FILTON
TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the **Finance & Scrutiny Committee** held at 7:00PM on Tuesday, 10th February 2026 – Held at: Filton Town Council Conference Room, Elm Park Leisure Centre, Filton, Elm Park, BS34 7PS

PRESENT: Cllrs D.Harris *(Chair)*, J.Baverstock *(Vice Chair)*, D.Boardman, A.Doyle & T.Mewies *(Mayor)*.
IN ATTENDANCE: Simon Davies *(Town Clerk)*, Robert Hutton *(Deputy Clerk)*, & Peach Jones *(Support Officer).*
APOLOGIES: Cllrs B. Mead *(Deputy Mayor),* A. Bird & S. Milestone
NON-ATTENDANCE: E.Adjeivi

MEETING STARTED AT 7:05PM

01. EVACUATION PROCEDURES – Noted.

02. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Noted: Cllrs Bird, Mead & Milestone.

03. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

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: No items were declared for exclusion, with no public or press in attendance.

05. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 13TH JANUARY 2026
RESOLVED: The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record and duly signed by the Chair.

06. MATTERS OF REPORT ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT OTHERWISE COVERED BY THE AGENDA
NOTED: The Town Clerk provided an update on the progress of the audit, advising Members that the process has now concluded with a positive outcome compared to the previous year. The formal audit report will be presented to councillors at the next meeting of the Finance & Scrutiny Committee.

The Town Clerk also responded to questions regarding the status of updated and newly drafted Council policies. Members were advised that significant progress has been made compared to the previous year, with only minor amendments remaining. These include the appointment of a licensed Data Protection Officer and the inclusion of updated insurance valuations within the Council's Asset Register. It was further noted that relevant data is currently being uploaded to the Council's integrated Rialtas system.

07. ACCOUNTS: INCOME AND EXPENDITURE TO DECEMBER 2025

The Town Clerk presented the Income and Expenditure report for the period ending December 2025.

Budget Headings
Finance & General Purposes
Allotments
Central Services
Civic Expenses
Corporate Management
Democratic Rep'n & Mgmt
Leisure Centre – Outsourcing
Leisure Centre – General
Leisure Centre – Swimming Pool
Leisure Centre – Outdoor Sport
Millennium Green
MUGA
Outside Services
Play Areas
Playing Fields
Precept & Interest
Roads & Highways
Capital Projects
Capital & Projects
L C Redevelopment

Members were advised that expenditure currently stands at approximately 84% of the approved budget, and key variances were highlighted for consideration.

Councillors raised queries regarding the presentation of certain cost centres, particularly the “Outside Services” heading, noting that the current categorisation does not provide sufficient clarity. The Town Clerk acknowledged this concern and advised that the existing Rialtas budget headings are not currently configured in a way that provides optimal transparency. Officers are therefore working with Rialtas to refresh and restructure the budget sheet, introducing clearer headings and improved breakdowns to enhance financial reporting clarity.

Members further commented that, historically, the Council may have been advised that the system could not be altered due to perceived regulatory or accounting constraints. The Town Clerk confirmed that, while proper accounting standards must be maintained, there is flexibility in how accountancy systems are structured at local council level. It was noted that the Council is exploring bringing more routine financial processes in-house, with external accountants continuing to prepare and review the year-end accounts.

RESOLVED: Committee members voted to approve the Income and Expenditure from December 2025 as presented.

08. ACCOUNTS: BANK RECONCILE TO DECEMBER 2025

The Town Clerk presented the bank reconciliation statements for December 2025, covering the Unity Trust Bank Account, NatWest Imprest Account, and NatWest Business Account.

Unity Trust Current Account	Natwest Imprest Account	Natwest Business Account

Members queried the rationale for maintaining multiple bank accounts. The Town Clerk explained that the current structure reflects legacy arrangements and operational requirements. Given the number of ongoing financial and accountancy system changes currently being implemented, it was considered prudent not to introduce further disruption at this stage. A review of banking arrangements may be considered once the wider financial restructuring work has been completed.

RESOLVED: Councillors approved the bank reconciliations for December 2025 and confirmed that the account balances were accurate as presented in the reports.

09. ACCOUNTS: DECEMBER 2025 PAYMENTS

The Town Clerk The Town Clerk presented the schedule of payments made during December 2025 for Members' review.

DECEMBER 2025 PAYMENTS LIST	
Chandlers Farm Equipment Ltd	DCK Accounting Solutions Ltd
DLIT Solutions Ltd	Filton Voice Ltd
First Fence Ltd	Fleet Line Markers Ltd
Glacier Environmental Ltd	Liam Holden
IT Resource Management Ltd	Lister Wilder
Microshade Business Consultants Ltd	Monsoon Marketing Ltd
Parkwood Leisure Ltd	Ricoh UK Ltd
Screwfix Trade UK	SLCC Enterprises Ltd
South Gloucestershire Council	Speller Metcalfe
Travis Perkins Trading Co Ltd	YZDesigns
Travis Perkins Trading Co Ltd	

It was noted that a full list of payments will be included within the formal published minutes to ensure transparency, acknowledging that once payments have been processed they are a matter of public record.

RESOLVED: Councillors approved and reconciled all payments made in December 2025 as presented.

10. LONG TERM LEISURE CENTRE PROVIDER UPDATE

The Committee received a report from the Town Clerk outlining the differences between a traditional monthly management or lease fee arrangement and a Disclosed Agency Model, as detailed in Annex D.

Members were advised that, following recent national legal rulings, councils may treat leisure services as non-business activities for VAT purposes, provided the Council is clearly the legal provider of the service. Under a Disclosed Agency Model, the Council would be the supplier of leisure services, with an operator acting as its agent and receiving a management fee. Income would belong to the Council, which would carry the associated revenue risk, while potentially benefiting from VAT efficiencies.

The Town Clerk emphasised that such a model would require careful legal and contractual design to ensure compliance with HMRC requirements. Annex D highlights that incomplete or "light-touch" arrangements could expose councils to VAT challenge, back-dated liabilities, and reputational risk.

It was therefore suggested that specialist legal and tax advice be sought before progressing further.

Members discussed a number of considerations, including:

- The implications of the Council assuming full revenue risk under the Agency Model.
- The treatment of VAT and whether the Council would retain VAT benefits while the operator receives a management fee.
- Procurement and contract variation risks.

- Insurance and indemnity requirements.
- Political and reputational risk relating to pricing structures and concessionary rates.
- The financial incentive structure and whether profit-share mechanisms would change under an agency arrangement.
- The potential length of any interim arrangement (e.g., 2-3 months) should further exploration be required before awarding a long-term contract.

The Town Clerk clarified that, under a compliant agency model, income would belong to the Council and the operator would receive a management fee, with the financial structure needing to be carefully built into the contract. It was noted that other councils have adopted similar models; however, given Filton Town Council's scale as a parish authority, the associated risks and governance requirements must be carefully considered.

Members further discussed the importance of ensuring that the leisure centre is not viewed solely as a revenue-generating asset and suggested that governance principles around this be reflected in Council policy documentation where appropriate.

RESOLVED:
All members agreed:

A. That the Town Clerk obtain and circulate to Members of the Finance & Scrutiny Committee the anticipated costs of commissioning specialist legal and tax advice in relation to the Disclosed Agency Model and associated HMRC implications.

B. That a full comparative report, setting out both the traditional contractual model and the Disclosed Agency Model (including risks, benefits, and financial implications), be prepared and circulated to Finance & Scrutiny Members ahead of the next meeting.

11. PRECEPT 2026-2027

NOTED: The Committee was advised that the Council's Precept request for the 2026-2027 financial year has been formally submitted to and accepted by South Gloucestershire Council.

12. LEISURE OPERATOR BASE TRADING ACCOUNT (LOBTA)

NOTED: Members received a verbal update regarding recent performance under the Leisure Operator Base Trading Account (LOBTA). It was reported that the initial sales target of 213 memberships was achieved ahead of schedule, with a further 227 additional sales secured thereafter. In total, 441 sales were achieved over the course of the campaign.

The Committee noted the positive trading performance.

13. LEARNING DIFFICULTIES DEVELOPMENT FUND GRANT APPLICATION

The Committee considered a proposal to apply for funding of up to £20,000 from the Learning Difficulties Development Fund to support inclusive programmes and equipment at Elm Park Leisure Centre.

Members were advised that the proposed Elm Park Inclusion Project, as set out in Annex E aligns with the strategic priorities of South Gloucestershire Council and the Learning Difficulties Partnership Board. The project aims to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for children and adults with learning difficulties through a range of inclusive initiatives, including adaptive gym and swim sessions, specialist staff training (including Mencap and SEN-focused programmes), therapeutic LEGO sessions, life-saving skills courses, and the introduction of a Boditrax health measurement machine.

It was noted that the application deadline is imminent and that the project would primarily support individuals with learning difficulties, while also enhancing wider community inclusion and strengthening the Leisure Centre’s role as a community-focused facility.

Councillors expressed support for the proposal and suggested that officers review whether similar provision exists locally to avoid duplication and ensure complementarity.

RESOLVED: Councillors unanimously agreed that the Town Clerk proceed with submitting an application to the Learning Difficulties Development Fund for up to £20,000, in line with the proposal outlined in Annex E.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - **NOTED:** Tuesday, 10th March 2026 at 7PM.

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8:00pm