



Meeting (No) **Finance & Administration Committee (5)**
Time & Date **6pm Tuesday 17th February 2026**
Place **Neston Town Hall**
Document **Minutes**

Present: Cllrs C. Braithwaite (Chair), S. Davies, S. Hudspeth, S. Jones, P. Kynaston and D. Ruscoe.

In attendance: Z. Dean (Locum Chief Officer).

PART 1: Items considered in the presence of the press and public	
35	Apologies for Absence
	It was RESOLVED: To accept apologies from Cllr S. Hudspeth for a holiday. Cllr P. Doughty was absent.
36	Public Participation
	No members of the public were present.
37	Declarations of Interest
	None received.
38	Minutes of the Last Meeting
	It was RESOLVED: To accept and sign the minutes from the meeting held on 09/12/2025 as an accurate record of that meeting.
39	Committee Budgets Month 10
	<p>A query was received regarding the ICT expenditure. It was noted that £2,336 was to be drawn down from the ICT EMR for the server from last year's budget. The Mayor's Allowance was currently showing more expenditure than actual due to three charity payments from Cllr Jones' 2024/25 Mayoral term.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: To receive the committee budget statement and Earmarked Reserves report.</p> <p>A question was asked regarding from whence most recent £1,250 CIL payment derived, which the Locum Chief Officer agreed to clarify via email.</p>
40	Finance
a	<p>The Chair read out the generalised expenditure list from the RFO which detailed the totals of higher value payments and categories of expenditure. It was noted that the documents covered three months of expenditure from November – January, including the majority of the Christmas switch-on related activities, as well as grant payments and road closures.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: To approve expenditure of £95,239.30 net from the Council's current account authorised by the RFO from 01/11/25 to 31/01/26, and Equals card payments of £1,667.50 net from 01/11/25 to 31/01/26.</p>
b	<p>The Chair noted that income included market stalls, CIL and room hire and booking income is improving.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: To note the current account income of £15,730.26 net from 01/11/25 to 31/01/26.</p>
c	It was RESOLVED: To agree the reconciliation of the Council's three bank accounts to 31/01/26.

Chair's initial:

Date:

41	Interim Internal Audit
a	<p>The Chair asked for any comments on the interim audit.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: To receive the interim audit report 2025/26.</p> <p>It was noted that Cllr S. Davies was already checking income and market pitch fees. Committee noted that the Council needed to regularly check income payments and Cllr D. Ruscoe had already been appointed to do so.</p> <p>The second point of action raised in the report had already been rectified and the ICT contract was now included on the Town Council's website.</p>
b	<p>It was RESOLVED: To agree to implement the actions from the report in a timely manner.</p>
42	RBS Year-End Closedown Package
a	<p>The Chair introduced the item and explained that RBS is the preferred council accounting system and a higher grade allows flexibility with selected dates. The cost is an annual one and by selecting the platinum package the Council receives a yearly discount. Members agreed that a five-year package would ensure stability for the Council.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: To receive a report from the RFO regarding the Year-End closedown.</p>
b	<p>It was RESOLVED: To agree the Platinum fixed-term package for the Year-End closedown services.</p>
43	ICT Breakdown
	<p>A question was asked regarding forward planning, ICT contingency arrangements and availability. The Chief Officer noted that Neston now has two servers, as well as backups, and a high level of encryption. Members noted they wished to ensure the Council can continue to function in any eventuality, making this part of the contract going forward.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: To receive the ICT breakdown report from July-December 2025.</p>
44	Proposal from the Market & Town Hall Committee
a	<p>The Chair introduced the item and the Stage Project Report [10/02/26 MTH4/54c].</p> <p>A question was asked regarding the viability of outside funding sources, such as Spacehive. Members asked for details to be passed to both the M&TH and C&E committees.</p>
b	<p>It was RESOLVED: To recommend that a request is made to Full Council for the sum of £5,000 to be drawn down from the Special Project Fund, to enable stage area improvements to go ahead early in the 2026/27 financial year.</p>
45	Date of the Next Meeting
	<p>Committee noted that the date of the next scheduled meeting is 21/04/2026 at 6pm.</p>
46	Exclusion of the Press and Public
	<p>To consider that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by s.100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the public and accredited representatives of newspapers be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by virtue of the paragraph specified against the item.</p>
PART 2: Items considered in the absence of the press and public	
47	ICT SLA

	<p>The committee requested further information regarding contingency planning.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: To accept the draft ICT SLA subject to the clarification/addition of a contingency clause.</p>
48	Council Banking Update
	<p>The Locum Town Clerk provided a verbal update on the Town Council's banking arrangements.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED: To remain with the Council's current banking provider, reviewing on an annual basis.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the RFO and Locum Chief Officer for their diligence.</p>

The meeting closed at 6.53pm.

Signed _____ **Date** _____