

MEETING MINUTES

10th September 2026

Meeting of WEST BEDLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL, held at Bedlington Community Centre, Front Street West, Bedlington, NE22 5TT, on Thursday 10th September 2026 at 6.30pm.

AGENDA-RELATED QUESTIONS TO THE COUNCIL

- Agenda part B, item f – a resident wanted to know if the Town Council would be submitting an objection for planning application 26/03002/FUL and was told it would be covered later in the meeting. The same resident had a query about the events employee salary (option 1, agenda item B, g, iv) as they thought it was excessive.
- Agenda item B, g, iv – the same point about salary was made by another resident.
- Agenda item B, g, iv – a resident said that they were happy the events contract was going out to tender. As chair of the trustees of Bedlington Community Centre, they asked if they could have a discussion with the Town Council about Bedlington Community Centre organising and hosting events on behalf of the Town Council before the contract goes out to tender. They were advised to submit their proposal for consideration.
- Agenda part B, item g, i – a resident had a question about the revised Neighbourhood Plan – they wanted to know if it included all the comment submissions – and Councillor Taylor confirmed this.

PRESENTATIONS

- Agenda part C, item e - apologies were received from Northumbria Police who were unable to attend tonight's meeting, however their quarterly report was received with thanks.*

PART A – ATTENDANCE AND MINUTES

Min ref	Item ref	Item description	Determination
26/157	a.	Attendance To record councillors in attendance.	Councillors Austin, Chapple, B Denny (Chair), S Denny, Henderson, Roberts Taylor and Thompson. Town Clerk, S Young, Assistant Town Clerk, M McTeer, and eight (8) members of the public.
26/158	b.	Apologies for absence i. To NOTE any apologies for absence from councillors. ii. To APPROVE any dispensations for absent councillors.	i. Apologies for absence from Councillor Hogg. ii. None for this meeting.
26/159	c.	Declaration of interest i. To RECEIVE and NOTE any disclosures of interest. ii. To APPROVE any requests for dispensations.	i. None for this meeting. ii. None for this meeting.
26/160	d.	Meeting minutes To AGREE and SIGN as a correct record the minutes of West Bedlington Town Council's meeting on 13th August 2026.*	RESOLVED that the minutes of the West Bedlington Town Council meeting held on 13th August are APPROVED as a true record.

PART B – MATTERS FOR DECISION

Min ref	Item ref	Item description	Determination
26/161	a.	Funding applications	None for this meeting.
26/162	b.	Finance - Audit Arrangements 2025/26 Completion of Audit - Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) To NOTE the external auditors' certification of the Annual Return of Accounts for the financial year ending 31st March 2026. There were no matters which came to the attention of the auditor that required the issuing of a separate additional issues report, and the notice of conclusion has been published on 24th August 2026.*	NOTED.
26/163	c.	Bedlington Community Centre - landlord consent To APPROVE (as landlord) a request from Bedlington Community Centre's trustees (as tenant) for permission to pursue a "Borderlands" funding opportunity.*	APPROVED.
26/164	d.	Biodiversity measurable objective To APPROVE a measurable biodiversity objective in relation to the annual planting up of flowerpots and troughs. Proposal 1 - gradual transition: Phasing in perennials over a 1–5-year period. Proposal 2 - full transition: Shifting completely to perennials in 2027, due to the end of the current planter contract. <i>Note, minute no. 26/144 resolved to adopt a biodiversity policy for the Town Council.</i>	AGREED to get costings for both options so an informed decision can be made at a future meeting.
26/165	e.	Governance – review of existing policies APPROVE the following policies* which are unchanged. i. Policy 12 Community Support (Grants) ii. Policy 13 Code of Conduct iii. Policy 18 Vandalism iv. Policy 24 Gifts + Hospitality v. Policy 25 Third-Party Requests CCTV Policy vi. Policy 28 Equalities Policy vii. Policy 29 Safeguarding Policy viii. Policy 32 County Councillor Protocol	All policies reviewed and APPROVED with no changes.

26/166	f.	Planning Planning applications – where comments have been requested. The Council is asked to discuss and decide if it wishes to make any comments in relation to the planning applications received for comment. Please note, where the response date is before the date of the meeting, an extension has been agreed to allow consideration of the application at the meeting and an opportunity to submit comments. Reference: 26/02801/MAST Description: Notification of Prior Approval for the Installation of an 18m lattice tower supporting a 3m headframe, Installation of 6 no. new antennas, Installation of 9 no. remote radio units (RRUs), 6 no. break out boxes (BOBs) and 1 no. GPS node. Removal of 1 no. existing cabinet and installation of 1 no. new cabinet in the existing cabin, removal of 3 no. existing mast head amplifiers (MHAs, associated apparatus and ancillary works. Bedlington Telephone Exchange, Glebe Road, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 6JX. Response date: 28th August 2026 Reference: 26/02985/FUL Description: Proposed loft extension, roof alterations and associated external works. The Lodge, 25 Nedderton Village, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 6AX. Response date: 15th September 2026. Reference: 26/03002/FUL Description: Installation of security shutters to front elevation. 72 Front Street West, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 5UA. Response date: 16th September 2026.	No comment. No comment. Agreed to submit a comment to object based upon shutters not being permitted as part of the Shopfront Design Guide for Bedlington Conservation Area.
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		Reference: 26/03070/PRUTPO Description: Tree Preservation Order Application: T30 (Cedar) - Reduce upper crown up to 5m and reshape, T26 (Beech) - crown reduce up to 4m pruning back to overall natural profile of tree. Greenside, Fairway Rise, Hartford Hall Estate, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 6AG. Response date: 22nd September 2026	No comment.
26/167	g.	Working groups / committees 1. APPROVE any recommendations from working groups (not included elsewhere on the agenda). i. Neighbourhood Plan Working Group APPROVE the revised draft West Bedlington Neighbourhood Plan*, updated following the consultation responses.* ii. Services Working Group APPROVE to send the bus shelter cleaning activity out to tender* to be started in April 2027. iii. Finance and Governance Working Group NOTE the Financial Governance Framework illustration provided.* APPROVE the updates to the financial policies (Standing Orders and Financial Regulations) *, which will require formal line by line reviews of the budget on a quarterly basis, adjusting for impacts, inflation and approved mid-year member requests. APPROVE a 5-point request form* for members to complete when adding items to the agenda, which will reflect budget impacts. iv. Events Working Group Events 2027 to 2030 for approval. Proposed options: 1. Employ 0.5 FTE to create and manage events similar to Blyth and Ashington Town Council's – Year 1 cost £30,000, Year2+ £25,000. 2. Since the current supplier is now out of contract, then go to tender, in line with the Procurement Act 2023. Documents shared with members include the proposed draft tender document, submission pack, communications requirements, and time frame for selection.	1. i. APPROVED. ii. APPROVED. Please see appendix A for details. iii. NOTED and APPROVED. Please see appendix B for details. iv. Option 1 – all councillors were against this proposal (zero voted for this and zero abstained). Option 2 – councillors Henderson, Taylor and Thompson voted against this; councillors Austin, Chapple, B. Denny, S. Denny and Roberts voted for this option. Zero abstained. OPTION 2 APPROVED.

		2. To NOTE any other information from working group chairs.	2. Nothing for this meeting.
26/168	h.	Bank reconciliation To APPROVE a checked bank reconciliation as of 31st August 2026, a current account balance of £6,674.65, a deposit account balance of £27.08 and a CCLA savings account balance of £330,000 *	APPROVED.

MEETING PART C – MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

Min ref	Item ref	Item description	Determination
26/169	a.	Chair's update and external invitations/consultations To NOTE any announcements from the Chair and discuss invitations, consultations and feedback from external meetings received since the previous Council meeting.	Councillor Hogg will be attending the Town and Parish Council meeting on 8 th October to represent West Bedlington Town Council.

26/170	b.	West Bedlington Town Council 02 September 2026 (2026 - 2027) PAYMENTS & RECEIPTS LIST <table><tr><th>Vouche Code</th><th>Date</th><th>Minute</th><th>Bank</th><th>Payment Ref.</th><th>Description</th><th>Supplier</th><th>VAT Type</th><th>Net</th><th>VAT</th><th>Total</th></tr><tr><td>12</td><td>Interest CCLA Account</td><td>05/08/2026</td><td>Lloyds Current Acco.</td><td></td><td>Receipt - CCLA interest payme</td><td>Lloyds Bank</td><td>X</td><td>1,205.00</td><td></td><td>1,205.00</td></tr><tr><td>88</td><td>Printing</td><td>05/08/2026</td><td>Lloyds Current Acco.</td><td>762703</td><td>Payment - Printing costs</td><td>Smart Office Systems Ltd</td><td>S</td><td>-49.69</td><td>-9.94</td><td>-59.63</td></tr><tr><td>89</td><td>Internet Hosting</td><td>05/08/2026</td><td>Lloyds Current Acco.</td><td>001850700018911</td><td>Payment - Website Domains</td><td>Zen Internet Limited</td><td>S</td><td>-25.98</td><td>-5.20</td><td>-31.18</td></tr><tr><td>90</td><td>.gov emails</td><td>05/08/2026</td><td>Lloyds Current Acco.</td><td>WESTBEDCO 079</td><td>Payment - Monthly message b.</td><td>Widescope Web Design</td><td>S</td><td>-61.91</td><td>-12.38</td><td>-74.29</td></tr><tr><td>13</td><td>Interest Deposit Account</td><td>13/08/2026</td><td>Lloyds Deposit Acco.</td><td></td><td>Receipt - Deposit account inter</td><td>Lloyds Bank</td><td>X</td><td>0.83</td><td></td><td>0.83</td></tr><tr><td>91</td><td>CCTV</td><td>13/08/2026</td><td>Lloyds Current Acco.</td><td></td><td>Payment - CCTV (Church Lane)</td><td>Reay Security Ltd</td><td>S</td><td>-49.20</td><td>-13.84</td><td>-63.04</td></tr><tr><td>92</td><td>CCTV</td><td>13/08/2026</td><td>Lloyds Current Acco.</td><td></td><td>Payment - CCTV (Westlea Cem</td><td>Reay Security Ltd</td><td>S</td><td>-49.20</td><td>-13.84</td><td>-63.04</td></tr><tr><td>93</td><td>Summer Holiday Events</td><td>13/08/2026</td><td>Lloyds Current Acco.</td><td>SI-138</td><td>Payment - Summer Activities 2</td><td>House of Hamilton</td><td>Z</td><td>-3,060.00</td><td></td><td>-3,060.00</td></tr><tr><td>96</td><td>Meadowdale Gates SLA</td><td>13/08/2026</td><td>Lloyds Current Acco.</td><td>INV-971194</td><td>Payment - Locking/unlocking M</td><td>Reay Security Ltd</td><td>S</td><td>-1,116.00</td><td>-223.20</td><td>-1,339.20</td></tr><tr><td>95</td><td>CCTV</td><td>13/08/2026</td><td>Lloyds Current Acco.</td><td>INV-971176</td><td>Payment - CCTV (Bedlington to</td><td>Reay Security Ltd</td><td>S</td><td>-674.70</td><td>-134.94</td><td>-809.64</td></tr><tr><td>94</td><td>Event Organiser Fee</td><td>13/08/2026</td><td>Lloyds Current Acco.</td><td>SI-140</td><td>Payment - Event Coordinator F</td><td>House of Hamilton</td><td>Z</td><td>-5,000.00</td><td></td><td>-5,000.00</td></tr><tr><td>97</td><td>Event - Family Fun Day (Street</td><td>17/08/2026</td><td>Lloyds Current Acco.</td><td>SI-139</td><td>Payment - Balance of Street Fa</td><td>House of Hamilton</td><td>Z</td><td>-28,500.00</td><td></td><td>-28,500.00</td></tr><tr><td>99</td><td>Staff Salaries</td><td>20/08/2026</td><td>Lloyds Current Acco.</td><td></td><td>Payment - Payroll</td><td>Northumberland County Cr.</td><td>Z</td><td>-4,933.37</td><td></td><td>-4,933.37</td></tr><tr><td>99</td><td>Pension Employers Contribution</td><td>20/08/2026</td><td>Lloyds Current Acco.</td><td></td><td>Payment - Payroll</td><td>Northumberland County Cr.</td><td>Z</td><td>-710.40</td><td></td><td>-710.40</td></tr><tr><td>99</td><td>Payroll Charge by NCC</td><td>20/08/2026</td><td>Lloyds Current Acco.</td><td></td><td>Payment - Payroll</td><td>Northumberland County Cr.</td><td>S</td><td>-18.00</td><td>-3.60</td><td>-21.60</td></tr><tr><td>98</td><td>.gov emails</td><td>20/08/2026</td><td>Lloyds Current Acco.</td><td></td><td>Payment - .gov emails</td><td>Widescope Web Design</td><td>S</td><td>-31.20</td><td>-6.24</td><td>-37.44</td></tr><tr><td>99</td><td>NE Employers Contribution</td><td>20/08/2026</td><td>Lloyds Current Acco.</td><td></td><td>Payment - Payroll</td><td>Northumberland County Cr.</td><td>Z</td><td>-614.91</td><td></td><td>-614.91</td></tr><tr><td>101</td><td>Bank Charges</td><td>20/08/2026</td><td>Lloyds Current Acco.</td><td></td><td>Payment - Bank charges</td><td>Lloyds Bank</td><td>Z</td><td>-8.50</td><td></td><td>-8.50</td></tr><tr><td>100</td><td>CCTV</td><td>20/08/2026</td><td>Lloyds Current Acco.</td><td></td><td>Payment - CCTV SIM cards</td><td>Wireless Logic Limited</td><td>S</td><td>-479.05</td><td>-95.81</td><td>-574.86</td></tr><tr><td>14</td><td>VAT Refunds</td><td>27/08/2026</td><td>Lloyds Current Acco.</td><td></td><td>Receipt - HMRC VTR</td><td>HMRC</td><td>R</td><td></td><td>2,396.34</td><td>2,396.34</td></tr><tr><td>104</td><td>Landline and internet</td><td>27/08/2026</td><td>Lloyds Current Acco.</td><td></td><td>Payment - Landline and interne</td><td>Alcom</td><td>S</td><td>-10.00</td><td>-2.00</td><td>-12.00</td></tr><tr><td>102</td><td>Event - Summer Live Music Eve</td><td>27/08/2026</td><td>Lloyds Current Acco.</td><td></td><td>Payment - Traffic management</td><td>Northumberland County Cr.</td><td>S</td><td>-1,486.00</td><td>-297.20</td><td>-1,783.20</td></tr><tr><td>103</td><td>Playzone Community Sports Co</td><td>27/08/2026</td><td>Lloyds Current Acco.</td><td></td><td>Payment - Bedlington PlayZone</td><td>Northumberland County Cr.</td><td>Z</td><td>-6,975.00</td><td></td><td>-6,975.00</td></tr><tr><td colspan="8">Total</td><td>-52,687.28</td><td>1,578.15</td><td>-51,109.13</td></tr></table>	Vouche Code	Date	Minute	Bank	Payment Ref.	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Z	-6,975.00		-6,975.00	Total								-52,687.28	1,578.15	-51,109.13	ALL payments and (receipts) since the last Town Council meeting were NOTED.
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103	Playzone Community Sports Co	27/08/2026	Lloyds Current Acco.		Payment - Bedlington PlayZone	Northumberland County Cr.	Z	-6,975.00		-6,975.00																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																												
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26/171	c.	Other planning applications Where comments have not been requested. Reference: 26/02865/DISCON Description: Discharge of condition 20 (gas protection) on approved application 25/04674/VARYCO ALDI Schalksmuhle Road, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 7FH. Reference: 26/02914/DISCON Description: Discharge of conditions 19 (Ground Gas protection) & 20 (Verification of Ground Gas) on approved application 26/00837/FUL Land South East of Law Courts, Schalksmuhle Road, Bedlington, Northumberland. Reference: 26/02937/NONMAT Description: Non-material amendment: to allow minor amendment to wording of condition 25 of 18/02329/OUT 7C Netherton Lane, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 6DP	All applications NOTED.																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																			

		Reference: 26/02991/DISCON Description: Discharge of Condition 29 (External Facing Materials) of approved application 25/04674/VARYCO Former Tesco Site, Market Place, Bedlington, Northumberland. Reference: 26/03035/DISCON Description: Discharge of conditions 3 (Biodiversity Gain) and 4 (LEMP) on approved application 26/00837/FUL Land South East of Law Courts, Schalksmuhle Road, Bedlington, Northumberland. Reference: 26/03036/DISCON Description: Discharge of Condition 13 (Land Contamination) of approved application 26/00837/FUL Land South East of Law Courts, Schalksmuhle Road, Bedlington, Northumberland.	
26/172	d.	Planning decisions made by Northumberland County Council - West Bedlington Town Council notified Reference: 26/00837/FUL Description: Cafe and drive-thru unit, along with associated car parking, servicing, external works, and landscaping Land South East of Law Courts, Schalksmuhle Road, Bedlington, Northumberland. Decision: GRANTED Reference: 26/02202/PRUTPO Description: Tree Preservation Order Application : T1 (Beech) - reduce lateral branches overhanging the rear Garden by 2m. T2 (Sycamore) - reduce lateral branches overhanging the rear Garden by 2m. 1 Bellingham Court, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 5QS. Decision: PERMIT Reference: 26/02311/VARCCD Description: Variation of Condition 3 (Usage) on approved planning application 24/01694/CCD in order to amend the wording within the Condition. 17 Featherstone Grove, Hazelmere, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 6NU. Decision: GRANTED Reference: 26/02279/PRUTPO Description: Tree Preservation Order: T1 - Acer - Remove two west facing branches from above shed, T2 - Acer - Remove one west facing branch, extending over garden, T3 - Acer - Remove four	All planning decisions NOTED.

		west facing branches, extending over garden, T4 - Acer - Remove three west facing branches, extending over garden. 8 Hallwood Close, Nedderton Village, Northumberland, NE22 6BG. Decision: PERMIT Reference: 26/02367/FUL Description: Proposed removal of existing side outhouse and erection of new extension. 99 Hartlands, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 6JQ. Decision: GRANTED	
26/173	e.	Police report A Police report was provided for this meeting*. The next scheduled report is for the December 2026 meeting.	The report was read out at the meeting and NOTED.
26/174	f.	Matters for information only To NOTE any matters pertaining to the Council, that members would like to bring to the attention of other members and residents. For information only. No proposals or voting on these matters. i. Councillor – any matters for information only. ii. Town Clerk – any matters for information only.	i. Councillor Austin provided information about a litter pick at Gallagher Park at 10am on 19th September and Councillor Taylor provided an update about a community partnership event at Bedlington Community Centre on 7th October at 5pm.
26/175	g.	Date of next meeting To NOTE the next scheduled meeting of the Town Council will be on Thursday 8th October 2026 at 6.30pm in Bedlington Community Centre, Front Street West, Bedlington. The agenda for this meeting to be issued on Wednesday 30th September 2026.	NOTED.

QUESTIONS TO THE COUNCIL – ANY OTHER WEST BEDLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL MATTERS

- A resident suggested the Town Council could seek the views of an ecologist to investigate biodiversity.

MEETING PART D – EXEMPT BUSINESS

That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

- Nothing for this meeting.

The Chair closed this meeting at 19.55.

DRAFT

WEST BEDLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL - COUNCILLORS:

Trevor Austin, Dave Chapple, Brian Denny, Sian Denny, Cath Henderson, Adam Hogg, Al Roberts, Christine Taylor, Victoria Thompson.

* Supporting documentation distributed to members before the meeting and is available to members of the public. If you would like a copy of any of the supporting documents related to an agenda item, please email clerk@westbedlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk and we'll be more than happy to facilitate your request, unless the information is exempt.

APPENDIX A

Agenda item B, g, ii - Services Working Group

To seek approval to initiate a competitive tender process for the town’s bus shelter cleaning contract. The Town Council currently faces significant operational challenges regarding the maintenance and cleaning of local bus shelters. There is a persistent lack of transparency regarding cleaning frequency, specifications, and service verification. No formal Service Level Agreement (SLA) has been in place for the past eight years, making performance monitoring, quality assurance, and accountability difficult to enforce with the incumbent provider, NCC Services.

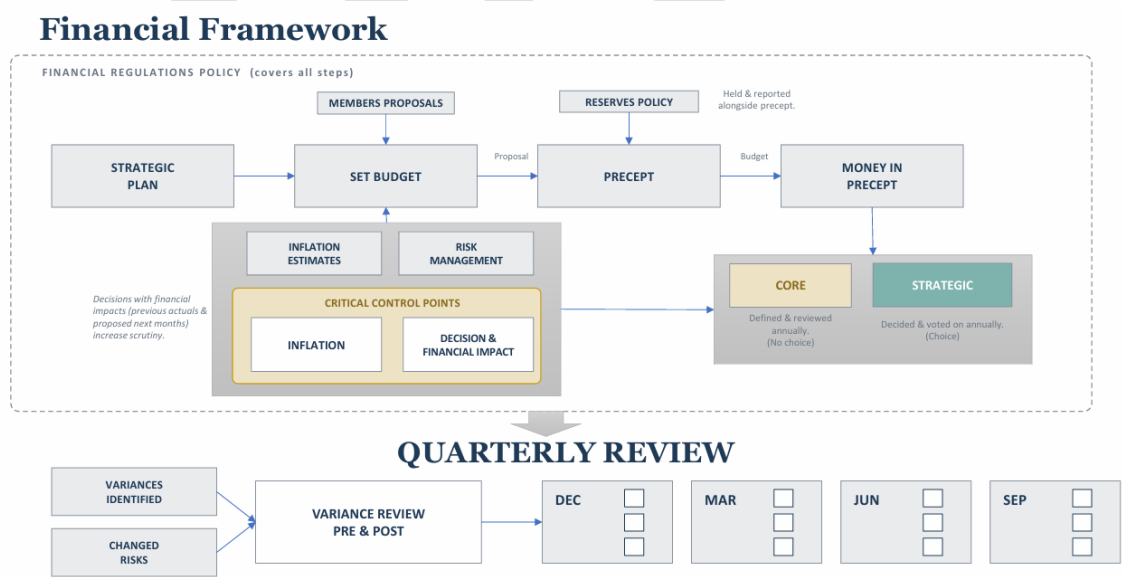
This will give us the chance to establish clear service standards and ensure value for public money. It is proposed that the contract be put out to competitive tender. This process will define a robust SLA with transparent schedules and reporting mechanisms. NCC Services will be invited to tender alongside independent commercial contractors equipped with specialised cleaning vehicles (e.g., commercial window and container cleaning operators).

Discussions have also taken place with NCC Services regarding the flower bed planting and maintenance contract. To ensure performance standards and long-term value for money, this service will be tendered under a 3-year Service Level Agreement (SLA). NCC Services will be invited to submit a bid alongside external supplier. Given the total anticipated value over the three-year term, the opportunity will be advertised publicly on Contracts Finder in full compliance with the Procurement Act 2023. The draft tender documentation will be placed on the next agenda for member review and approval.

APPENDIX B

Agenda item B, g, iii - Finance and Governance Working Group

The Chair met with the Clerk to conduct a comprehensive review of the current financial governance model, ensuring it is fully documented and understood. The resulting structure is detailed in the following Financial Governance Framework illustration:



As custodians of public funds, our primary duty to the residents of our town is to manage their precept with complete transparency, rigour, and accountability. Under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Town Council has a legal obligation to make proper arrangements for the administration of its

financial affairs. Implementing a formal, minuted quarterly budget review is not about creating unnecessary administration; it is about fulfilling our collective duty as elected members and ensuring every councillor has a clear, continuous view of our financial position.

Quarterly budget monitoring is standard practice across the local council sector. Section 3 of the NALC Model Financial Regulations explicitly requires the Responsible Financial Officer to present a statement comparing actual spending against budget at least once per quarter. Furthermore, under the statutory JPAG Practitioners' Guide, which defines 'proper practices' for town and parish councils, we are required to demonstrate active, ongoing budgetary oversight throughout the year. Minuting quarterly reviews provides the written evidence we need to sign off Assertion 1 of our Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), proving to our auditors and the public that our internal financial controls are robust.

Finally, Regulation 3 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 mandates that we maintain a sound system of internal control and risk management. Leaving budget checks with a simple glance leaves the Town Council vulnerable to unforeseen cost overruns, unmanaged inflationary impacts, or unrecorded liabilities. Reviewing our ledger every three months allows us to spot variances early, make proactive mid-year adjustments, and publish up-to-date financial reports on our public agenda.

By embedding formal quarterly reviews into our calendar, we protect the Town Council, support our Responsible Financial Officer, and demonstrate to our community that we operate with total openness and prudent governance.

It is proposed that the Town Council adopt a formal quarterly budget review procedure to evaluate expenditure against forecasts and implement necessary adjustments. Furthermore, to maintain sound financial governance, all future agenda items submitted for consideration must include a statement of financial impact.

Referring this matter solely to the Finance Working Group does not alter the decision-making process, as any proposed variations, including additions, deletions, or adjustments, must ultimately return to Full Council for formal review and approval.