

NORTHLEACH WITH EASTINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

Finance and General Resources Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 21 April 2026, 7pm
at the Westwoods Centre, Northleach

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

In Attendance: Ms Pauline Rigby (Clerk/RFO)

1. Apologies for absence

All councillors were present.

2. Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

3. Confirmation of Minutes

It was noted that the date of next meeting had been given as the 14 April instead of 21 April.

It was RESOLVED that, subject to this amendment, the minutes of the Finance and General Resources Committee meeting held on 13 January 2026 be confirmed as a true record.

4. Grant applications:

- (a) To consider application from Stroud & North Cotswolds Citizens Advice.

It was RESOLVED that the application be reviewed in December.

Reason: The request does not relate to a specific project cost. However, the value of the application is recognised and, should budget remain available at the end of the financial year, it will be reconsidered at that time.

- (b) To consider donation request from Cotswolds Friends.

It was RESOLVED that the grant application be refused.

Reason: The application form was not completed, no specific amount was requested, and the request does not relate to a defined project cost. The applicant may wish to submit a revised application in the future with the required information.

5. Financial reporting:

- (a) To approve and sign the bank reconciliation to 31 March 2026.

Cllrs Jackson and Hulcup had both 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 and were briefly discussed.

- (c) To report transfers between council accounts.

The Clerk reported that, among other transfers, £15,000 had been drawn down from Cambridge & Counties notice account on 20 March to maintain the current account balance.

- (d) To note submission of VAT return for 31 March 2026.

The Clerk confirmed that the VAT return had been submitted.

6. To note temporary suspension of two online approvals process, now reinstated, following shortage of available signatories, and appoint additional councillors as full signatories.

It was RESOLVED that Cllrs Blackwell and Glynn be added as signatories to the Council's current account with access to online banking.

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

Cllr Hulcup had conducted the recent checks and checked petty cash.

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

8. To receive the interim internal audit report and agree any actions arising:

The report had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Clerk outlined the actions to be taken in response, specifically the addition of an explanatory note within the invoices folder to clarify how it was organised.

Members noted that many good practices had been noted in the report, and thanked the Clerk for her work. They questioned the rationale of changing the process for reporting payments and asked the Clerk to raise this with the auditor.

9. To review and approve the list of direct debits and regular payments.

The Clerk described the list and purpose of each direct debit or regular payment.

It was RESOLVED that list of direct debits and regular payments be approved, including a new direct debit to Cotswold District Council for paying business rates.

It was clarified that setting up a standing order required two councillor signatures.

10. To review the Financial Reserves Policy and confirm earmarked reserves at 31 March 2026.

The policy had been circulated with an amendment to clause 5 as follows: "Unspent project budgets held as earmarked reserves for ongoing projects shall be carried forward at the end of the financial year. If a project is cancelled, the associated earmarked reserve will be closed and any remaining balance transferred to the general fund."

It was RESOLVED that the amended policy be approved.

It was further RESOLVED to confirm the earmarked reserves position.

11. To agree how much to move to savings accounts when precept has been received.

It was RESOLVED to split the funds evenly between the two savings accounts, putting £35,000 in CCLA and £35,000 into Cambridge & Counties Bank.

12. To note that employer's automatic enrolment Pensions duties have been completed.

The Clerk reported that a review had been carried out to determine whether staff should be automatically enrolled in a pension scheme and outlined the outcome. The re-declaration of compliance with the Pensions Regulator could now be submitted.

13. To approve purchase of council mobiles for Town Clerk and Admin Officer

The Clerk explained that council mobiles had become a necessity for business continuity reasons. A budget-friendly device could be paired with a low-cost SIM-only contract.

It was RESOLVED that mobile phones be purchased for Town Clerk and Admin Officer with an expected cost of less than £200 per device.

14. To receive the report from SLCC Consultancy and consider the recommendations.

Cllr Jackson introduced this item, noting that the Council hadn't had a review of the Clerk's role since 2017. He felt it was useful to understand the appropriate grading of the Council and Clerk's role i.e. LC2 substantive, and recommendations for grade points for each of role.

Some concern was raised regarding an apparent contradiction in the report, namely that the Clerk is overburdened while also indicating that councillors should take on less. The potential risk of councillors undertaking work normally carried out by staff was discussed, particularly in the event of councillor turnover.

Committee considered whether to recommend the new grading structure to Full Council or seek clarification on the methodology first. It was also felt that the report did not fully reflect the way the Council currently operates. Members agreed that, if the document is to form part of the Council's records, it should accurately represent its activities and responsibilities.

It was therefore RESOLVED that a response be prepared, highlighting the key points to be addressed and requesting further information on the methodology of evaluation. Members would provide feedback to Cllr Jackson, who would collate and summarise comments before responding to the consultant.

15. To confirm appointment of Anthony Warder as Westwoods Caretaker.

It was RESOLVED to appoint Anthony Warder as Westwoods Caretaker for 8 hours per week on SCP 6, subject to receiving satisfactory references.

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

Already noted: Employment law changes (Cllr Glynn)

17. Date of Next Meeting.

The next scheduled meeting is on **Tuesday 14 July 2026** unless required sooner.

The meeting closed at 8:15 pm.

Signature of the Chairman on approval of the minutes: _____