, property rents, allotments, burial and associated fees, bank interest and specific grants & donations, together with recoverable VAT, which is recovered quarterly. To date, we have -:

- Ensured receipt of the two precept instalments for 2025-26 into the Council's bank account in line with the Council approved value request;
- Checked detail of the 8 burials occurring since 1<sup>st</sup> August 2025 to the date of this first review visit for the year, ensuring that, for each, appropriate interment application documentation had been received, together with the statutorily required burial and / or cremation certificates in each case. We have also ensured that the correct fees had been charged and paid to the Council, noting that the fees relating to the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2025 interment had not yet been received at the date of our review; and

- Reviewed income received against budget with no issues or concerns of note existing currently.

### **Conclusions**

*As indicated above, no issues arise in relation to the income streams examined in the year to date warranting formal comment or recommendation. We will examine income arising from other sources at our next review reporting our conclusions accordingly.*

## **Petty Cash Account**

We are required, as part of the AGAR certification process, to consider the effectiveness of the Council's controls over any petty cash account or other cash holding in use.

The Council operates a limited petty cash account to defray sundry administrative expenses. The account is "topped up" as and when required with "round sum" cash withdrawals through the Barclays cash-point card, generally of £50 each with those cash transfers coded directly to expense code 4022/101 (Petty cash). Whilst we note that a monthly record is maintained recording the opening physical cash balance carried over from the previous month, plus any cash transfer received in that month less detail of any "in month" purchases to arrive at the month-end balance which is checked and agreed to the physical cash holding.

Whilst the physical cash holding is consequently relatively small (generally less than £100) at each month-end, the value of that holding is not physically recorded in the Omega accounts and is also, consequently not reflected in the combined year-end cash and bank balances in the AGAR at Section 2, Box 8.

During the course of this interim review, we have both checked and agreed the physical cash holding to the maintained record also ensuring that the 11 payments made between 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025 and our visit date were appropriately supported by till receipts. We note that, whilst only one payment in our review period included an element of VAT, that amount being insignificant. Due to the way petty cash account transactions are recoded (i.e. only the periodic cash top-ups are recorded in the Omega accounts), the actual physically held cash balance is not identified in either the Omega accounts or AGAR.

### **Conclusion and recommendation**

*Appropriate accounting arrangements should be put in place to ensure that, whilst insignificant amounts are involved, the physical petty cash holding is appropriately accounted for throughout the year with the year-end holding included as a cash holding in the AGAR at Section 2, Boxes 7 & 8. This would best be achieved by establishing a separate cashbook in Omega with the year's opening balance, periodic top-ups and monthly payments duly recorded in the cashbook account. This would also facilitate the identification and recording of any recoverable VAT incurred on purchases during the year.*

*R1. Appropriate petty cash account recording arrangements should be put in place to record all account transactions during the year resulting in the appropriate disclosure of the year-end petty cash account balance in the AGAR at Section 2.*

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## Review of Staff Salaries

In examining the Council's payroll function, we aim to confirm that extant legislation is being appropriately observed as regards adherence to the Employee Rights Act 1998 and the requirements of HMRC legislation relating to the deduction and payment over of income tax and NI contributions, together with meeting the requirements of the local government pension scheme with regard to employee contribution percentages. We have previously examined the payroll procedures in place and considered them generally sound.

Consequently, we have, by reference to the Office Manager's record of staff in post, the approved point on the NJC pay scale and contracted weekly working hours: -

- Agreed the gross salaries paid to each employee in August 2025, including the national pay award arrears payable from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025;
- Checked and agreed detail of overtime enhancements paid with the August 2025 payroll to supporting time sheets;
- Verified the tax and NI deductions applied for the month to each employee;
- Checked and agreed the pension deductions being applied to ensure that they are in line with the nationally agreed percentages based on the gross salary being paid; and
- Agreed the net monthly salaries paid to each employee to the underlying payslips.

### *Conclusions*

*We are pleased to record that no issues have been identified in this review area warranting formal comment or recommendation.*

## Review of Investments and Loans

We seek to ensure surplus funds are invested appropriately to maximise income earning potential whilst also ensuring, as far as is reasonably possible, that funds are invested securely in line with the Council's adopted Investment Policy. £500,000 is currently on deposit in the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund with the interest earned monthly duly deposited in the Barclays Current account.

No loans are in place repayable either by or to the Council at the present time.

### *Conclusions*

*No issues arise from our work to date in this area: we will ensure appropriate receipt and deposit of the monthly CCLA income in the Barclays current bank account at future reviews.*

Rec. No.	Recommendation	Response
<b>Petty Cash Account</b>		
R1	Appropriate petty cash account recording arrangements should be put in place to record all account transactions during the year resulting in the appropriate disclosure of the year-end petty cash account balance in the AGAR at Section 2.	