



WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE
FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
HELD AT 32 WATERLOO STREET
MONDAY 15th DECEMBER 2025

Meeting Commenced: 7.00 pm

Meeting Concluded: 8:47 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Ciaran Cronnelly (Chair), Roger Bailey (S), Mark Canniford, Peter Crew, John Crockford-Hawley, Robert Payne, Robert Skeen, John Standfield (S), Helen Thornton and Charlie Williams.

ALSO, IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Caroline Reynolds (non-voting), Sarah Pearse (Chief Executive Officer/Town Clerk), Helen Morton (Director of Finance & Resources), Molly Matthews (Senior Development Officer).

254	Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lisa Pilgrim substituted by John Standfield and Gillian Bute substituted by Roger Bailey. It was noted that Councillor Caroline Reynolds was in attendance as a non-voting member.
255	Declarations of Interest Councillor Roger Bailey declared a non-pecuniary interest as an allotment plot holder.
256	To approve the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 13th October 2025 The minutes of the meeting had been previously circulated. PROPOSED BY: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley SECONDED BY: Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly A vote was taken and carried . Accordingly, it was: RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 13 th October 2025 be approved and signed by the Chair.

257	<p>At this point in the meeting, the Chair proposed to move forward agenda item 14 for discussion. It was agreed by the committee to do so.</p> <p>Allotments</p> <p>The report from the Town Clerk/CEO had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The Chair gave a summary of decisions made so far, regarding non-resident plot holders and the need to give consideration to how the current management model was working.</p> <p>The CEO/Town Clerk added that a lot of correspondence had been received regarding this issue and advice had been sought from ALCA who had reviewed the information and data and sent a detailed report back in response. They clarified that the Council had not acted unlawfully, and that the law had been open to interpretation for many years and it now fell to this committee to make a decision moving forward. Importantly the committee needed to ensure that any decisions made had to ensure it was not acting in ultra vires. The options were outlined as follows:</p> <p>Option 1 - Continue the 12-month notice process and complete the transition.</p> <p>Option 2 - Pause implementation temporarily during governance remediation.</p> <p>Option 3 - Formally permit a limited number of non-resident tenancies.</p> <p>Option 4 - Rescind existing notices and reissue after adoption of a revised policy.</p> <p>Option 5 – Ongoing Allotment Management for consideration - The council may wish to consider its options with regard to how its Allotments are managed as such it should review the current agreement and all other options. ALCA has offered to provide support with this area should the council deem it necessary following on from the issues that have arisen.</p> <p>A discussion ensued regarding the waiting list numbers and how it was managed, which currently stood at 120 (website) and 140 on manual lists (260 in total) with some people on that list reported as being on it for 15 to 20 years. It was noted some plot holders had multiple plots and this need to be considered carefully as to the appropriateness of doing so with such a long waiting list. It was essential that the space available was shared fairly with all interested parties.</p> <p>The CEO/Town Clerk clarified that in addition to non-resident letters that had been sent there were some more plots registered to addresses out of the Parish, however they were allocated to Alliance Homes and Osprey (community organisations), whereby the council had requested further information as to the use and whether it was for parishioners of Weston super Mare within the lease agreement with them.</p> <p>It was suggested that moving forward, the non-resident rule would need to be strictly enforced to avoid a repeat of the situation. It was also suggested, that a full review of multi plot holders take place and be brought back to the next meeting for further consideration.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly SECONDED BY: Councillor Mark Canniford</p>

A vote was taken and **carried**. Accordingly it was:

257.1 RESOLVED:

1. To follow option 4 of the CEO/Town Clerk's report and rescind existing notices and reissue letters confirming this decision after adoption of a revised policy.
2. A decision should be made at a future date regarding the assignment of multiple plots per person/household.
3. Moving forward, should a resident allotment holder move out of the area, their plot should be surrendered.
4. The CEO/Town Clerk and Chair/Vice-Chair to update the policy for immediate issue to the Allotment Club to allow resolution to be actioned with regards to Non Resident Plot Holders.

The report also outlined the recommendations from ALCA, which included the suggestion to issue a remedy notice to the Allotment Club. This would give the Allotment Club 14-28 days from date of issue, to rectify breaches of the agreement. Breaches included as follows:

- Not providing AGM minutes
- Lack of insurance documentation
- Not upholding the residency rules
- Not following council instructions
- Poor record keeping
- No submission of accounts and criticism of the council

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly

SECONDED BY: Councillor Mark Canniford

A vote was taken and **carried**. Accordingly it was:

257.2 RESOLVED: Instruct the CEO/Town Clerk to issue a remedy notice to the Allotment Club in January 2026 to allow for the Christmas period when this would not be reasonable.

Finally, the report recommended a review of the allotment management model to be carried out independently working with ALCA, with recommendations to come back to the committee.

The Committee were in agreement that there had been clear errors and something needed to change. It noted that historically this had been by both parties. It was queried whether there would be a cost to the review. The CEO/Town Clerk informed that she believed the review would be free of charge, however that any recommendations from the review may attract a cost. It was noted that the relationship with the Allotment Club had improved in the last 12-18 months considerably and working practices with the council were much improved.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly

SECONDED BY: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley

A vote was taken and **carried**. Accordingly it was:

257.3 RESOLVED: To instruct ALCA to carry out a review of the management model of the Allotments.

258	<p>The Chair reverted back to the order of the agenda.</p> <p>To receive the Minutes of the Grants and Governance Sub Committee held on 23rd October 2025</p> <p>The Notes had been previously circulated. It was noted that 'centre' was not spelt correctly in the minutes (195) and should be corrected.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That with the above amendment, the Minutes of the Grants and Governance Sub Committee held on 23rd October 2025 be received.</p>
259	<p>To receive the Notes of the Health and Safety Meetings held in September and October 2025</p> <p>The notes had been previously circulated.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Notes of the Health and Safety Meetings held in September and October 2025 be received.</p>
	<h2>FINANCE</h2>
260	<p>To receive the Monthly Financial Reports September and October 2025</p> <p>The reports had been previously circulated.</p> <p>260.1 For Approval</p> <p>1.1 Schedule of Unapproved Expenditure</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew SECONDED BY: Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly</p> <p>A vote was taken and accordingly, it was carried.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the financial reports be received.</p> <p>260.2 For Noting</p> <p>2.1 Bank Reconciliations 2.2 Budgetary Control Report 2.3 Bank Interest Report 2.4 Schedule of Received Income 2.5 Bad Debt general report 2.6 Overspend report</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the financial reports be noted.</p> <p><i>19:50pm Councillor Charlie Williams left the meeting.</i></p> <p>It was noted that interest rates were still very low and this would be explored for future investments.</p>

261	<p>Medium Term Financial Plan 2026/2027</p> <p>The Medium term Financial Plan had been previously circulated and changes outlined in red.</p> <p><i>19.53pm Councillor Charlie Williams rejoined the meeting.</i></p> <p>There was a request to ensure that the Real Living Wage (RLW) and National Living Wage (NLW) were not confused within the document and that this should be checked ahead of publication. This led to discussion on the actual impact of the RLW and future staffing costs.</p> <p>The Chair advised that the Medium Term Financial Plan 2027/28 would come to the Committee earlier next year ahead of the budget itself to further improve budget planning in future years.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Crew</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. It was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: To approve the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2026 / 2027 (including Capital and financial forecast 2025-2030), and ensure the RLW references were consistent and not confused with the NMW.</p>
262	<p>To receive the Feedback Report of 'Your Town Your Voice' Budget Consultation Exercise.</p> <p>The summary report had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The CEO/Town Clerk gave an outline of the consultation process, resulting in the summary report provided. The report re-enforced the importance of play areas, CCTV, dog bins, toilets and Weston Museum, whilst also highlighting lower priority services but the response rate has been low.</p> <p>The lack of engagement had been disappointing, therefore a review regarding community engagement would take place acknowledging the need to look at language and the approach used to connect with the community.</p> <p>A discussion ensued around the use of information collected.</p> <p>It was noted that there was work to be done around community engagement with the ongoing devolution programme and Council Award Scheme which Council had agreed to engage with.</p> <p>The Chair requested that a community engagement proposal be brought back to a future committee meeting.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Feedback Report of 'Your Town Your Voice' Budget Consultation Exercise be received. 2. That a review report be brought back to a future Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting.

263	<p>To approve the Glendale contract contribution for another year</p> <p>The report of the Town Clerk/CEO had been previously circulated.</p> <p>North Somerset Council had formally requested that WSMTC agree to support a 12-month extension of the district-wide Glendale grounds maintenance contract at a cost of £74,464 extending its end date from 31.03.26 to 31.03.27. NSC has advised that alternative contract arrangements could not be mobilized before April 2027, and that a one-year extension would enable continuity of service and provide essential time for WSMTC to plan any new delivery model for grounds and open-space services beyond 2027.</p> <p>It was enquired if WSMTC could have influence on the maintenance schedule, to which the CEO/Town Clerk would enquire, noting that this was a service continuation and not a change in contract.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Crew</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly, it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: To</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the historic context from the report approved on 25 November 2024. 2. Agree to NSC's request to extend the Glendale contract to 31.03.27 at last year's cost plus CPI (£74,464) which would come from the Devolution budget provision. 3. Authorise officers to develop a full Working Plan for the transfer of relevant services from 01.04.27. 4. Authorise officers to prepare a Comparable Business Model (in-house vs external), to be developed through the Devolution Start & Finish Group and completed by September 2026 to allow sufficient time for decision-making and implementation. 5. Receive the Working Plan and Comparable Business Model no later than the October 2026 Finance and General Purposes committee to support precept, mobilisation and contractual preparations for the 01.04.27 implementation date.
264	<p>To recommend a Draft Budget for 2026/2027 to Town Council</p> <p>The draft budget had been previously circulated.</p> <p>Band D equivalent values had not been received at the time of the original budget report being circulated with the agenda, but an overall budget summary had been provided at £4,475,937. Band D costs had since become available, and it would be 6p less than the previous financial year. It was confirmed that the budget principle had been maintained of a standstill with only CPI added.</p> <p>The draft budget had already been discussed by individual committees, with the opportunity to discuss services in detail relating to each committees remit.</p> <p>It was queried what had been cut to achieve a standstill budget, to which the RFO explained that this was due to changes to the staffing structure, cost savings around efficiency and the Blakehay Theatre had allowed for the delivery of the draft budget.</p> <p>Debated ensued regarding individual budget lines, but clarification was given and ultimately no changes were recommended. It was noted that the Somewhere to Go SLA was</p>

originally intended to decrease and recommended that this should be reviewed ahead of formal adoption of the budget by council in January 2026.

It was queried why the accessibility ramp and the Castlebatch provision had been included for a second year in a row. The CEO/Town Clerk explained that the 2025/2026 ramp budget had been reallocated to the Old Town Quarry and the Castlebatch works had not yet occurred.

Councillors queried the reduction of the Band D value, noting that the budget provided was not a standstill.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly

SECONDED BY: Councillor Mark Canniford

A vote was taken and **carried**. Accordingly, it was:

RECOMMENDED: That the draft budget for 2026/2027 be recommended to the Town Council for approval, following amendment of the final budget value to be a £0 different from 2025/2026.

Total Precept Requirement: £4,475,937

Band D Equivalent cost £164,50

A Councillor queried why there had not been a group briefing ahead of the meeting as has been standard in previous years. It was explained that F & GP has reviewed and put in place revised budget setting processes, which included more involvement by committees alongside the direction from this committee for officers to produce a standstill budget plus CPI for them to consider. It was confirmed that individual group meetings could still be requested with the CEO/Town Clerk or RFO ahead of the council meeting in January if requested.

265 To approve the Town Council Charges for the year 2026/2027

The Town Council Charges schedule had been previously circulated.

Individual services had been asked to review their charges in line with market.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly

SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Crew

A vote was taken and **carried**. Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED: To approve the Town Council Charges for the year 2026/2027.

266 CCTV provision at the Old Town Quarry

The report of the Senior Development Officer had been previously circulated.

The CEO/Town Clerk reported a need for CCTV coverage at the site due to previous Anti-Social Behaviour at the site.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly

SECONDED BY: Councillor Roger Bailey

	<p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly, it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: To approve the use of capital budget surplus for the installation of CCTV at the Old Town Quarry.</p>
	<h2>GOVERNANCE</h2>
267	<p>To approve the Health and Safety Policy.</p> <p>The Health and Safety Policy had been previously circulated.</p> <p>A Councillor queried the damp in the reception of 32 Waterloo Street. It was explained that this was caused by guttering and water ingress from below. It was very common with buildings of this age and location in the town. The situation was made worse as a north facing wall. An internal wall would be put up to manage the situation and allow the old building to breathe.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly SECONDED BY: Councillor Mark Canniford</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly, it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Health and Safety Policy be approved.</p>
	<p>There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 8:47 pm</p> <p>Signed..... Dated</p> <p>Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee</p>