



GILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

The Town Hall, School Road, Gillingham, Dorset SP8 4QR

FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Finance and Policy Committee meeting held on Monday **20 October 2025** at 19.30 in the Council Chamber at Gillingham Town Hall.

Present:

Cllr Simon Chase (Deputy Chairman)
Cllr Graham Bashford
Cllr Fiona Cullen
Cllr Rupert Evill
Cllr Mick Hill

Cllr John Kilcourse
Cllr Donna Toye
Cllr Barry von Clemens
Cllr Philip Walker
Cllr Roger Weeks

In attendance:

Julie Hawkins, Town Clerk
Tina Wright, Responsible Financial Officer

The following joined the meeting via MS Teams:

Michael Streeter, Gillingham & Shaftesbury News.
Cllr Graham Campbell (non-member)
Cllr Chris Tomlinson

In accordance with legislation councillors joining the meeting via MS Teams were not permitted to vote.

- 195. Public Participation. Please note: a period up to a maximum of fifteen minutes will be allowed for public comments and questions restricted to items listed on the following agenda**

There was no public participation.

- 196. To receive and accept apologies for absence**

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** to accept the apologies received from Cllr Paul Harris and Cllr Chris Tomlinson who were unable to attend the meeting in person for personal reasons.

- 197. To receive declarations of interest. Please note Members are required to comply with the requirements of Section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 disclosable pecuniary interests and Section 13 of the Standing Orders**

There were no declarations of interest.

198. To receive questions pertaining to the previous minutes

There were no questions.

199. To approve the Minutes as a true and accurate record of the Finance and Policy Committee meeting held on 15 September 2025

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Finance and Policy Committee meeting held on 15 September 2025 as a true and accurate record.

200. To approve payments for the previous month

A list of payments had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix A.](#)

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the list of payments for September 2025 is approved.

201. To receive and consider the six-monthly Management Accounts to 30th September 2025.

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix B.](#)

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** to approve the six-monthly (Quarter Two) Management Accounts to 30th September 2025.

202. To receive any requests for virement of budgets, if any

There were no requests for virements.

203. To receive and consider reports from sub-committees and task and finish groups, as follows:

a) Council Agreements and Contracts Sub-committee

There has been no meeting.

b) S106 Funding Sub-committee

There has been no meeting.

c) Town Crier Task and Finish Group

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix C.](#)

Cllr Campbell presented the report on behalf of the Task and Finish Group.

Members considered the draft job description and suggested that it should be renamed, role description.

Concerns were raised over the statement included within the draft job description allowing the post holder to negotiate fees for commercial cries.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that consideration of a role description should be deferred.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that £2,000 is included for consideration in the draft budget for FY2026/27 – Budget no 6401 – Civic Costs, Town Crier Costs.

Please note that figures are subject to change as part of the budget setting process.

204. To review and adopt the following draft policies/documents:

a) Mayor's Award Policy

It was agreed that the following words should be added to the policy: *Awards will be made at the discretion of the Mayor.*

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the Mayor's Award Policy, as amended, is approved and adopted.

b) Honorary Freeman Policy

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the Honorary Freeman Policy, as presented, is approved and adopted.

205. To consider and agree Allotment charges for FY2026/27 – deferred from the September Finance and Policy Committee meeting.

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix D.](#)

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the annual Allotment fees for FY2026-27 are increased to £30.00 for half-size plots, £18.75 for smaller plots and £16.00 for quarter-size plots.

206. To agree the CCTV wayleave agreement and fees for FY2026/27.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the wayleave fees for FY 2026/27 are increased from £67.50 to £70.00.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the draft wayleave agreement, as presented, is approved and adopted.

207. To receive and note information regarding Assertion 10 of the AGAR (Annual Governance and Accountability Return).

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix E.](#)

The information was noted.

208. To receive and note statements for the CCLA Investment Accounts.

Statements had been circulated prior to the meeting.

The statements were noted.

209. To receive and note a statement for the Lloyds Bank 95 Day Notice Account.

The statement had been circulated prior to the meeting.

The statement was noted.

210. To receive notification of the closure of Lloyds Bank, Gillingham Branch on 8 January 2026.

A letter had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Councillors expressed their disappointment that the last bank in Gillingham is to close.

Cllr von Clemens informed the meeting that he has contacted LINK and requested that a cash assessment is carried out for Gillingham.

211. To receive matters pertinent to this meeting

There were no matters pertinent.

The meeting closed at 19.57

**Gillingham Town Council
Bank Payments: September 2025**

<u>Line</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Account Ref</u>	<u>Details</u>	<u>Gross Amount</u>
1	01/09/2025	Water 2 Business	Chantry office 6-mthly water charge	£90.10
2	01/09/2025	Water 2 Business	Town Bridge office/Public WC 6-mthly water charge	£432.57
3	01/09/2025	Water 2 Business	Town Hall 6-mthly water charge	£236.72
4	01/09/2025	Water 2 Business	Roman Court 6-mthly water charge	£520.43
5	01/09/2025	Public works Loan Board	6 mthly loan repayment Roman Court	£9,793.00
6	02/09/2025	Dorset Council	Cemetery rates 25-26	£379.00
7	02/09/2025	Dorset Council	Chantry office rates 25-26	£184.00
8	02/09/2025	Dorset Council	Town Bridge rates 25-26	£195.00
9	02/09/2025	Dorset Council	Roman Court rates 25-26	£1,634.00
10	02/09/2025	Dorset Council	Town Hall rates 25-26	£1,010.00
11	05/09/2025	Dorset Council	Third party payments to HMRC/DC Pension -Aug 25 payroll	£26,470.62
12	09/09/2025	Petty Cash	ATM withdrawal to top-up Petty Cash acct	£10.00
13	09/09/2025	Octopus Energy	Chantry Office electric Aug 25	£31.52
14	09/09/2025	Octopus Energy	Hardings Park CCTV electric Aug 25	£22.61
15	09/09/2025	Octopus Energy	Town bridge/Public WC electric Aug 25	£24.18
16	09/09/2025	Octopus Energy	Town Hall gas/electric Aug 25	£150.14
17	09/09/2025	Octopus Energy	Old Mortuary electric Aug 25	£17.58
18	12/09/2025	Lee Holmes Garden Machinery	Horticultural parts	£749.33
19	12/09/2025	Fix-A-Door	6-monthly door inspection @Roman Court	£300.00
20	12/09/2025	Screwfix	Staff PPE	£94.99
21	12/09/2025	David Harness Tree Management	Tree Maintenance work @Barnaby Mead and Rolls Bridge	£792.00
22	12/09/2025	Aqua Cleaning Services	Aug 25 Hygiene Services (Town Hall, Roman Court, Chantry and Town Bridge office)	£109.13
23	12/09/2025	The Play Inspection Company	Annual inspection fee of play areas	£1,260.00
24	12/09/2025	Staff expenses	Staff travel to Dorchester for meeting	£31.80
25	12/09/2025	Crockers	Materials	£39.96
26	12/09/2025	Cloudy IT	Domain Management Fee - Annual	£24.00
27	12/09/2025	OFCOM	OFCOM radio Licence fee - (CCTV)	£57.00

28	12/09/2025	JW Services	Office cleaning (all sites) and Public WC cleaning – Aug 25	£1,955.00
29	12/09/2025	Tower Supplies	Staff workwear	£69.48
30	12/09/2025	Mole Valley	Horticultural parts	£41.36
31	12/09/2025	Gillingham, Mere & Shaftesbury Lions Club	46th Charter Anniversary dinner invite for Mayor & consort (13.09.25)	£60.00
32	16/09/2025	Sage UK Ltd	Sept 25 Sage 50 Professional software fee	£240.60
33	22/09/2025	Octopus Energy	Chapel electric - July 25	£0.29
34	25/09/2025	Screwfix	Materials	£48.17
35	25/09/2025	Sherborne Turf	Gardening materials	£35.11
36	25/09/2025	Western Workshops	Cleaning materials, consumables, horticultural parts	£115.56
37	26/09/2025	Talktalk	Monthly Broadband fee for Roman Court/Chantry office	£61.97
38	29/09/2025	Peninsula Business	Annual fee for HR and Employment services	£5,118.64
39	30/09/2025	Employee wages	Employee net pay (Sept 25)	£32,768.21
37	30/09/2025	www.Sarahraven.com	Gardening materials	£81.79
September 2025 - Total Payments				£85,255.57

**Gillingham Town Council
Quarterly Management Accounts Report
For the Quarter Ending 30th June 2025
Author: Tina Wright, RFO**

1. Introduction

This report presents the quarterly financial position of Gillingham Town Council for the period 1st April to 30th Sept 2025. It compares actual income and expenditure against the approved budget, highlights variances, and identifies any financial issues requiring attention. This report also sets out the position of the Council's reserves as at the end of Quarter 2 (Q2) (30th September 2025). It provides details of general and earmarked reserves, in-year movements, and any recommended actions.

2. Overview of Financial Performance

This section summarises the council's overall financial position at the end of the first six months of the financial year.

- **Total income received (inc. precept) :** £1,152,507
- **Total expenditure incurred:** £548,851
- **Net operating position:** £603,656 surplus year-to-date
- **Variance from budget:** £+41,731 positive variance

Income:

Income exceeded the budget by **£4,524 (0.39%)**, as revenue relating to room hire, bank interest and exporting electric back to the grid via PV panels at workshop slightly ahead of expectations at mid-year.

Expenditure:

Expenditure was **£37,207 (6.35%) below budget**, due to pending projects and deferred spending in some service areas.

Net Operating Position:

The resulting **surplus of £603,656** represents a **£41,731 favourable variance** compared with the budgeted surplus of £561,925. This implies that, at the six-month mark, the council's financial position is ahead of plan, largely due to underspending.

3. Q2 Expenditure vs Budget Analysis by Cost Centre

The quarterly budget reports are *snapshots* of the financial year. The charts below show spending for the first three months only.

The apparent overspend in the Town Hall/Roman Ct & Chantry budget at Q2 is due to the timing of certain payments, specifically the annual business rates, which are paid in full at the start of the financial year. In accounting terms, this is known as a “front-loaded” expenditure, where some costs are incurred early rather than being spread evenly throughout the year. This does not mean the council has exceeded its overall budget for the year. Instead, it reflects the payment schedule for specific items. As the year progresses and other costs are incurred in line with the budget, the overall expenditure will align with the annual budgeted amount. The rates expenditure are planned and routine payments, and not an indication of unplanned or excessive spending. The overall expenditure is expected to even out over the remainder of the year as other costs are incurred in line with the budget profile

Earmarked Reserves have been used in Cemetery, Town Hall & Vehicle cost centres. As noted in section 2 expenditure remains under budget overall.

Cost Centre	Q2 Budget (£)	Q2 Actual (£)	Variance (£)	Status
Cemetery, Chapel, Old Mortuary, Garden of Remembrance	5101	4306	+795	On track -Garden of Remembrance wall work to be completed later in year
Closed Churchyard	1450	1363	+87	On track -Church wall project to complete Q3
Allotments	115	29	+86	Underspent as expenditure due in Q3
Estate Management	23,825	12,003	+11,822	Underspent -Works due Q3
General Purposes Projects	10,300	2,825	+7475	Underspent -SID order pending, seasonal expenditure Q3- Festive Lighting
General Purposes	9805	7221	+2584	Underspent – CCTV works to be confirmed
War Memorials	0	0	0	On budget – EMRs/Accruals in place
Grants	0	0	0	No annual budget provision has been made for grants 25-26
Civic	1,975	1,438	+537	On track
Payroll and Staff Costs	341,408	323,836	+17,571	Underspent due to staff vacancy
Premises – Town Hall	13,907	15,777	-1,870	Overspent as frontloaded (rates)
Premises – Roman Court	31,553	36,103	-4550	Overspent as frontloaded (rates)
Premises – Community	2,853	3,514	-662	Overspent as frontloaded (rates)

Cost Centre	Q2 Budget (£)	Q2 Actual (£)	Variance (£)	Status
Office (Chantry)				
Public Toilets & Town Bridge Office	7,761	7,066	+695	On track
Vehicles and Equipment	22,578	28,166	-5,588	Overspent – due to higher maintenance/repairs work on Horticultural vehicles/machinery
Administration & Compliance	6,347	2,897	+3,450	Underspent – Staff training to be carried out later in year
Professional Fees, Subscriptions, etc.	31,000	38,291	-7,291	Overspent -Accts software & front loaded due to annual fees incurred
Health & Safety	11,462	15,689	-4228	Overspent - front loaded due to annual/six monthly fees incurred
Accruals	81,950	1,314	-	Funds are set aside for future commitments.

4. Q1 Income vs Budget Analysis by Income Centre

- Excluding the precept, operational income shows a broadly balanced and slightly favourable position overall.
- Bank interest, verge maintenance income, and room/land hire have performed well above target.
- Cemetery, allotments, and wedding income remain below expectation, suggesting seasonal or demand-based variation.

Description	Half-Year Budget (£)	Actual (£)	Variance (£)	Favourable / Adverse
Precept Income	1,123,850	1,123,850	0	Precept paid in full by end Sept.
Income – Cemetery and Burials	2,500	1,632	–868	Adverse
Income – Allotments	485	10	–475	Adverse - income due Q3

Description	Half-Year Budget (£)	Actual (£)	Variance (£)	Favourable / Adverse
Income – Room Hire and Lettings	1,500	2,530	+1,030	Favourable
Income – Rent of Office (Registrar)	2,503	2,658	+155	Favourable
Income – Civil Weddings	1,000	440	–560	Adverse
Income – SLA D.C. Verges	2,537	5,153	+2,616	Favourable
Income – Excess Electric (back to grid)	8	950	+870	Favourable
Income – Town Meadow Land Hire	500	1,015	+515	Favourable
Miscellaneous, Sundries & Wayleaves	29	104	+75	Favourable
Bank Interest (all accounts)	13,000	14,186	+1,186	Favourable
Prior Year Adjustment	0	–22	–22	Adverse

5. Reserves Position

The General Reserve currently stands at **£1,072,314** which is approximately 12 months' net revenue expenditure (NRE is the precept less loan repayments and any amounts allocated for capital or earmarked reserves) and is within recommended levels (see Para 5.34 of the Practitioners' Guide 2025)

Q2 General Reserves total : £1,072,314 (55%)

Q2 Earmarked Reserves total: £444,561 (23%)

Q2 Commuted Sum Reserves total : £434,136 (22%)

Q2 Restricted Funds total : £8984 (0.46%)

Q2 Total Reserves : £1,959,995

6. Cash Flow & Liquidity Position

- **Current account balances:** £1,150,115
- **CCLA Investment :** £376,503 at 4.03% yield
- **Lloyds 95 day notice acct (new) :** £455,909
- **Outstanding debtors:** £898.07 (Room hire) and VAT reclaim due £12,166
- **Creditors outstanding:** £47,811.67 (rates, suppliers)

Cash flow remains stable. Unity Investment account to be opened shortly for Lodden Lakes Commuted sum. A further review of long-term investment opportunities will be considered in Q3.

7. Conclusion

The Council remains in a sound financial position, with income and expenditure generally in line with expectations. We will continue to monitor reserve usage in line with the Council's Reserves Policy. Variances are being monitored and managed within delegated authority and reserves remain healthy.

Gillingham Town Council

Town Crier Task and Finish Group

Author: Serena Burgess, Projects & HR Officer

A meeting took place on 1 October 2025

Present: Cllr Graham Campbell (Lead member), Cllr Barbara Hurst, Cllr Sarah Snook, Serena Burgess (Projects & HR Officer)

This report takes into account the amendments requested at the Finance and Policy Committee meeting held on 18 September 2025.

1. Recruitment Process

The recruitment process will be determined at a later date if it is agreed to reinstate the role of Town Crier.

2. Potential Costs

Since the previous report, Gillingham Museum have confirmed they will not be returning any of the items stored there.

As requested, a detailed breakdown of an example livery (similar to the photo shown) is as follows:

Item	Material	Buttons/ Lining/ Braid	Labour @ £25/hr	Total
Coat	420	196	2150	2766
Waistcoat	75		500	575
Britches	57		350	407
Jabot	28		100	128
Threads	40			40
Interfacing	44			44
Hat	85			85
Shirt	70			70
Socks	43			43
Gloves	24			24
Bell	68			68
				£4250*



Other costs:

- Recruitment advertising in the Blackmore Vale Magazine (if appropriate) - £192.08*
- Membership of the Ancient & Honourable Guild of Town Criers - £15* one-off joining fee and £35* annual subscription

**Current prices – these would need to be increased by the CPI rate for September 2025 (due to be published on 22 October 2025)*

As can be seen from the photo below taken at the recent Dorset Town Crier's Competition, while the livery is made up of similar items, the ornateness varies. Therefore, until the Council agree the exact style and the Town Crier has been appointed (as sex and stature will of course be factors), it is not possible to determine the exact cost of livery.



The Mayor and Projects & HR Officer spoke to several Town Criers at the event, most of whom helped to source their livery from various places or made it themselves.

Members agreed that funding new livery was not necessary. Therefore, the Task and Finish group would like to propose an amount of £2,000 be considered for inclusion in the draft budget.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- That, subject to budget approval, the Job Description, as amended, is agreed
- That £2,000 is included for consideration in the draft budget for FY2026/27 – Budget no 6401 – Civic Costs, Town Crier Costs

Finance and Policy Committee – 20 October 2025

Minute no. 205

Gillingham Town Council
Proposed schedule of charges -
Revised Expenditure Forecast and Fee Review (Allotments only) - FY2026/27
Author: Tina Wright, RFO

1. Purpose of the Report

To inform members of the Finance and Policy Committee of the revised expenditure forecast for the allotment service in 2026/27, and to recommend an increase in allotment fees from 1 April 2026 to recover costs associated with the provision and management of allotment sites.

2. Background

At the Allotments and Burials Sub-committee meeting held on Thursday 21 August 2025 a recommendation was made that the allotment fees increase by 50% for the period 1st January – 31st December 2027.

At the Finance and Policy Committee meeting held on 15th September 2025 Minute no. 192, it was agreed and resolved that the RFO should re-calculate the allotment charges so that the budget is balanced, and provide a report to the next Finance and Policy Committee meeting.

The Allotments and Burials Sub-committee report presented to the Finance and Policy Committee on 15th September included a summary of the total expenditure for the previous financial year and details of a benchmarking exercise undertaken to compare Gillingham's charges with those of neighbouring town and parish councils. The report indicated that allotment expenditure was £2,609 for FY2024/25. Since the meeting, officers have carried out a further review of expected costs for FY2026/27, which indicates that total expenditure will be lower than previously forecasted.

3. Revised Expenditure Forecast

The revised forecast reflects the completion of several significant one-off works undertaken in the previous financial year. These included the subdivision of larger allotment plots to create more manageable units for new tenants, and maintenance works to bring plots back into cultivation following periods of non-use.

As this work will not recur in FY2026/27, the projected running costs for the service are expected to be lower; however, ongoing costs such as routine maintenance, administration, and insurance will continue to apply.

4. Legal Requirement for Rent Increases

In accordance with the Allotments Act 1950, Section 10, the Council must provide at least 12 months' written notice before implementing any increase in allotment rents. The increase can only take effect at the end of the current tenancy year unless otherwise agreed in the tenancy agreement. Failure to comply would render the increase invalid.

In addition, under Section 32 of the Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908, councils may not make a profit from allotment rents. Income must be used solely to offset costs relating to acquisition, maintenance, or improvement of allotment land.

5. Financial Position

The current allotment charges have remained at the same level for many years, and an increase is now considered necessary to align charges with associated costs.

Item	Charge FY2025/26	Proposed charge for FY2026/27	Comments
ALLOTMENT CHARGES			
Cemetery Road Allotment Gardens			
Full Size Plot	n/a	n/a	
Half Size Plot	£20.00	£30.00	
Smaller Plots - Plot 6a, 6c, 9a and 9b	£12.50	£18.75	
Quarter Size Plot	£10.00	£16.00	
Park Farm Allotment Gardens			
Full Size Plot	n/a	n/a	
Half Size Plot	£20.00	£30.00	All plots are half size.

The proposed total income for FY2026/27	£1,325.00
Forecast expenditure for FY2026/27	£1,310.00

RECOMMENDATION:

- That annual Allotment fees for FY2026-27 are increased to £30.00 for half-size plot, £18.75 for smaller plots and £16.00 for quarter-size plots.

Gillingham Town Council**Information regarding Assertion 10 of the AGAR
(Annual Governance and Accountability Return)
Author: Town Clerk**

Assertion 10 is a new addition to the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) that comes into effect from the 2025/26 financial year. It formalises the digital and data governance responsibilities, recognising the increased reliance on digital communications and the importance of data protection.

What does Assertion 10 require?

To respond 'Yes' to Assertion 10, a council must confirm it has met all of the following requirements:

1. Email Governance

The council must use a generic email account linked to its own domain rather than a personal or free email service such as Gmail or Outlook.

Gillingham Town Council meets this requirement.

2. Website Compliance

The council must ensure its website complies with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 and the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2 AA standard.

The Town Hall staff have all attended training on website accessibility and have been working with the council's current website provider to try and ensure the website meets the required standard; however, the requirements are complex, and some areas of the website are not meeting the required standards. A full report will be made to Full Council regarding this.

The council must also publish required documents under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and, where applicable, the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities - Gillingham Town Council meet both of these requirements.

3. Data Protection

All councils must comply with:

- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- The town council is legally considered both a Data Controller and a Data Processor, and it must process personal data responsibly and lawfully.

Gillingham Town Council meet all of the above requirements.

4. IT Policy

All smaller authorities (excluding parish meetings) must have an IT policy that governs how members, clerks, and staff use both council-owned and personal devices for council business.

Gillingham Town Council meets this requirement. The town council's IT Policy was agreed in April 2025 and can be viewed [here](#)

RECOMMENDATION:

- **The information is noted.**