

NORTHLEACH WITH EASTINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Finance and General Resources Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2026, 7pm
at the Westwoods Centre, Northleach

Members Present: Cllrs Matt Jackson (Committee Chairman), Gina Blackwell, Terry Morley-Blackwell, Brian Hulcup, Valerie Glynn, and Flam Wellman

In Attendance: Ms Pauline Rigby (Clerk/RFO)

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies received from Cllr Michael Seath.

2. Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

3. Confirmation of Minutes

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the Finance and General Resources Committee meeting held on 14 October 2025 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

Note: it was agreed to change the order of business while waiting for Ms Chandler-Mullins to arrive, so agenda items 5(a) and 5(b) were considered next, then item 4, but the minutes are recorded in numerical order for ease of reference.

4. Grant applications:

- (a) To consider application from Friends of the Cotswolds for £500 towards the 'Heritage on Display' project at The Old Prison.

Lou Chandler-Mullins had joined the meeting to present the application. She explained that the aim of the project at the Old Prison is to improve the museum element. They wanted to make better use of the existing gallery space, to enhance the Prison as a visitor attraction and to showcase the heritage of Northleach. A pledge of £500 in match funding is being sought, subject to a successful application to the Arts Council. The proposed project would run for one year, although the displays would remain in place until loan agreements expire, and the gallery space would continue to be available for future use. A decision on the Arts Council application is expected towards the end of March.

It was RESOLVED to pledge £500 for the 'Heritage on Display' project.

- (b) To review and re-adopt the Town Council grants policy.

Two minor amendments were proposed for clarity.

It was RESOLVED that the policy as amended be re-adopted.

5. Financial reporting:

- (a) To approve and sign the bank reconciliation to 31 December 2025.

Cllr Glynn had verified the bank reconciliation.

It was RESOLVED that the bank reconciliation be approved.

- (a) To review quarterly receipts and payments detail.

To be circulated after the meeting, councillors to raise any questions.

- (b) To review the budget monitoring report.

Reports had been circulated.

- (c) To report transfers between council accounts.

The Clerk reported that £5,000 had been drawn down from CCLA to maintain the current account balance.

- (d) To note submission of VAT return for 31 December 2025.

The Clerk confirmed that the VAT return had been submitted.

6. To report on internal control checks and agree arrangements for next check.

Cllr Glynn had conducted the recent checks, and a report had been circulated.

She reported that, following discussion with the Clerk, the BrightHR service would be cancelled as the Council now has other sources of HR Advice.

It was RESOLVED that Cllr Hulcup would carry out the next internal control checks.

7. To confirm the competence and independence of the appointed Internal Auditor.

It was RESOLVED that, to the best of its knowledge, the Council confirms that the appointed Internal Auditor is competent and independent of the Council.

8. Investments:

- (a) To review and update the Treasury Management Policy.

An updated draft policy had been circulated. The Clerk explained that there is a legal requirement to have an investment Strategy and renaming the policy would make this clear that the Council was compliant.

It was RESOLVED that the policy be renamed as an Investment Strategy and the proposed amendments be approved.

- (b) To note increase in FSCS limit to £120,000 and consider any further actions arising.

It was noted that the savings account covered by FSCS was a 95-day notice account, while although not covered by FSCS, the CCLA account was low risk with good interest rates and instant access. It was agreed no further actions are required.

- (c) To report renewal of Cambridge & Counties Bank 95-day notice account to Issue 29 with annual interest rate of 4.2%.

This was noted.

9. To review and re-adopt the Council's Publication Scheme.

No amendments to the publication scheme were proposed. Members discussed their desire to publish the complete meeting pack with the agenda but, due to current staff shortages, agreed to defer the matter until May. Meanwhile it was agreed to include a statement on the agenda: "For additional information and background papers please contact the Clerk".

It was RESOLVED that the Publication Scheme be re-adopted.

10. To receive an update on website accessibility testing, and approve the revised website accessibility statement.

The Clerk gave a summary of the testing carried out on the website and the results.

It was RESOLVED that the revised website accessibility statement be accepted.

11. To present the salary benchmarking exercise and agree the way forward

Minute 13 of 14 October 2025 refers. A confidential report had been circulated outlining the pay scale structure and providing comparables from other parishes nearby.

The Clerk declared an interest in the matter and left the room at this point.

Following a discussion, the Clerk returned to the room and was informed of the decision.

It was RESOLVED to award the Town Clerk an increase of one point on the salary scale, from SCP 28 to SCP 29.

It was further RESOLVED to undertake a benchmarking exercise within an independent body to determine the appropriate LC scale for this council is and where staff sit on those scales. Authority was given to proceed immediately with the report if the cost is £800 or less; if the cost exceeds £800, the matter is to be referred back to a future meeting for further consideration.

12. To agree a recommendation to Full Council for the budget and precept for 2026-27.

A draft budget had been circulated. Cllr Jackson introduced this item, highlighting that the draft budget included the new cost of operating the public toilets. A subsidy from the district council was included in the budget, but from April 2027 the full cost of the toilets would fall to the Council. One possibility was to create an EMR for the toilets in the current year, with the intention of using it in the following year to help cushion any future increase.

Members considered what level of increase in the precept could reasonably be justified to residents of Northleach. It was recalled that when setting the budget last year, the Band D Council Tax had been held at the same level. It was suggested that the Bassett Road S106 earmarked reserve (EMR) could be used for playground surfacing or renewal, to avoid having to budget separately for those items.

Following discussions around the appropriate level of reserves,

It was RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council a budget resulting in an increase of 3% on Council Tax bills with the gap of about £5,000 funded from general reserves.

13. Items for future meetings: (for information only)

To be added: Publishing agenda packs (May 2026), new Employment Rights Act (Cllr Glynn).

14. Date of Next Meeting.

The next scheduled meeting is on **Tuesday 21 April 2026** unless required sooner.

The meeting closed at 9:00 pm.

Signature of the Chairman on approval of the minutes: _____