



9 am to 4 pm Mondays to Fridays

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Cllr G Newman (Chairman)	Cllr S Bloomfield	Cllr D Savage
Cllr S Bird (Vice Chairman)	Cllr M Deacon	Cllr A Smith
Cllr N Barber	Cllr S Gallant	Cllr S Wiles
Cllr C Barham	Cllr Jan Garfield	Cllr K Williams

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the **FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** to be held at the **Town Hall, Felixstowe** on **Wednesday 28 October 2015** at **7.30pm** for the transaction of the following business:

A G E N D A

- 1. Apologies**
To receive apologies for absence.
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
Members and officers are invited to make any declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Local Non-Pecuniary Interests that they may have in relation to items on the Agenda and are also reminded to make any declarations at any stage during the meeting if it becomes apparent that this may be required when a particular item or issue is considered.
- 3. Requests for Dispensation**
Councillors with a pecuniary interest in an item on this agenda, who wish to remain, speak and/or vote during consideration of that item, may apply for a dispensation in writing to the Town Clerk prior to the meeting. Applications may also be considered at the meeting itself should the nature of the interest become apparent to a Councillor at the time of the meeting.
- 4. Confirmation of Minutes**
To confirm the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 23 September as a true record. **(Pages 3-5)**
- 5. Accounts for September 2015**
To receive the Monthly Accounts report to 30 September 2015 and consider any actions deemed necessary. **(Pages 6-10 & Appendix A)**
- 6. Internal Audit – Quarter Two Report**
To receive the report of the Internal Auditor and agree appropriate action in respect of any matters raised. **(Page 11 & Appendix B)**
- 7. Cycling on the Prom**
To consider matters relating to the use of bicycles on the prom. **(Pages 12-14)**

8. Budget 2016/17 (First Draft)

To consider first draft budget proposals for 2016/17 following recommendations from Council's Assets & Services, Civic & Community and Personnel Committees and make any recommendation to Council. **(to follow)**

9. Closure

To close proceedings and confirm the date of the next meeting scheduled for Wednesday 25 November 2015 at 7.30pm.



Ash Tadjrishi
Town Clerk
22 October 2015

For information (via email): All Town Councillors.
Local Press

AGENDA ITEM 4: CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

MINUTES of the **FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** meeting held at Felixstowe Town Hall on **Wednesday 23 September 2015** at **7.30pm**

PRESENT: Cllr S Bird (Vice-Chairman *in the chair*) Cllr D Savage
Cllr M Deacon Cllr A Smith
Cllr S Gallant Cllr S Wiles
Cllr Jan Garfield Cllr K Williams

OFFICERS: Mr A Tadjrishi (Town Clerk)
Mrs D Frost (Finance Administrative Officer)

In the absence of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman Cllr S Bird in the chair.

22. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from **Cllr G Newman, Cllr N Barber, Cllr C Barham** and **Cllr S Bloomfield**.

23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Member(s)	Minute No.	Nature of Interest
Cllr S Bird Cllr M Deacon Cllr S Gallant Cllr D Savage Cllr A Smith	All	Local Non-Pecuniary (as Members of Suffolk Coastal District Council)

24. REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

There were none.

25. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 22 July 2015 be signed by the Vice-Chairman as a true record.

26. ACCOUNTS FOR JULY/AUGUST 2015

Committee considered a detailed report showing income and expenditure against budget to 31 August 2015.

A full list of material variances was provided and Members discussed a number of matters relating to income and expenditure.

Electricity consumption was noted as being high at Walton Community Hall. The Clerk advised that Council's Assets & Services Committee were aware of this issue and would be considering how best to identify possible improvements. Members suggested that a remotely operated 'smart' timer could offer a way of controlling the heating system from the Town Hall.

The Clerk reported that, despite a number of phone calls and correspondence with a regular hirer of Walton Community Hall, a significant bill had still not been paid. The hirer had given assurances to Town Hall staff that the balance would be settled in a timely manner but no payment was received. Following cancellation of the booking and return of the keys, the hirer indicated that they would favour the offer of a repayment plan. The Clerk wrote to the hirer to set up a payment agreement, advising that further action would be taken if no response was received. As no response was received, the Clerk has instructed that formal action of recovery of the debts take place through the small claims process.

In response to a question on the maintenance of the Town Council's CCTV system, the Clerk advised that he was discussing the possibility of a joint maintenance contract agreement with SCDC which would include the additional cameras being installed at the Spa Gardens. It was expected that this could realise some savings for both authorities in 2016/17 through economy of scale.

Members discussed the cost and provision of Felixstowe in Flower, noting that some savings were expected against budget in the current year. The Clerk confirmed move the awards event to the Felixstowe Academy from the Brackenbury Leisure Centre had been very successful and it was hoped this this venue would be available again next year. It was also noted that additional sponsorship has been received in the current year but this could not be assumed for next year.

RESOLVED that:

- i. the Accounts to 31 August 2015 be received and noted as presented with no other action required at this time; and,**
- ii. the action taken by the Clerk to seek recovery of debts owed to the Council through the small claims process be approved.**

27. LOCAL COUNCIL GOLD AWARD SCHEME

Committee considered an update from members of the Local Council Gold Award Scheme Working Group.

Members heard that the group had met with the Chief Executive Officer of the Suffolk Association of Local Councils to discuss the criteria required to meet the Quality Gold level. The group had been advised that there were no other Council's in Suffolk currently seeking the Quality Gold standard, which had been awarded to very few councils nationally to date. It was also noted that

the Council's current Foundation Aware level was considered by SALC to be a more comprehensive accreditation than the Quality Council status which had been achieved under the previous scheme.

Committee noted that the Working Group believed that Council could demonstrate how it met the criteria required for the mid-level 'Quality' award and potentially submit this evidence to the accreditation panel early in the new year. However, further work would be required to develop Council's business plan in order to secure the 'Quality Gold' award.

Members discussed the practicalities of a timeframe for achieving the award and agreed that appropriate time should be given to the development of an extensive business plan rather than submitting an early portfolio for the Quality award.

RESOLVED that the Local Council Gold Award Scheme Working Group continue to progress the Council's application with a view to submitting for the Quality Gold award in 2016/17.

28. CLOSURE

The meeting was closed at 9.06pm. The next meeting was noted as being scheduled for 28 October 2015 at 7.30pm.

Date: _____

Chairman: _____

AGENDA ITEM 5: ACCOUNTS FOR SEPTEMBER 2015

A summary Income & Expenditure Report to 30 September 2015 is shown below with a detailed report provided at **Appendix A**.

		Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Of Budget
02/10/2015		Felixstowe Town Council					Page No 1
13:53		Summary Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 30/09/2015					
Month No : 6		Committee Report					
<hr/>							
<u>Finance & General Purposes</u>							
Expenditure		120,876	261,654	140,778	0	140,778	46.2 %
Income		558,525	562,021	-3,496			99.4 %
Net Expenditure over Income		-437,648	-300,367	137,281			
<u>Assets & Services</u>							
Expenditure		109,978	260,988	151,010	0	151,010	42.1 %
Income		51,395	109,371	-57,976			47.0 %
Net Expenditure over Income		58,583	151,617	93,034			
<u>Civic & Community</u>							
Expenditure		57,628	110,316	52,688	0	52,688	52.2 %
Income		4,850	4,000	850			121.3 %
Net Expenditure over Income		52,778	106,316	53,538			
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<u>INCOME - EXPENDITURE TOTALS</u>							
Expenditure		288,482	632,958	344,476	0	344,476	45.6 %
Income		614,770	675,392	-60,622			91.0 %
Net Expenditure over Income		-326,288	-42,434	283,854			

In accordance with Council's Financial Regulations, Committee is to receive explanations of Material Variances for expenditure in excess of the estimated budget of 10% or £500, whichever is the lesser. As the Council's budgets are not produced on a phased basis, the expectation is, being five months in to the year, for overall expenditure to be around 50%, with an explanation for any items overspent by £500 or 10% or over this level (i.e. 55%). Total expenditure for the first six months stood at 45.6% Explanatory notes and any recommended action for individual qualifying items in **Appendix A** are as follows:

Cost Centre 101 - Administration

4460 Subscriptions (76.8%)

One further subscriptions expected from this budget.

Recommendation: Continue to monitor on an annual basis.

4464 Insurance (99.2%)

Full year payment up front.

Recommendation: Continue to monitor on an annual basis.

1805 Bank Interest Received (27.7%)

One account is quarterly. However annual interest on Investment Bond will be now not be received until maturation in next financial year (April 2016).

Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a regular basis.

Cost Centre 201 - Town Hall

4110 Rates (59.4%)

Rates are paid over 10 months only.

Recommendation: No further action

4155 Cleaning Materials (82.2%)

Cleaning materials purchased in advance.

Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a monthly basis.

4180 Licences (66.7%)

Complete. Wedding licence paid over 3 years (budget set for a 2 yearly charge)

Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a tri-annual basis.

4260 Equipment Purchases (55.6%)

Two display cabinets purchased for Magistrates Room.

Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a monthly basis.

1000 Hirings (14.8%)

£813 (54.2%) billed awaiting receipt of payment.

Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a monthly basis.

1030 Leases, Rents & Licences (18.3%)

Payments due at various points in-year. Expect to be at 100% by year end.

Recommendation: No further action

Cost Centre 202 - Walton Community Hall

4110 Rates (58.9%)

Rates are paid over 10 months only.

Recommendation: No further action

4155 Cleaning Materials (90.9%)

Cleaning materials purchased in advance.

Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a monthly basis.

1000 Hirings (41.1%)

£2,582.75 (34%) invoiced for payment yet to be received.

Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a monthly basis.

Cost Centre 203 – Broadway House

4002 Employer Pension Contributions (58.8%)

Employee proportioned between Walton/Broadway House.

Surplus in Walton 4002 (35.9%)

Recommendation: Personnel Committee has reapportioned this as part of its budget recommendations for next year.

1030 Leases, Rents & Licences (0.0%)

Annual receipt on invoice in December.

Recommendation: No further action.

Cost Centre 204 – Cemetery

4110 Rates (58.8%)

Rates are paid over 10 months only.

Recommendation: No further action

4155 Cleaning Materials (63.7%)

Cleaning materials purchased in advance.

Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a monthly basis.

1120 Purchase of Graves (26.7%)

£420.00 (3%) invoiced but payment outstanding.

Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a monthly basis.

1130 Memorials (43.1%)

£735 (7%) invoiced but payment outstanding.

Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a monthly basis.

Cost Centre 205 – Allotments**1080 Allotment Rents (20.9%)**

Majority of Allotment rents are billed annually in September

Recommendation: No further action

Cost Centre 301 – Civic & Community**4095 Honoraria (100.0%)**

Paid in full in August for 2015/16.

Recommendation: No further action.

4505 Mayoral Allowance (100.0%)

Paid in full at start of Municipal Year.

Recommendation: No further action.

4513 Civic Awards (69.4%)

Civic Awards completed, no further expense due.

Recommendation: No further action.

4530 Civic Service (124.7%)

Cost of Civic Service higher than budget estimated for 2015/16.

Recommendation: Civic & Community Committee has reviewed budget provision for 2016/17 and has recommended a slight increase.

4600 CCTV (100%)

Cost of annual maintenance contract paid in full for 2015/16.

Recommendation: No further action.

4645 Christmas Lights (93.1%)

Annual provision for Christmas Lights paid in full in advance.

Recommendation: No further action.

Cost Centre 302 – Section 137 Expenditure

4620 Annual Grants (100.0%)

Paid in full at start of Financial Year.

Recommendation: No further action.

4655 Occasional Grants (34.8%)

First Round of Grants Awards (50% of total was available) approved at Civic & Community Committee on 17 June 2015.

Recommendation: No further action.

Cost Centre 303 – Felixstowe in Flower

4290 Flowers & Containers (73.6%)

Front loaded cost of providing the flowers and containers for Felixstowe in Flower.

Recommendation: No further action.

Cost Centre 304 - Communications

4483 Website (70.0%)

Front loaded. Website hosting Apr-Aug 15 and Biennial fee for .gov.uk paid

Recommendation: No further action.

Cost Centre 305 – Community Fund Projects

4625 Felixstowe Harwich Ferry (100.0%)

Paid in full at start of Financial Year.

Recommendation: No further action.

4630 Level 2 (100.0%)

Paid in full at start of Financial Year.

Recommendation: No further action.

Committee is requested to consider the Accounts to 30 September 2015 and decide on any action it deems necessary.

AGENDA ITEM 6: INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT: Q2 2015-16

The Internal Audit Report for the Quarter ending 30 September 2015 is attached at **Appendix B**. The Internal Auditor made the following recommendations:

Section 2. Financial regulations, standing orders, payment controls

Recommendation 1: Adopt latest Financial Regulations when available.

(Clerk's note: Current Financial Regulations are based on the latest available NALC model. Financial Regulations are reviewed on an annual basis and will be considered next by F&GP in February 2016.)

Recommendation: 2 Review £10,000 limit on card as a mitigation measure against card fraud. Recent spending has never neared £1,000. The higher limit may be justified, but if so should be regularly reviewed and minuted.

(Clerk's note: Financial Regulations 4.1 provide that the Clerk, as RFO, is permitted to authorise expenditure on revenue items to the amounts included in that class of expenditure in the approved budget subject to a limit of £5,000. Reference is made also in 6.15 to restrict any single debit card transaction to a maximum value of £5,000. This should be updated to include a reference to Council's credit card with a similar limit set.)

Section 5. Income controls

Recommendation 3: Council should consider whether the scheme of delegation should include authorisation in advance for the taking of legal action on behalf of the Council.

(Clerk's note: Scheme of Delegation to the Clerk is reviewed at each Annual Council meeting and this recommendation will be included for consideration in May 2016.)

Recommendation 4: Whilst the officers have considered mitigation measures to prevent re-occurrence, these proposals should be submitted to the F&GP Committee to endorse and approve any changes to debtor control systems.

(Clerk's note: Any changes to debtor control systems will be brought to F&GP in due course.)

Section 7. Payroll controls

Recommendation 5: Payroll "Payflow" records were found in the main purchase ledger file for invoices. These documents contain confidential personnel information covered by the Data Protection Act [bank details, payments] and therefore should be kept separately in a secure store.

(Clerk's note: This recommendation was actioned on 8th October and all payroll records are now held with secured personnel files.)

Committee is requested to consider the attached quarterly Internal Audit Report for the period 1 July 2015 - 30 September 2015 and make recommendations to Council for any action it deems necessary.

AGENDA ITEM 7: CYCLING ON THE PROM

It is apparent that some uncertainty persists over the legality, or otherwise, of cycling on the prom. Felixstowe Town Council, Suffolk County Highways, Suffolk Coastal Norse and Suffolk Coastal District Council each report receiving regular enquiries on this matter. Enquiries are wide ranging but can generally be summed up as follows:

- Seeking clarification of the rules
- Reporting having witnessed cycling on the prom
- Reporting having 'nearly' been hit by a cyclist on the prom
- Requesting that cycling on the prom be permitted

The Clerk has made enquiries with Suffolk Coastal District Council, as the responsible authority, to confirm the status of the byelaw.

SCDC have advised that there is an existing byelaw, made on 24 January 1983 to prevent the riding of bicycles on the prom. Although it was also confirmed that it is not accurate to state that in general, the riding of bicycles on the promenade is illegal in all places at all times. The byelaw is legally enforceable only where the Council (SCDC) have displayed notices in conspicuous positions along the promenade stating that the riding of bicycles is prohibited. SCDC are aware of situations in the past when signs have been removed.

Byelaws are limited in use without an effective enforcement regime. In practical terms, the police can enforce, as can the local authority. In the case of cycling on Felixstowe prom there are few resources in place to be out on site in order stop cyclists, obtain their details, warn them and collect the evidence that is necessary to bring a successful prosecution. The Town Hall is not aware of any successful prosecution being made in the 33 years since the byelaw was made.

SCDC have advised that the Byelaws (Alternative Procedure)(England) Regulations 2015 came into force on 1 October. The new regulations may give some greater local discretion over the making, amending and revocation of byelaws.

There are a number of examples around the country where local councils (such as in Bournemouth, Poole, Llandudno, Bognor Regis, Gt Yarmouth and Gorleston) have revoked the byelaw preventing cycling on proms.

The matter was again raised Council's Highway Advisory Committee on 8 September 2015 by Suffolk County Council who reported that requests for a marked cycle lane had been received. Members of this advisory committee requested that the Town Council consider the general principle of cycling on the prom with a view to making a further recommendation to Suffolk Coastal District Council as the responsible authority.

There are a number of options for consideration, some of which are outlined in the table below together with an indication of possible pros and cons. This list is not exhaustive and Members may wish to consider what other options may be available.

Notwithstanding and any recommendations Council may make, Members of the Highways Advisory Committee strongly recommended that, before any alternative decision is implemented, a trial period be considered whereby an assessment could be made of the impact of cycling on the prom over a full 12 months.

Options to consider:

Option	Pros	Cons	Other factors
No change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No additional resources required. • Cycling will continue to occur but is potentially limited to those who are not aware of (or willing to ignore) the byelaw. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present situation persists, enquiries and complaints will continue, some prom users will remain frustrated by apparent 'law breaking'. • Cyclists singled out despite no actual evidence of accident or injury being caused to other prom users. • Byelaw does not apply to other prom users who also have potential to cause harm/obstruction - such as dogs, dog leads, motorised scooters. • Felixstowe may be viewed as out-of-step with national trends and positive promotion of cycling generally. 	
Permit Cycling with a dedicated cycle path	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolves current uncertainty and removes perception of the cyclist as 'breaking the law' • Promotes health and wellbeing; in line with national trends and policies. • Enhances opportunities for Felixstowe as an accessible resort. • Safe route for all cyclists - young and old. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some sections of the community could perceive the prom to be less safe. • High cost. • Siting of a cycle lane would be problematic as it would conflict with other uses of prom. • Cycle lanes can engender a territorial attitude from cyclists and non-cyclists. • Could potentially lead to a 'cycle superhighway' with cyclists treating the prom as a race track. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires revocation of byelaw. Provisions under The Byelaws (Alternative Procedure)(England) Regulations 2015 gives greater local discretion and makes this easier but a 'deregulatory assessment' is required. • SCC would need to be consulted.
Permit Cycling without creating a dedicated cycle lane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little to no cost. • Resolves current uncertainty and removes perception of the cyclist as 'breaking the law' • Promotes health and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some sections of the community could perceive the prom to be less safe. • Relies on sensible interaction between cyclists and other users, as per shared space and other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above.

	<p>wellbeing; in line with national trends and policies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhances opportunities for Felixstowe as an accessible resort. • Safe route for all cyclists - young and old. • Speeds generally limited as appropriate to the conditions. 	<p>mixed use locations.</p>	
<p>Promote enforcement of byelaw</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give 'teeth' to the byelaw. • May only require one or two successful enforcements to send out the message. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Byelaws are hard to enforce as they do not all allow for fixed penalty notices to be issued, so the only option available to local agencies is to take an individual to court if they fail to comply, which can be costly and time-consuming. • Would require increased signage and public awareness campaign for successful enforcement to be achieved. • Financial and aesthetic cost to increase signage along prom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notwithstanding the resources, evidence etc. required, if there is no 'will' to penalise cyclists in this way it won't happen.
<p>Enforce with Public Space Protection Order</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be discharged, varied or revoked by the Local Authority. • Can prescribe controlled zones and periods of time for restricted activity. • Local Authority can issue Fixed Penalty Notices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of resources and enforcement. • PSPO designed to address public disorder/anti-social behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The order must be in writing and it must be published. • Reasonable signage should be put up in the areas affected. • The order lasts for up to three years and renewed within this time to remain in place. • Must consult with the chief officer of police, the Police and Crime Commissioner and any representatives of the local community.

Committee is requested to consider the present situation in regards to cycling on the prom and make any recommendation to Council for onward referral to Suffolk Coastal District Council.
