



FILTON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the **Finance & Scrutiny Committee** held at 7:00PM on Tuesday, 11th November 2025 –
Held at: Filton Town Council Conference Room, Elm Park Leisure Centre, Filton, Elm Park, BS34
7PS

PRESENT: Cllrs: D. Harris (*Chair*), A. Bird, D. Boardman, B. Mead (*Deputy Mayor*), T Mewies (*Mayor*)

IN ATTENDANCE: Simon Davies (*Town Clerk*), Robert Hutton (*Deputy Clerk*) & Peach Jones (*Support Officer*)

APOLOGIES: J. Baverstock (*Vice Chair*), S. Milestone

MEETING STARTED AT 7:00PM

01. EVACUATION PROCEDURES – Noted.

02. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Noted: Cllrs Baverstock and Milestone.

03. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

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| i. | To receive declarations of interest from Councillors on items on the agenda. | None. |
| ii. | To receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests (if any). | None. |
| ii. | To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate. | None. |

04. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: **Items 21 and 22** were declared for exclusion to the press and public, with the press and no public in attendance.

05. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 14TH OCTOBER 2025:

RESOLVED: The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

06. MATTERS OF REPORT ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT OTHERWISE COVERED BY THE AGENDA

NOTED: No matters arising from the previous Minutes.

07. ACCOUNTS: INCOME AND EXPENDITURE TO SEPTEMBER 2025

The Town Clerk outlined the variances in figures and clarified the confusion over finance headings which were set up by previous administration of the council.

RESOLVED: Committee members proposed to take items 7, 8 & 9 together. Councillors voted to approve and reconcile all payments and account figures including the Income and Expenditure from September 2025 as presented.

08. ACCOUNTS: BANK RECONCILE TO SEPTEMBER 2025

The Town Clerk presented the bank accounts to reconcile from September and clarified that due to staff limitation Filton Town Council are at least two months behind.

RESOLVED: Committee members proposed to take items 7, 8 & 9 together. Councillors voted to approve and reconcile all payments and account figures including the Income and Expenditure from September 2025 as presented.

09. ACCOUNTS: PAYMENTS

The Town Clerk presented to councillors a schedule of all payments from September 2025. Councillors raised a query on the water bill from Everflow regarding an ongoing credit balance which is overdue. It was noted by the Town Clerk that significant changes must be made internally in order to get these payments up to date.

RESOLVED: Councillors voted to approve and reconcile all payments from September 2025 as presented.

10. RIALTAS QUOTES

The Deputy Town Clerk presented quotes for multiple upgrade package options to the accounting software, already currently utilised but with the addition of Allotment Management, Asset Management, Bookings and Raising Purchase Orders.

The Deputy Clerk took questions from councillors regarding the pros and cons of acquiring these software packages including the cost effectiveness implied by the implementation of the extra software feature upgrades.

It was proposed to council by the Town Clerk that with the addition of these software packages it would make for a more streamlined finance processing system which will enable the council staff to better utilise areas which are in need of more dedicated hours due to there not previously being a reliable process already in place by previous management practise.

RESOLVED: Members agreed by vote to proceed with three of the four proposed software modules: Allotment Management, Asset Inventory, and Purchase Order Processing.

It was further proposed that the Town Clerk seek discussions with Elm Park Leisure Centre regarding the potential for them to operate or integrate a facilities booking system, rather than the Council purchasing this module at this stage.

11. TENDER UPDATE

NOTED: The Town Clerk provided a further update on the ongoing tender processes for both the Filton Festival and the Long-Term Leisure Centre Operator contracts, following the Committee's previous discussions at the last meeting.

Members were advised that work remains in progress to finalise both tenders for online publication. The Filton Festival Tender is currently undergoing final pre-publication checks, with the intention for it to be uploaded by [insert date], subject to the completion of minor adjustments where required. Larger amendments, if any arise, will continue to be referred back to Council for consideration, consistent with the approach agreed at the previous meeting.

The Committee also noted that Filton Town Council remains in active correspondence with Irwin Mitchell Solicitors, who are appointed to undertake the legal review of the Long-Term Leisure Centre Operator Tender documentation. Their role is to ensure the contract is robust, legally compliant, and free from potential loopholes or contractual risks before publication.

The Town Clerk confirmed that once the necessary legal checks are completed, both tenders will be prepared for publication, and opportunities will continue to be explored to

circulate the tenders through appropriate channels, including direct engagement with historically interested organisations, as previously raised by Members.

12. PLANNING TRAINING FOR FILTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOLVED: The Committee considered the proposal from the Planning Consultant to deliver formal planning training for councillors and council staff. - It was highlighted that the Staffing Committee was not quorate; therefore, the matter was referred to the Finance & Scrutiny Committee for determination.

Members discussed the importance of securing a date that would accommodate the attendance of all, or the majority of, councillors. Cllr Mewies raised concerns regarding the difficulty of identifying a suitable date that would ensure sufficient participation.

Cllr Boardman proposed that, in order to maximise accessibility and value, the training session should be both recorded and made available for later viewing, and that remote attendance via Microsoft Teams should be offered for those unable to be present in person.

Cllr Doyle supported this approach, emphasising that full benefit would only be achieved if a significant number of councillors were able to engage with the session.

Cllr Bird expressed confidence that this blended approach by offering in-person, remote, and recorded access would ensure the training remained cost-effective while enabling a higher proportion of councillors to take part.

The Deputy Clerk reported that, following a recent circulation requesting availability, only two councillors had confirmed they were able to attend the initially proposed date, underscoring the need for a more flexible delivery method.

RESOLVED:

Members agreed that the training should proceed on a revised date to be arranged with the Planning Consultant, with measures in place to maximise attendance and accessibility. This is to include the option for remote participation and provision of a recording and slides for councillors and staff.

13. TELEPHONE AND COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

RESOLVED: The Committee considered the proposal to upgrade the Council's telephone and communications system including:

- a. Establishing a Direct Debit with EE for two SIM cards at a cost of £50; and
- b. Transitioning from desk-based telephones to mobile devices supported by a Microsoft Teams call-forwarding and call-management system.

The Town Clerk gave an overview of the proposed technical and logistical transition, explaining that the upgrade would replace existing desk phones with work-issued mobile phones for all staff. This system would integrate with Microsoft Teams to enable seamless call forwarding, call handling, and internal communication.

It was emphasised that the primary purpose of the upgrade is to enhance staff safety, particularly for team members such as the Open Spaces Team and the Street Cleanser, who frequently work away from their desks or off-site. The move to mobile devices would ensure staff have a reliable means of making and receiving calls during working hours. Members also noted that the improved system could allow for increased operational awareness of staff working alone or on mobile rounds, solely for safety monitoring purposes.

The Town Clerk clarified that the intention behind the upgrade is not to facilitate or encourage home working, but to improve workplace safety, communication efficiency, and flexibility. Additional benefits include the ability for staff to share photos and videos more easily for operational and reporting purposes, internal messaging and social media updates.

RESOLVED:

Members unanimously agreed to support the proposed upgrade to the Council's telephone and communications system, including the introduction of work mobile phones for all staff and the establishment of the EE Direct Debit for two SIM cards.

14. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) ANNUAL STATEMENT

NOTED: The Committee received and noted the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Annual Statement for 2023/24, issued by South Gloucestershire Council, presented as Annex F. The Town Clerk advised that the CIL income had previously been held within the Council's Earmarked Reserves and wished to draw Members' attention to the updated figures and the opportunity to consider future use of these funds.

Members noted from the statement that Filton Town Council received £10,799.01 in CIL receipts during the 2023/24 reporting year. The report further confirmed that:

- No CIL expenditure was incurred during the reporting year.
- No CIL receipts were subject to Regulation 59E notices requiring repayment
- All CIL funds received in 2023/24 remain fully retained and available for eligible future infrastructure projects.

The Town Clerk invited Members to begin considering potential areas of expenditure that would meet CIL criteria and support local infrastructure improvements, noting that this discussion may be developed further at a future meeting.

15. PRECEPT AND BUDGET 2026-2027

The Committee considered the timetable and process for preparing the draft Precept and Budget for the 2026–2027 financial year, as set out in the agenda. Members noted that a request must be issued to all Committees to submit proposed budget items for initial consideration.

Councillors asked for clarification regarding the Council's capacity to allocate expenditure within defined budget lines and how Committee submissions would be used to support early budget formation.

The Town Clerk confirmed that, due to the Council's meeting schedule where Full Council meets on the last Tuesday of each month - there is no Full Council meeting scheduled in December, owing to the Christmas period. As such, the November Full Council meeting would be the final opportunity in 2025 to present this request for approval.

RESOLVED: The Committee agreed that all Committees are to be asked to submit their proposed budget items by the first week of December 2025. This recommendation will be presented to Full Council at its meeting on Tuesday, 25th November 2025 at 7.00pm.

16. COMMITTEE BUDGET RESPONSIBILITIES

The Committee considered the proposal, as outlined in the agenda, to recommend that each Committee be granted the authority to spend within clearly defined budget lines and financial limits as part of the budgeting framework for the forthcoming financial year.

RESOLVED: Councillors agreed to recommend to Full Council that, with effect from 1st April 2026, each Committee be assigned its own set budget, including specified expenditure lines and limits, enabling Committees to manage and authorise spending within those agreed parameters.

17. AUDIT UPDATE

The Committee received an update from the Town Clerk on both the external and internal audit processes, as set out in the agenda.

- a. External Audit 2024-2025 - **NOTED:** The Town Clerk reported that the External Auditor, BDO, is still processing the Council's submission, and the final audited report has not yet been received. Members were informed that the delay has been communicated to the Council and remains outside the Council's control.
- b. In-Year Assurance (Internal Audit) 2025–2026 - **NOTED:** Members noted that the scheduled internal audit review will take place on 12th November 2025, forming part of the Council's in-year assurance and compliance monitoring arrangements.

18. MAYORAL ALLOWANCE EXPENDITURE

The Committee considered the proposals relating to the use of the Mayoral Allowance. The Town Clerk advised that, while the Council has an established Mayoral Policy, no accompanying Mayoral Allowance Expenditure Document currently exists to set out permitted forms of expenditure or guide future decision-making. Members discussed the importance of establishing a clear framework for transparency, audit compliance, and consistency in how the annual Mayoral Allowance (currently set at £1,000) is managed.

Members considered and resolved to agree to the specific proposals:

- a. A donation of £200 to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal 2025.
- b. The introduction of a provision allowing an annual donation of up to £200 to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal as a permitted use of the Mayoral Allowance, subject to approval by the incumbent Mayor.

During discussion, Members noted the need for clearer guidance to support such decisions in future years. Cllr Doyle proposed that the Town Clerk prepare a Mayoral Allowance Expenditure Document, either as a standalone policy that complements the existing Mayoral Policy, or embedded within the Mayoral Policy itself, with the exact structure to be determined by the Town Clerk and to be brought back to either Finance & Scrutiny Committee and/or Full Council.

RESOLVED: Councillors agreed to both items (a) and (b) as presented.

It was further resolved that the Town Clerk will produce a Mayoral Allowance Expenditure Document for future consideration, either as a complementary document to the Mayoral Policy or incorporated within it, at the Town Clerk's discretion.

19. LEISURE OPERATOR BASE TRADING ACCOUNT (LOBTA)

NOTED: The Committee received an update from the Town Clerk on the August 2025 Leisure Operator Base Trading Account (LOBTA) for Elm Park Leisure Centre, as outlined in the agenda.

The Town Clerk reported that Elm Park Leisure Centre traded at a surplus for the period, resulting in the Council issuing an invoice to Parkwood Leisure for £10,039.30 (excluding VAT), in accordance with the cost-plus balancing mechanism within the LOBTA agreement. Members noted that the Centre's total cost to the Council for the month was £40,358.13,

compared with the monthly base payment invoiced to the operator of £50,397.43 (excluding VAT), as detailed in the financial statement for August 2025.

The Clerk reminded Members that the *amended LOBTA* figures are typically issued approximately eight weeks after the trading period concerned, due to the need for the operator to reconcile income, expenditure, and contract-related adjustments before submitting the final monthly statement.

20. CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS AND EVENTS

RESOLVED: Following above LOBTA budget adjustments, the Town Clerk presented a proposal to reinstate funding for Christmas decorations and events.

It was noted that the original Christmas budget of approximately £15,000 had been redirected to support the Leisure Centre emergency fund after the previous operator's liquidation. A revised budget of £10,000 is now available.

Councillors discussed possible decoration and event ideas and agreed that £10,000 would be a suitable amount to support community Christmas activities this year.

***THE PRESS & PUBLIC WERE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING REGARDING
ITEMS 21 & 22 AT 8:10PM***

21. EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS

As the Staffing Committee was not quorate, the Committee considered a proposal of a role review.

RESOLVED: Councillors agreed that the role be formally reviewed, with the matter to proceed through the appropriate staffing processes.

22. ADMISSION OF PARKWOOD LEISURE INTO THE AVON PENSION FUND

The Committee considered the request to approve the signing of the admission document relating to Parkwood Leisure's entry into the Avon Pension Fund.

RESOLVED: Councillors agreed that the Mayor and Town Clerk be authorised to sign the Admission Agreement on behalf of the Council.

23. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - NOTED: Tuesday, 9th December 2025 at 7PM.

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8:45pm