



**HAYWARDS HEATH  
TOWN COUNCIL**

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14<sup>th</sup> January 2025

To all Councillors on the Policy and Finance Committee and others for information

Dear Councillor,

You are hereby requested to attend a meeting of the **Policy and Finance Committee** to be held on **Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 7.00pm** at the Town Hall in the Council Chamber when the following business will be transacted.

Yours Sincerely  
**Steven Trice**  
Town Clerk

### **AGENDA**

1. To receive apologies for absence.
2. To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee held on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024. (Pages 3 - 6)
3. To note Substitutes.
4. Public Forum - *Members of the public are invited to ask questions or raise issues which are relevant and are the concern of this Council. A period of 15 minutes is allocated for this purpose. Notice of intention to address Council should be given to the Clerk by noon of the day of the meeting.*
5. To receive Declarations of Interest from Members in respect of any matter on the agenda.
6. To consider Town Council Members Allowance and Staff/Members expenses for 2025/2026. (Pages 7-9)
7. To consider the Council's draft budget for 2025 - 2026. (Pages 10-18)
8. To consider the review of the Town Council's Health and Safety Policies. (Pages 19-26)
9. Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the year ended 31st March 2025 — to receive, consider and note the Mid-Year Internal Audit Report 2024/2025. (pages 27-39)
10. To consider applications for Town Council Grants. (Pages 40-45)
11. To receive the 2025/2026 committee timetable. (Pages 46-48)
12. To consider the Government Standards consultation on 'Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities in England'. (pages 49-54)
13. To consider exclusion of Public and Press.

**Committee Members: Policy & Finance Committee:** AM Cooke (Chair), S Walsh (Vice Chair), A. Basher, R. Cromie, AM. Lucraft, P. Lucraft, A. Murray A. Rees.

*'During this meeting the public are allowed to film the Committee and officers only from the front of the public gallery, providing it does not disrupt the meeting. **Any items in the Exempt Part of the agenda cannot be filmed.** If another member of the public objects to being recorded, the person(s) filming must stop doing so until that member of the public has finished speaking. The use of social media is permitted but all members of the public are requested to switch their mobile devices to silent for the duration of the meeting.'*

**Town Mayor** Cllr Stephanie Inglesfield

**Town Clerk** Mr Steven Trice

# HAYWARDS HEATH TOWN COUNCIL

## POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

### Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024

A.M Cooke (*Chairman*)  
S. Walsh (*Vice Chairman*)  
A. Bashar  
P. Lucraft  
A.M Lucraft  
A. Murray  
A. Rees

\* Absent \*\* Apologies

Also present: Town Clerk, Committee Clerk

#### 32. Apologies

Member	Reason
None	

#### 33. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2024 were taken as read, confirmed as a true record and duly signed by the Chair.

#### 34. Substitutes

None.

#### 35. Public Forum

There were no members of the public present.

#### 36. Members' Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary or other interests.

#### 37. To receive and consider the lists of receipts and payments, and income and expenditure for the period to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024.

The Town Clerk presented the lists for period to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024 welcoming questions and asked it be noted that the RFO had also included the CCLA investment paperwork as requested at the last meeting. Without comment;

Members **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council to approve the lists of payments and receipts, and income and expenditure for the period to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024.

#### 38. To confirm bank balances and bank reconciliation statements as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024.

It was asked how much money had been deposited to the CCLA investment fund. The Town Clerk informed Councillors that £750,000 had been agreed by Members and he believed all of the monies has been deposited.

Cllr P Lucraft queried if there were enough monies in the current account to cover operational spending and how money could be retrieved from the CCLA. The Town Clerk confirmed that there were enough monies available at the present and this would be reviewed as monies can be retrieved on the same day if requested by 11am, with no penalties imposed.

Members **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council to approve the bank balances and the reconciliation statement as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024.

**39. To consider applications for Town Council Grants.**

Members noted the remaining 2024/2025 budget of £3,642.00. The Town Clerk advised that the Grants totalled being requested exceeded this amount and reminded Councillors to be mindful of there being two further Policy and Finance meetings in this Council year, although this should not impact their decision to award each Grant.

Cllr P Lucraft noted that there are many organisations in the town that should be applying for support and the Council wants to encourage them, as it's small amounts of money but significant for organisations.

The Town Clerk noted that there has been increased coverage of the Grants, particularly on Facebook and the website, and ECO Imogen Wilson has done a lot of work promoting the Grants programme, plus the Committee had increased the money available. Councillors noted that Paish/Town Council are the only Local Authorities that gives running costs.

Cllr P Lucraft noted that the budget for Grants had started at £8,500, which the Committee increased to £10,000. The Council had previously doubled the amount of Grant organisations could apply for and made the criteria wider, as the Grants had not been increased in many years.

Each grant application was discussed individually with all being awarded apart from the Waves Music Therapy because Councillors wanted further information on the number of beneficiaries and number of Haywards Heath children. Members were in agreement that the project was worthy of support so they delegated the decision, with their support, to the Town Clerk. Cllr A Murray declared an interest in Ensemble Reza, who he gave £500 to from his Councillor pot. Cllr AM Cooke also advised that MSDC gave them £5000 for a 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary concert.

Members **RESOLVED** to award;

1. **A grant of £1000 to Waves Music Therapy to help fund a new Music Therapy project at Warden Park Primary School – DELEGATED to the Town Clerk to approve after further information is sought.**
2. **A grant of £800 to Mid Sussex Active to help fund a new Primary School Sports Training programme**
3. **A grant of £500 to Home-Start Crawley, Horsham and Mid Sussex to help with running costs**
4. **A grant of £500 to Ensemble Reza to help with running costs for a series of 7 lunch time concerts in Jan-July 2025**
5. **A grant of £500 to Haywards Heath Foodbank to help with purchasing new mattresses for their Babybank service**
6. **A grant of £500 to Haywards Heath Town Team to help with running costs of their 2025 Bike Ride event.**

Members, in considering the grant applications before them and being mindful of two further meetings of the Committee in the current Council year **RESOLVED to increase the grants budget to £17,000 by moving £7,000 from the unrestricted reserves to the 2024/25 grant's budget.**

**40. To consider making a request to Mid Sussex District Council in relation to Governance Arrangements in Haywards Heath**

The Town Clerk noted that this item had been brought by Cllr P Lucraft, as the two most recent attempts to review and sort the boundaries of Haywards Heath out had both been dismissed by MSDC.

Cllr AM Lucraft noted that the current boundary discrepancies were very confusing for electorates, therefore it was agreed that realignment should be reviewed and changed before the local elections in 2027. It was noted that the main concerns were the difference in representation in the north of the Town with Lindfield at District/Town level and to the south of the Town where the housing along

the relief road is in the Ansty and Staplefield Ward that coalesced with the Town that should be brought within the Town Boundary.

Members **RESOLVED** to authorise the Town Clerk to write to Mid Sussex District Council to formally request that a Governance Review be undertaken for Haywards Heath that would be completed for the Town/District Elections in May 2027.

**41. To consider charges for the Town Hall, Allotment Rents and Burial Charges for the 2025/26 financial year.**

The Town Clerk noted that Town Hall renting was returning to pre-pandemic levels and an increase as recommended 3% covers forecasted inflation plus staffing costs increases. It was also felt important not to increase hire costs by more as other local venues are already priced very competitively and local groups and organisations were struggling to pay hall hires in the present economic climate.

Members **RESOLVED** to recommend to;

- A) Increase the hire costs for the Town Hall by 3% for community hirers and 3% for commercial hirers for the financial year 2025/26**
- B) Increase the annual percentage rise to Cemetery fees by 3% for the financial year 2025/26**
- C) Increase the annual percentage increase in allotment rental fees by 3% for the financial year 2025/26**
- D) To keep wedding fees at £425 for the financial year 2025/26**

**42. To receive an update on financial matters relating to the Council undertaken by delegated authority**

Members **NOTED** the update on financial matters without comment.

**43. To consider for adoption a Town Council Investment Policy**

The Town Clerk presented the proposed Investment Policy. Cllr P Lucraft queried the 12 month fixed term policy and suggested extending this to 24 months and potentially adding a clause to state that this would be subject to 80% of the Council's Assets being in short term funds in order to manage capital risks and interest rate risks. Cllr S Walsh queried the percentage reserve needed at any time. The Town Clerk confirmed that this should cover 4-6 months' worth of operating costs. Cllr P Lucraft suggested that the Policy & Finance Committee review the investment strategy twice a year.

Members, in considering the queries and comments on this policy, **RESOLVED** to ask the Town Clerk to return the Investment Policy to the Committee in January with the amendments that were agreed as per the body of the minute.

**44. To receive recommendation from the Environmental and General Committee in relation to the introduction of a grants fund for third party Community Events.**

Without comment and unanimous support.

Members **RESOLVED** to introduce a £5,000 grant fund for the third party Community Events administered and overseen by the Committee within the 2025/26 budget.

**45. To note a representation made to West Sussex County Council on the development of the proposed Hurst Farm**

On the grounds that the Hurst Farm Section 106 Agreement was still to be executed the Leader of the Town Council had written to the Cabinet Member at West Sussex County responsible for Education to seek clarification on the status of the Section 106 Agreement and to ascertain what the hold up was. This was in light of the fact that the school proposed was also under review for its need due to Government review of 41 proposed schools. In addition, it had also been requested that a review of the speed limit into Fox Hill from the County border be looked into in light of the

new housing developments in the area. Members noted the two issues raised in light with the Town Clerk's concerns that the development of Hurst Farm had been delayed for many years due to issues around the school and the planning permission, which was putting pressure on Town Council services that were planned to be provided on Hurst Farm to meet allotment demand and the lack of space at Western Road Cemetery.

Members **NOTED** the Update.

**46. To consider the Government consultation regarding the ability of Town/Parish Councils to hold remote meetings.**

Members considered the Government's consultation on remote meetings and felt where the move to allow Councillors to attend meetings remotely was welcomed. This was agreed with the proviso that, due to the differing nature of Town/Parish Councils, that each Council be given the ability set their own processes and procedures. With regards to proxy voting, it was felt that this was not favourable as it could damage the democratic process and put the quorum of meetings at risk alongside the risk that Members will not engage and decisions would may not be made with Councillor taking into consideration the reports of officers.

Members **RESOLVED** to **support the introduction of remote meeting with reservations on proxy voting and the understanding it will be for the Town Council to adopt its own policies and procedures if the legislation around remote meeting is introduced.**

**47. Urgent business**

There was none.

**The meeting closed at 8.35 pm.**

**Committee Meeting: Policy and Finance**

**Report of:** Town Clerk

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025

**Subject:** Members Allowances and Members/Staff Expenses 2025/2026

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**Purpose of Report**

- 1) The following report presents the allowances and expenses that can be paid to Councillors and staff of Haywards Heath Town Council during the 2025/2026 financial year.

**Summary:**

- 2) The Council has a number of budget headings to cover the cost of travel, attendance at courses and conferences and for training courses that can be claimed by both staff and Councillors. In addition, there is also a basic allowance paid to each Member of the Council along with a Mayor's Allowance and the suggestion of allowing a payment to be made to enable the Town Mayor to visit the Town's twin towns. The following report reviews (annually) in one policy the range of payments and where possible the level of re-imbusement for the 2025/2026 financial year.

**Recommendations;**

**Members are asked to consider and agree the expenses and allowances payable to Members and staff for the financial year 2025/2026 as presented in the tables (a) and (b) under point 4 of this report.**

**Background:**

- 3) Members will find below the range of allowances and payments that can be received by both Members and staff. The payments are held under designated headings some of which are fixed and some of which are variable due to the differing costs for travel and training.
- 4) Table (a) and (b) lay out the allowances and expenses that can be paid by the Council to Members and staff as of the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025, for Member's agreement with a suggested rise in Members allowances in table (a) and generally in (b) apart from milage claims as this is set by the National Joint Council Green Book;

**Cont.....**

**Table (a): Members Allowances.**

<b>Members Allowances</b>	<b>Rate for 25/26 against 2024/2025 suggest at 3% rise.</b>	<b>Budget Heading</b>
Basic Allowance	£1,242 <b>(25/26 = £1,279)</b>	4242 – Members' Allowances.
Town Mayor's Allowance	£1,186 <b>(25/26 = £1,222)</b>	4240 – Mayor's Allowances.
<b>Twining Trips</b>		
The purchase of one economy (non-refundable) flight/train/ferry, intermediates travelling costs and bed and breakfast hotel accommodation to the maximum of 3 nights at £140 per night for the Mayor, to either/or of the Town's Twin Towns (Bondues or Traunstein) per annum. <i>NB – the Mayor will be required to take out independent insurance as the Town Council does not cover extraneous costs.</i>	£10 increase – travel and accommodation price fluctuation.	Budget 4005 – Travelling Expenses.

**Table (b): General Expenses.** Please note that the general and subsistence suggested rates are in line with those recommended by National Joint Council in line with annual pay scales reviews.

<b>General</b>	<b>NJC Local Government Pay Settlement 2024 rates.</b>	<b>Budget Heading</b>
Car Mileage	45p per mile <b>(No Change)</b>	Budget 4005 – Travelling Expenses.
Additional Mileage Rate	3p per mile for 1 passenger 5p per mile for 2 or more passengers <b>(No Change)</b>	Budget 4005 – as above.
Cycling Allowance	20p per mile <b>(No Change)</b>	Budget 4005 – as above.
Full Train/Bus Fare between Home/Haywards Heath and destination of Course or Conference.	N/A <b>(Cost set by travel provider)</b>	Budget 4005 – as above.
<b>Subsistence -</b>	<b>Rate for 23/24 against 2024/2025 suggest at 3%.</b>	<b>Budget Heading</b>
Breakfast	£9.00 Overnight <b>(25/26 = £9.30)</b>	Budget 4027 – Courses Conferences and Training.
Lunch	£13.00 Overnight <b>(25/26 = £13.40)</b>	Budget 4027 – as above.
Tea	£5.50 Overnight <b>(25/26 = £5.70)</b>	Budget 4027 – as above.
Evening Meal	£17.00 Overnight <b>(25/26 = £17.50)</b>	Budget 4027 – as above.
Out of Pocket Expenses per night	£8.00 Overnight <b>(24/25 = £8.20)</b>	Budget 4027 – as above
<b>Other Expenses that can be claimed.</b>		
Training Courses - Staff	N/A <b>(Cost set by provider)</b>	Budget 4009 – Staff Training.
Conference Costs - Staff	N/A <b>(Cost set by provider)</b>	Budget 4027 – Courses Conferences and Training.
Training Courses Conference Costs - Cllrs	N/A <b>(Cost set by provider)</b>	Budget 4027 – Courses Conferences and Training.
Staff Recognition	£450.00 – <b>(No Change)</b>	Budget – 4200 Hospitality and Staff Recognition.



*N/A: donates variable costs due to distance and method of travel and/or cost of courses/conference.*

*\*Every payment must be redeemed by receipt given to the Responsible Financial Officer.*

**Financial Implications**

- 5) The financial implication of this policy will be dealt with within the budget setting report to be considered by this committee under item 7.

**Town Clerk**

**Committee Meeting: Policy and Finance**

**Report of:** Town Clerk/RFO  
**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025  
**Subject:** Budget 2025 – 2026

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**Purpose of Report:**

1. The purpose of this report is for Members to consider the Town Council's budget for the next financial year.

**Summary:**

2. As a starting point for Haywards Heath Town Council's 2025–2026 budget setting process, the Environment and General Purposes Committee considered its draft budget on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2024. Following on from this meeting, the Environment and General Purposes Committee's comments have been fed into the full draft budget as outlined in Appendix 1 of this report for Members consideration. Please note the draft budget as attached is based on officer's projections for Council expenditure for 2025–2026, which includes suggested new purchases/initiatives/improvements to facilities and services.

**Recommendation(s):****Members are asked to RESOLVE;**

- a) to recommend to Full Council, the draft budget for the 2025–2026 financial year as attached at Appendix 1, with a 3% rise in Council Tax and a 4% increase in the precept (including a 1% increase in the tax base) to £904,714 representing the average Band D cost of £71.33 per annum.

**Background:****Dispensation for setting the budget.**

3. *Advice from the DCLG (now MHCLG) is that no dispensation is required to set the precept and allowances.* However, Members are reminded of the restrictions on voting outlined in Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. In particular it should be noted that where a Member has at least two months arrears of Council Tax he or she must not vote on any matter relating directly to the setting of a precept or any recommendation, resolution or other decision which might affect the calculation of the precept (though they may remain in the meeting and may speak).
4. Please note that in previous years the Monitoring Officer at Mid Sussex District Council advises a dispensation for all Members to discuss and vote on allowances, the budget and fixing the precept.
5. Where dispensation is not required Section 13 of the Council's Standing Orders, which sets out the dispensation process and is administered by the Town Clerk, as the Proper Officer to the Council, a policy exists, which dates back to the 19<sup>th</sup> November 2012 to give certainty in the budget process annually. So, it can be proved that dispensation was given, if challenged even though none is required generally. This decision was taken under advice from the National Association of Local Councils and the Society of Local Council Clerks, to ensure the Council is totally covered from any legal challenge on the Council's budget setting process.
6. The proposed budget, its background and the implications included in each budget heading are outlined in Appendix 1 of this report. The draft budget 2025–2026 shows heading breakdown of

we the figures that have been prepared for the next financial year's budget, together with columns for the current year's budget and the forecasted expenditure to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. Appendix 2 shows the current position of the Council's earmarked reserves that can also be called upon.

7. The budget shows a **4% rise in the Precept**, which equates to a precept of £904,714 for 2025/2026 from £869,580 for 2024/2025 (the 25/26 precept figure includes a 1% rise in the tax base as advised by MSDC in early December).

#### **2025 – 2026 Budget Financial Implications**

8. **It is recommended that the Town Council considers increasing its precept to £904,714 from £869,580. This represents an 4% increase in the precept with the amount payable by Council Tax payers for a typical Band D household in 2025–2026 being £71.33 per annum (Band D in 2024–2025 was £69.26).**
9. **This represents a rise in the amount payable by Council Tax Payers of 3% with the other 1% coming from the Tax Base rise and shows a balanced revenue budget for the 2024–25 year.**
10. Members may wish to recommend a revised/amended budget to Full Council

#### **Financial Implications**

11. Covered in Appendix 1 of the report.

**Town Clerk/RFO**

**HAYWARDS HEATH TOWN COUNCIL**  
**POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE – MONDAY, 20 JANUARY 2025**  
**DRAFT BUDGET 2025/26**

**REVENUE**

	Budget '24/25	Forecast to 31/03/2025	Draft Budget '25/26	Notes
	£	£	£	
Precept	869,580	869,580	<b>904,714</b>	•
Cemetery	35,000	36,261	37,250	
Lettings	25,000	30,000	27,000	
Interest Earned	25,000	32,750	27,500	
Allotment Rents	4,634	4,627	4,766	
Roundabouts (WSCC)/Flower Bed Sponsorship	7,250	7,250	7,250	
Other Income	2,026	2,112	2,147	
	<b>968,490</b>	<b>982,580</b>	<b>1,010,627</b>	

**EXPENDITURE**

	Budget '23/24	Forecast to 31/03/2024	Draft Budget '24/25
	£	£	£
<b>Environment &amp; General Purposes</b>			
Allotments	8,000	13,067	10,500
Cemetery	7,050	6,527	7,050
External Contract for Cemetery	17,779	16,345	17,162
Hanging Baskets, Goblet Baskets & Tiered Planters	4,680	4,614	5,085
Muster Green, Roundabouts & Other Flower Beds	21,752	19,800	20,750
Public Clock (St Wilfrid's)	200	200	200
Street Lighting — Power & Maintenance	17,750	17,477	16,750
Street Lighting — Improvement/New Schemes	4,000	4,000	4,000
Severe Weather Contingency	315	315	325
General Maintenance/Repairs	4,838	4,775	4,918
Town Initiatives	8,072	8,072	5,381

South Road Trees	2,000	2,000	2,000
Community/Young Enterprise Awards	1,500	1,500	1,500
Land off Hurstwood Lane — Management Costs	0	0	0
Environmental Projects	2,205	2,205	2,275
	<b>100,141</b>	<b>100,897</b>	<b>97,896</b>

**Leisure & Amenities**

Best Kept Garden/Allotment Competitions	971	710	971
Christmas Lights	14,900	14,898	17,500
Christmas Lights — Maintenance Reserve	1,500	1,500	3,000
Haywards Heath/South & South East in Bloom	1,076	2,138	1,076
Town Council Events	26,500	26,500	30,250
Leave No One Behind	2,000	2,003	2,000
Days Out Project	2,500	30	0
Community Events Grants	—	—	5,000
	<b>49,447</b>	<b>47,779</b>	<b>59,797</b>

**Grounds Maintenance**

Salaries & National Insurance	150,950	135,006	157,350
Pension	35,505	31,084	35,570
Clothing & Footwear	1,175	1,175	1,210
Depot Rent	11,323	11,417	12,455
Depot Rates	5,240	5,072	5,240
Other Depot Expenses	5,775	6,119	6,725
Vehicle Expenses	14,200	26,550	18,000
Fuel	3,090	3,341	4,920
Equipment Expenses	4,924	6,074	6,250
Mobile Telephones	596	600	600
Contingencies & Sundries	325	391	375
	<b>233,103</b>	<b>226,829</b>	<b>248,695</b>

**EXPENDITURE (cont.)**

**Accommodation**

Rent	2,507	2,507	2,507
Rates, Water & Sewerage	38,957	39,838	40,533
Cleaning	7,183	6,981	7,420
Caretaking	12,543	9,559	12,953
Pension	0	0	0

Maintenance Building & Grounds	5,750	5,826	6,000
Electricity	4,800	3,771	3,960
Gas	8,700	3,434	4,350
Telephone, Fax & Internet	2,141	2,463	2,040
Reserve for Cyclical Redecoration	1,250	1,250	1,250

	<b>83,831</b>	<b>75,629</b>	<b>81,013</b>
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**Office & Customer Service**

Salaries & National Insurance	243,100	241,716	255,545
Pension	58,636	41,833	59,811
Travelling Expenses	1,200	1,603	1,750
Printing & Stationery	3,365	3,483	3,840
Postage	275	275	300
Advertising	2,000	750	1,500
Office Equipment Maintenance	5,403	5,383	6,185
Insurances	11,325	11,325	14,850
Courses, Conferences & Publications	3,500	3,064	3,500
Subscriptions	13,774	12,582	14,017
Audit Fee	2,200	2,009	2,625
Staff Training	2,500	2,500	2,500
Reserve for Replacement of Fixtures & Fittings	3,750	3,750	3,750

	<b>351,028</b>	<b>330,273</b>	<b>370,173</b>
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**Other Expenditure**

Hospitality & Staff Recognition	2,250	1,421	1,450
Grants & Subsidies	10,000	10,000	17,000
Bentswood Hub CIC/Community People SLAs	0	11,893	19,750
Cost of Living Grants	0	0	0
Newsletters	7,070	4,771	7,070
Reserve for Election Expenses	10,000	10,000	10,000
Contingencies & Sundries	1,025	471	1,025
Bank Charges	1,344	1,190	1,136
Mayor's Allowance	1,186	1,186	1,222
Members' Allowances	19,872	18,630	20,464
Reserve for Community Facilities	1,869	1,869	1,750
Community Projects	15,000	15,000	10,000
Community Warden	21,500	21,500	21,500
Loan Capital Repayment	6,000	6,000	6,000
Loan Interest	2,574	2,574	2,262

Advisers' Fees	8,750	8,750	7,750
New Website	20,000	20,000	1,800
	<b>128,440</b>	<b>135,255</b>	<b>130,179</b>

<b>CAPITAL</b>	10,000	10,000	10,000
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#### Ward Budgets

Ashenground (2x £312.50 )	625.00	625.00	625.00
Bentswood & Heath East (3x £312.50)	937.50	937.50	937.50
Bentswood & Heath West	312.50	312.50	312.50
Franklands (3x £312.50)	937.50	937.50	937.50
Lucastes & Bolnore (3x £312.50)	937.50	937.50	937.50
Lucastes Boltro	312.50	312.50	312.50
North Central	312.50	312.50	312.50
North East	312.50	312.50	312.50
North West	312.50	312.50	312.50
	<b>5,000</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>5,000</b>

Ashenground	1,500	1,500	1,500
Bentswood & Heath East + Bentswood & Heath West	1,500	1,500	1,500
Franklands	1,500	1,500	1,500
Lucastes & Bolnore + Lucastes Boltro	1,500	1,500	1,500
North Central + North East + North West	1,500	1,500	1,500
	<b>7,500</b>	<b>7,500</b>	<b>7,500</b>

<b>Total Revenue Expenditure</b>	<b>968,490</b>	<b>939,162</b>	<b>1,010,253</b>
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<b>Revenue Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>43,418</b>	<b>374</b>
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#### Notes

- Precept increased from £869,580 (2024/25) to £904,714 (2025/26), based on a tax base of 12,683.5 (up from 12,555.3 in 2024/25). This represents an **3% increase** in the amount payable by Council Tax payers, i.e. £71.33 p.a. for a typical Band D household (up from £69.26 in 2024/25).

Draft budget assumes a 'cost of living' pay rise for 2025/26 of 3% per employee. Should Members wish to change this assumption, the figures will obviously have to be recalculated.

Forecast General Reserve @ 31/3/25 is as follows:

**add:** Revenue Surplus

b.f. 1/4/24	289,396.36
	<u>43,418.00</u>
	<b><u>332,814.36</u></b>



14/01/2025

## Haywards Heath Town Council

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## Detailed Income &amp; Expenditure by Budget Heading

Month No: 9

Policy &amp; Finance Committee - POSITION OF RESERVES AT 30-NOV-24

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent
<u>900 Reserve Movements</u>						
9002 Cemetery	3,128	30,064	26,936		26,936	10.4%
9004 Street Lighting Schemes	0	5,558	5,558		5,558	0.0%
9006 New Burial Ground	0	70,920	70,920		70,920	0.0%
9010 Christmas Lights - Maintenance	3,195	3,359	164		164	95.1%
9013 Town Council Events	0	14,838	14,838		14,838	0.0%
9016 Cyclical Redecoration	1,250	9,245	7,995		7,995	13.5%
9017 Insurances	2,072	3,041	969		969	68.1%
9018 Staff Training	0	4,189	4,189		4,189	0.0%
9019 Replacement Fixtures/Fittings	0	22,874	22,874		22,874	0.0%
9022 Election Expenses	0	9,509	9,509		9,509	0.0%
9023 Community Facilities	0	3,412	3,412		3,412	0.0%
9026 CAPITAL	263	54,215	53,953		53,953	0.5%
9028 Advisers' Fees	0	24,591	24,591		24,591	0.0%
9029 Graffiti/Street Scene Works	(640)	9,267	9,907		9,907	(6.9%)
9030 Severe Weather Contingency	0	3,186	3,186		3,186	0.0%
9034 Muster Green	2,100	11,039	8,939		8,939	19.0%
9036 Haywards Heath Town CIC	(2,306)	17,375	19,681		19,681	(13.3%)
9037 Community Warden	0	32,745	32,745		32,745	0.0%
9038 Roundabout Liabilities	0	2,250	2,250		2,250	0.0%
9039 Maintenance Building & Grounds	4,865	14,758	9,893		9,893	33.0%
9041 Town Development	0	5,649	5,649		5,649	0.0%
9042 CCTV	0	6,322	6,322		6,322	0.0%

9043 Fox Hill Village Sign	0	1,000	1,000	1,000	0.0%
9055 South Road Trees	2,160	7,564	5,404	5,404	28.6%
9058 Land Hurstwood Ln - Management	0	30,500	30,500	30,500	0.0%
9059 Speed Indicator Device (SID)	0	244	244	244	0.0%
Reserve Movements :- Indirect Expenditure	<u>16,087</u>	<u>397,714</u>	<u>381,627</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>381,627</u> <u>4.0%</u>
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<u>(16,087)</u>	<u>(397,714)</u>	<u>(381,627)</u>		
<hr/>					
Grand Totals:- Income	0	0	0		0.0%
Expenditure	16,087	397,714	381,627	0	381,627 4.0%
<b>Net Income over Expenditure</b>	<u>(16,087)</u>	<u>(397,714)</u>	<u>(381,627)</u>		
<b>Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve</b>	<u>(16,087)</u>				

**Committee Meeting: Policy and Finance**

**Report of:** Town Clerk  
**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025  
**Subject:** Health and Safety Policies

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**Purpose of Report**

- 1) The purpose of this report is for Members to consider Town Council policy documents.

**Summary:**

- 2) The following report presents a review of Haywards Heath Town Council's Health and Safety policy documentation, which was produced in conjunction with consultants Complete Health and Safety Ltd.

**Members are recommended to;**

- a) **Note and comment upon on the Health and Safety documents as attached.**

**Background**

- 3) As required by the Internal Auditor's Members will find attached copies of the Town Council's following Health and Safety documentation for consideration, comment and sign off, (these reports are attached to the Members summons email and available on request by residents as there is a considerable amount of paperwork.)
  1. Health and Safety Policy
  2. General Risk Assessment
  3. Fire Risk Assessment
  4. Fire Safety Policy
  5. Ground staff Risk Assessment
- 4) All of the above was reviewed last year by Complete Health and Safety Ltd.
- 5) Members will also note that the Health and Safety documentation forms part of the Town Council's staff handbook and all staff must sign to say they have read the document as the handbook links to staff contracts of employment resulting in any deliberate breach of Health and Safety being a disciplinary matter.

**Financial Implications**

- 6) There will be financial implications resulting from the recommendations outlined in the Fire Risk assessment, which will be met from existing budgets. If it transpires that works need to be procured, they will be dealt with through the Council's Standing Orders and Financial regulations.

**Legal Implications**

- 7) None.

**Town Clerk**

## Health and Safety Policy - Health and safety at Work etc Act 1974

This is the Health and Safety Policy Statement of Haywards Heath Town Council.

Haywards Heath Town Council are committed to ensuring the health and safety of everyone who works for the Council and also of everyone who may be affected by the Council's work activities, including visitors, clients, contractors, and the general public.

This policy sets out the arrangements that are necessary to achieve the above while complying with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and all other applicable legislation.

The Council will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that:

- Safe equipment is provided and safe systems of work are devised and implemented
- Adequate arrangements are in place for the safe use, handling, storage and transport of materials, substances and equipment
- Sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision is given to ensure the health and safety of employees/operatives and others affected by their actions
- A safe workplace, including a safe means of entering and leaving workplaces, is provided and maintained
- The working environment is without risks to health and adequate welfare facilities are provided

The Town Council will provide the necessary resources in terms of finance, labour resources and time to meet the requirements of this policy.

It is Council policy to consult with employees/operatives on health and safety issues before updating or modifying any part of the health and safety policy and to provide training and information, as appropriate. The Council will do as much as is reasonably practicable to ensure that health and safety arrangements are adequately resourced at all times.

This policy can only be successful with the active co-operation of employees/operatives who have responsibility for taking care of themselves and others, following safe working procedures and reporting any safety issues as soon as possible.

The Town Council will collect and use personal data to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its staff and others. This policy will be reviewed annually and revised as necessary in response to changes in legislation or methods of working.

*Signed:*

Dated:

## **Responsibilities**

As the employer Haywards Heath Town Council has overall accountability for health and safety.

(1) Responsibility:

- Day-to-day tasks at the Town Hall are managed by the Town Clerk.
- Day-to-day tasks at the Depot and on site are managed by the Head Groundsman. and are overseen by the Deputy Clerk.

(2) Staff will be kept informed about health and safety matters: on a quarterly basis but they are still the overall responsibility of those named under point one. Delegation for specific task will be made to individuals within the organisation, by workplace area or by topic under point 3.

Responsibilities will be clearly set so that if there are any health and safety concerns, they can be reported to the right person or ultimately the Town Clerk.

Employees also have legal responsibilities to take care of the health and safety of themselves and others, and to co-operate to help the Town Clerk comply with the law.

## **Control of Health and Safety Arrangements**

(1) Overall and final responsibility for health and safety is that of all staff individual and as a collective.

- Haywards Heath Town Council

(2) Day-to-day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practise is delegated to

- Town Clerk

(3) To ensure health and safety standards are maintained/improved, the following people have responsibility in the following area

<b>Name</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Town Hall Office:	Deputy Clerk - Andrew Sturgeon
Depot:	Head Groundsman (Andrew Stempt)
Outside Activities:	Groundstaff (Daniel Beard)
Out of office hours:	Caretaker/Cleaner – Max Macdonald/Josefa Figueira

(4) All employees have to:

- Co-operate with Deputy Clerk and Town Clerk on health and safety matters;
- Not interfere with anything provided to safeguard their health and safety;
- Take responsible care of their own health and safety; and
- Report all health and safety concerns to an appropriate person (as detailed in this policy statement).

## **Health and safety risks arising from our work activities**

(1) Arrangements for undertaking risk assessments.

- Town Hall assessment to be conducted by Town Hall Staff.
- Depot and Council landholdings/tasks assessments by Groundstaff.
- All reported to Town Clerk to present to the Council as the corporate body.

(2) Risk assessments will be reviewed by;

Town Clerk, Deputy Clerk

(3) The findings of the risk assessments will be approved by;

Town Clerk, Town Council

(4) Action required to remove/control risks will be approved by;

- Town Clerk, Deputy Clerk
- Town Clerk will be responsible for ensuring the action required is implemented.
- Town Clerk will check that the implemented actions have removed/reduced the risks.
- Assessments will be reviewed every by staff, Annually by Council or when the work activity changes, whichever is soonest.

(5) Consultation with employees

The Town Clerk will consult with employees delegated with special tasks and then all staff (due to size of Town Hall staff). Consultation with employees is provided by Town Clerk through regular staff meetings.

(6) Safe plant and equipment and Council Facilities

- Depot & outside areas – Head Groundsman will be responsible for identifying all equipment/plant maintenance. Any problems found with plant/equipment should be reported to the Deputy Clerk and Head Groundsman (who will also check that new plant and equipment meets health and safety standards before it is purchased).
- Town Hall – the Town Clerk will be responsible for day to day running of Town Hall. The Town Clerk will be responsible for ensuring effective maintenance of the Town Hall in liaison with the Deputy Town Clerk.
- Town Clerk will be responsible for ensuring that all identified maintenance as per above is implemented.

### **Safe handling and use of substances**

A Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended) (COSHH) assessment has been undertaken by the Deputy Head Groundsman. To ensure the principles of the document are implemented the following delegations will apply;

- Outside areas - Groundstaff (Daniel Beard)
- Town Hall office - the Deputy Town Clerk in liaison with Deputy Head Groundsman will be responsible for identifying all substances which need a COSHH assessment.
- Deputy Head Groundsman will be responsible for undertaking COSHH assessments and will be responsible for ensuring that all actions identified in the assessments are implemented.
- Deputy Head Groundsman will be responsible for ensuring that all relevant employees are informed about the COSHH assessments and will check that new substances can be used safely before they are purchased.
- Assesments will be reviewed every quarter or when the work activity changes, whichever is soonest.

### **Information, instruction and supervision**

The Health and Safety Law poster is displayed at the entrance to reception and on the notice board at the depot.

Health and Safety advice is available from Town Clerk, the Deputy Town Clerk and Groundsman Supervision of work experience /trainees will be arranged/undertaken/monitored by Town Clerk

Town Clerk is responsible for ensuring that our employees working at locations under the control of other employees are given relevant health and safety information.

## **Competency for tasks and training**

All employees are to be given health and safety induction training when they start work, which should cover basics such as first aid and fire safety. There should also be job-specific health and safety training. You also have to provide training if risks change, and refresher training when skills are not frequently used.

Induction training will be provided for all employees by Groundstaff (Deputy Head Groundsman), Town Hall – Town Clerk.

Job-specific training will be provided by Groundstaff (Deputy Head Groundsman), Town Hall – Town Clerk or outside bodies

### **Training records are kept at/by**

Town Clerk – Town Hall and office and Groundstaff (Deputy Head Groundsman) available on the Council's shared computer drive and held at depot.

### **Training will be identified, arranged and monitored by**

Town Clerk, Responsible Finance Officer

### **Accidents, first aid and work-related ill health**

Employees must receive specialist health surveillance for certain work. Your COSHH assessments will identify where this specialist health surveillance is needed. You should note down your first-aid arrangements here.

Health surveillance is required for employees doing the following jobs;

- All jobs undertaken by groundstaff will be monitored by individual risk assessments.
- Health surveillance will be arranged by the Deputy Town Clerk in conjunction with Head Groundsman and Deputy Head Groundsman. This will be overseen by the Town Clerk.
- Health surveillance records will be kept by Town Clerk
- Office staff and monitored by the Town Clerk
  - The first-aid box(es) is/are kept at;
  - The Depot
  - Town Hall - 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Kitchen
  - Town Hall – Ground Floor Kitchen.
  - Council Vehicles

The appointment person(s)/first aider(s) is/are

Trained: Andrew Stempt and Helen Hewett and Steven Trice

All accidents and cases of work-related ill health are to be recorded in the accident book. The book is kept by the front office staff who are responsible for reporting accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences to the enforcing authority (HSE or your local authority depending upon where you work). A book is also held at the Town Council Depot located at Copyhold Lane.

## **Monitoring**

The Town Council will demonstrate it is monitoring health and safety by actively doing spot check visits, or reactively, eg by investigating any accidents or ill health and record instances along with the procedures to investigate the incident.

To check our working conditions, and ensure our safe working practices are being followed, Council staff will review the Town Hall and the Groundstaff the Depot on a quarterly basis

Town Clerk is responsible for investigating accidents.

Town Clerk is responsible for investigating work-related causes of sickness absences

Town Clerk is responsible for acting on investigation findings to prevent a recurrence.

### **Emergency procedures – fire and evacuation**

Recording of emergency procedures, how often they are checked and who by whom will be monitored by the Town Clerk.

The Town Clerk is responsible for ensuring the fire risk assessment is undertaken and implemented.

- Escape routes are checked by staff, each morning
- Fire extinguishers are maintained and checked annually by external contractors.
- Alarms are tested weekly by the caretaker.
- Emergency evacuation will be tested every bi-monthly.

### **Other matters to consider**

a) Electricity

The Council will ensure that arrangements are in place to test, maintain and compile records of the electrical safety of portable equipment, fixed installations, electrical tools, appliances and electrical work activities. Where possible, electrical equipment should be switched off overnight. Employees must not use any unauthorised electrical appliances or extension leads and must report immediately any defects and damage to equipment, plugs or cables to the Town Clerk/Head Groundsman and or Deputy Clerk.

b) Fire is covered in the staff and hirers fire procedure documentation found on the Council shared computer drive and the folder held on reception.

c) Asbestos in the premises

The Council will ensure that arrangements are in place to identify, record, manage, inspect and review the type and location of asbestos material in all Council owned or managed premises. Information must be conveyed to any employee and contractor who may be exposed to asbestos fibres in the course of their work. Regular inspections should be undertaken to ensure that asbestos material is not damaged. Where necessary, the Council will use only contractors who have been licensed by the Health and Safety Executive to work on, remove and dispose of asbestos containing material.

d) Managing contractors

The Council will ensure that persons carrying out contracted work on Council premises, land or structures are assessed prior to commencement of the work in respect of their health and safety competence and, in particular, their arrangements for working safely. This should include checks of their risk assessments, method statements, safe systems of work and previous accident records and enforcement history. In addition, they will be provided with a copy of the Council's Contractors' Code of Conduct and Safety Rules that they must sign and return to show that they agree to comply with the content therein.

e) RIDDOR reporting

RIDDOR means the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013, which came into force on 1st October 2013. Reporting accidents and ill health at work is a legal requirement. The information enables the enforcing authorities to identify where and how risks arise and to investigate serious accidents. The enforcing authorities can then help and advise you on preventive action to reduce injury, ill health and accidental loss - much of which is uninsurable. You will have duties under the Regulations to report:

- deaths
- specified injuries
- accidents resulting in over 7 day injury
- diseases



- dangerous occurrences
- gas incidents

*Please inform the Town Clerk or Incident Contact Centre at*  
 Caerphilly Business Park  
 Caerphilly  
 CF83 3GG  
**Tel:** 0845 3009923  
**Fax:** 0845 3009924

f) Manual handling

The Council will provide arrangements to ensure that any significant risk arising from manual handling activities by employees is avoided. Where this is not possible, an assessment will be undertaken to identify those at risk, training will be provided and safe systems of work developed to minimise the risks (e.g. mechanising the activity, providing assistance for the task). These assessments will be reviewed regularly and revised where necessary.

g) Display Screen equipment

The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992. These Regulations deal with the Health and Safety requirements when working with Display Screen Equipment (DSE). They are intended to protect staff who habitually use DSE as a significant part of their work. They are concerned not only with the effect that display screens may have on eyesight, but also the prevention of muscle and joint problems due to poor job and workplace design, and the physical and mental stress caused by prolonged continuous use. This may mean, if the workstation assessment finds it necessary, the provision of new chairs, footstools, document holders etc or the revision of work patterns and assurance that any new DSE equipment is suitable.

The Town Clerk and/or designated Health and Safety Officer will need to make arrangements to:-

- \* assess workstations and reduce risks to Health and Safety;
- \* ensure that workstations meet minimum requirements;
- \* plan work to ensure breaks or changes of activity occur during prolonged use;
- \* arrange for eye tests if required by staff who qualify and if necessary provide corrective glasses needed specifically and solely for use with DSE;
- \* provide information and training for DSE users.

All of the above should be carried out in accordance with The Code Of Practice Held Centrally. All employees have a duty to:-

- \* inform their employer of any medical condition that may affect, or be affected by, their use of DSE;
- \* ensure that workstations and DSE are suitably adjusted so as to minimise Health and Safety risks.

h) Personal protective equipment

The Personal Protective Equipment At Work Regulations. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers to identify and assess the risks to Health and Safety present in the workplace, so enabling the most appropriate means of reducing those risks to an acceptable level to be determined. There is in effect a hierarchy of control measures, and PPE should always be regarded as the "last resort" to protect against risks; engineering controls and safe systems of work should always be considered first. However, in some circumstances PPE will still be needed to control the risk adequately, and these Regulations will then take effect. The Town Clerk and Health and Deputy Head Groundsperson will need to:-

- \* assess the need for PPE;
- \* select the most suitable PPE;

- \* provide, maintain and store PPE correctly, and replace it as necessary;
- \* ensure that information, instruction and training is given;
- \* ensure proper use and the reporting of loss or defect of PPE.

All employees have a duty to:-

- \* ensure that they use, maintain and store PPE in accordance with any instructions or training which they have received.

i) Driving at work

When you are driving, riding a motorcycle or bicycle on a work-related journey, you are effectively at work. Whilst the Council has a responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, your health and safety while at work, you also have a responsibility to ensure that you do not put others at risk when you are driving for work. You should not drive if you feel unfit to do so, for example if you are tired, unwell, have certain medical conditions or are taking medication that may affect your ability to drive. You must never drive whilst under the influence of alcohol. In addition, you must comply with all Road Traffic Acts and the Highway Code and the Department of Transport 'Driving at Work Manual', which has been provided to staff,

j) Pregnant women

The Company will encourage workers to tell us at an early stage if they are pregnant or a nursing mother. The Town Clerk will carry out an assessment of the affected worker considering their work activities and will identify appropriate controls to ensure her safety. Where her condition puts her at specific risk from substances or activities and this cannot be controlled by other means changes to her role will be considered. Nursing mothers will be supported by offering suitable facilities and changes to their work pattern.

k) Violence & Aggression

The Council will take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure that its employees are not subjected to violence or aggression while carrying out their work. Arrangements will be established to minimise the risk including, inter alia, providing training for all employees at risk; monitoring employees in potentially dangerous situations and providing them with appropriate support and means of communication to colleagues. All incidents of violence or aggression, verbal abuse and sexual or racial harassment should be recorded.

l) Workplace Stress

The Council will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that no member of staff is subjected to a level of stress due to work, which is detrimental to their health. All employees are encouraged to report any concerns to the Town Clerk who will take steps to deal with the matter. The Council aims to create an environment where, if workplace stress does occur, it can be dealt with openly and fairly. The Council also commits itself to investigating all claims of ill health due to workplace stress to ensure appropriate action is taken to prevent any recurrence of the situation.

**Ends**

**Committee Meeting: Policy and Finance**

**Committee Meeting: Full Council**

**Report of:** Town Clerk

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> January 2024

**Subject:** Internal Audit – Mid Year Review 2024/2025

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**Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose of this report is for Members to consider a report of the Internal Auditor.

**Summary**

2. Members will be aware that the Town Council's Internal Audit review is undertaken is being undertaken to Mulberry and Co for the 2024/2025 financial year after the Committee approved signing a three-year contract. The following report presents the mid-year 2024/2025 Internal Audit report as per Appendix 1 for comment and adoption. Alongside this, the main body of this report responds to the recommendations made and presents the actions to implement any changes/updates to Town Council policies and processes in line with the recommendations made.

**Recommendation(s)**

**To consider and adopt the Mid-Year 2024/2025 Report of the Internal Auditor, and any recommendation made within the report, as presented by Mulberry and Co.**

**Background**

3. The audit was conducted in person on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2024 with Andy Beams from Mulberry and Co, the RFO and Councillor Anne- Marie Cooke in attendance.
4. Firstly, it must be noted that there were *'no errors or misstatements that need reporting to the External Auditor, nor were there any significant weaknesses found in the internal controls'*.
5. There was only one suggestion, which was - It is not clear which minutes are draft or final and I recommend that on the pages where minutes are published a statement is added stating *'All minutes are in draft format until approved at the next meeting.'* This statement has been added as part of the new website/

**Financial Implications**

6. None.

**Legal Implications**

7. None.

**Town Clerk**



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**MULBERRY**  
**LOCAL AUTHORITY SERVICES LTD**

Eastgate House

t 07428 647069

Dogflud Way, Farnham

e office@mulberrylas.co.uk

Surrey, GU9 7UD

w www.mulberrylas.co.uk

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Mr S Trice  
Haywards Heath Town Council  
The Town Hall  
40 Boltro Road  
Haywards Heath  
West Sussex  
RH16 1BA

28 November 2024

Dear Steve

**Re: Haywards Heath Town Council**  
**Internal Audit for Financial Year Ended 31 March 2025 – Interim Audit report**

**Executive summary**

Following completion of our interim internal audit on 28 November 2024 we enclose our report for your kind attention and presentation to the council. The audit was conducted in accordance with current practices and guidelines and testing was risk based. Whilst we have not tested all transactions, our samples have where appropriate covered the entire year to date.

Our report is presented in the same order as the assertions on the internal auditor report within the published Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). The start of each section details the nature of the assertion to be verified. Testing requirements follow those detailed in the audit plan previously sent to the council, a copy of which is available on request. The report concludes with an opinion as to whether each assertion has been met or not at this point in the year. Some assertions are tested only at the final internal audit, and this is reflected where appropriate in the report.

**Recommendations for action are shown in bold text and are summarised in the table at the end of the report.**

Our sample testing did not uncover any errors or misstatements that require reporting to the external auditor at this time, nor did we identify any significant weaknesses in the internal controls such that public money would be put at risk.

It is clear the council takes governance, policies and procedures seriously and I am pleased to report that overall, the systems and procedures you have in place are fit for purpose and whilst my report may contain recommendations to change these are not indicative of any significant failings, but rather are pointers to improving upon an already well-ordered system.

It is therefore our opinion that the systems and internal procedures at Haywards Heath Town Council are well established and followed.

**Regulation**

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require smaller authorities, each financial year, to conduct a review of the

effectiveness of the system of internal control and prepare an annual governance statement in accordance with proper practices in relation to accounts. In addition to this, a smaller authority is required by Regulation 5(1) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 to “undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards or guidance.”

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Company Number 15566682. Company Directors: Mark L Mulberry BA (Hons) FCCA CTA, Nicky Mulberry, Andy Beams CiLCA, Anna Beams CiLCA

Internal auditing is an independent, objective assurance activity designed to improve an organisation’s operations. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes. The purpose of internal audit is to review and report to the authority on whether its systems of financial and other internal controls over its activities and operating procedures are effective.

Internal audit’s function is to test and report to the authority on whether its specific system of internal control is adequate and working satisfactorily. The internal audit reports should therefore be made available to all Members to support and inform them when they considering the authority’s approval of the annual governance statement.

**Independence and competence**

Your audit was conducted by Andy Beams of Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd, who has over 34 years’ experience in the financial sector with the last 14 years specialising in local government.

Your auditor is independent from the management of the financial controls and procedures of the council and has no conflicts of interest with the audit client, nor do they provide any management or financial assistance to the client.

**Engagement Letter**

An engagement letter was previously issued to the council covering the 2024/25 internal audit assignment. Copies of this document are available on request.

**Planning and inherent risk assessment**

The scope and plan of works including fee structure was issued to the council under separate cover. Copies of this document are available on request. In summary, our work will address each of the internal control objectives as stated on the Annual Internal Audit Report of the AGAR.

It is our opinion that the inherent risk of error or misstatement is low, and the controls of the council can be relied upon and as such substantive testing of individual transactions is not required. Testing to be carried out will be “walk through testing” on sample data to encompass the period of the council year under review.

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## A. BOOKS OF ACCOUNT

### **Internal audit requirement**

*Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.*

### **Audit findings**

The audit was conducted on site with the council's Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) with the Chair of the Policy and Finance Committee in attendance. The information advised in advance of the visit had been prepared and was available for review and overall, I have the impression that accounting records are neatly maintained and easily accessible. Other information was reviewed through discussion with the RFO and Chair of Policy and Finance Committee and a review of the council website [www.haywardsheath.gov.uk](http://www.haywardsheath.gov.uk)

The council uses the Rialtas Business Solutions (RBS) accounting package for recording the council's finances. This is an industry specific accounting package. The accounting package is updated regularly and used to produce management information reports for review at council meetings.

I reviewed the nominal ledger entries for the period 1 April 2024 to date. The RFO is aware of some off-setting of event income against the expenditure budget and these entries will be corrected with a journal entry. From my sample testing, other transactional items were posted with sufficient narrative detail to explain their source and appeared to be placed to the most appropriate nominal code budget headings.

## B. FINANCE REGULATIONS, GOVERNANCE AND PAYMENTS

### **Internal audit requirement**

*This authority complied with its Finance Regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved, and VAT was appropriately accounted for.*

### **Audit findings**

*Check the publication and minuting of the prior year audited AGAR and notice of conclusion of audit*

The External Auditor's Report for 2023/24 was not qualified and has been published on the council website along with the completed Notice of Conclusion of Audit form.

The conclusion of the audit was reported to the Policy & Finance Committee meeting at the meeting held on 17 September 2024 (minute ref 29).

There is evidence within the minutes of council meetings of the receipt and review of internal audit reports during the year.

*Confirm by sample testing that councillors sign statutory office forms*

I confirmed by sample testing that councillors sign "Acceptance of Office" forms. The council website includes a councillor page where the individual Register of Members' Interests forms are published.

*Confirm that the council is compliant with the relevant transparency code*

As the council's income and expenditure exceeds £25,000, it is not a statutory requirement to follow the requirements of the Local Government Transparency Code, although it is recommended best practice to do so.

*Confirm that the council is compliant with GDPR*

The council is fully aware of GDPR and has undergone training. It was noted the council has established common email addresses for all councillors. This is recommended because it gives a natural segregation between work and personal lives, making it clear beyond doubt in what capacity a councillor is acting. In addition to this it gives control to the council, adds a degree of professionalism and in the event of a FOI request limits access to personal computers.

The Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) Practitioner's Guide (March 2024) contains updated guidance on the matter as below:

## The importance of using .gov.uk domains for websites and emails

- 5.210. All Parish, Town and Community Councils are eligible to use, and are advised to use, a .gov.uk domain for their websites and email communications. Your community, suppliers and partners will now reasonably expect a local council to have a .gov.uk domain name. Note that Parish meetings are exempt from the requirement to have a website.
- 5.211. To assist with compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), it is advised that clerks provide official .gov.uk email accounts to their councillors, which must only be used for official council business.
- 5.212. When choosing a domain name all councils must follow the rules set out by the Cabinet Office to choose a .gov.uk domain name, for example, 'ourparishcouncil.gov.uk' with email addresses linked to that domain.
- 5.213. Using a .gov.uk domain for your council website and email accounts gives Parish Councils the following advantages:
- 5.214. Increased professionalism and trust from members of your community, partners and suppliers because your email address and website domains are a trusted government brand.
- 5.215. Separation of your personal life from your professional life, ensuring members of your community, partners and suppliers understand what capacity you are emailing them in - whether a Councillor or Clerk.
- 5.216. Increased control for the Responsible Officer over email accounts and documentation when managing new joiners, leavers, sudden absences or Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests.

The council has a Privacy Notice and Accessibility Statement on its website, and it is clear the council has made every effort to comply with the website requirements.

### *Confirm that the council meets regularly throughout the year*

In addition to full council, the council has a committee structure in place. Terms of reference for each committee and the committee membership are published on the website page linked to the committee.

A diary of future meeting dates is published on the council website, along with historic agendas and minutes for council and committee meetings.

### *Check that agendas for meetings are published giving 3 clear days' notice*

I was able to confirm that at least 3 clear days' notice is given on agendas. Whilst we have not tested every single committee and council meeting there was no evidence of non-compliance in giving three clear days' notice of the meeting.

I note the council publishes the non-confidential supporting documents on the council website, either appended to the agendas or as a separate additional documents file in accordance with the requirements of the Information Commissioner's Office.

### *Check the draft minutes of the last meeting(s) are on the council's website*

Minutes are uploaded to the council website. **It is not clear which minutes are draft or final and I recommend that on the pages where minutes are published a statement is added stating 'All minutes are in draft format until approved at the next meeting.'**

### *Confirm that the Parish Council's Standing Orders have been reviewed within the last 12 months*

The Standing Orders are based on the current NALC model and were most recently reviewed and adopted by council on 13 May 2024 (minute ref 17).



*Confirm that the Parish Council has adopted and recently reviewed Financial Regulations*

The council re-adopted the Financial Regulations in May 2024, and these were based on the current NALC model at that time. The council has subsequently adopted an amended version of the financial regulations based on the updated NALC model, with these being recommended for adoption by the Policy & Finance Committee at the meeting held on 17 September 2024. Future testing for internal audit processes will be based on the newly adopted Financial Regulations, with the expectation that council actual processes match those listed as being adopted.

*Confirm all section 137 expenditure meets the guidelines and does not exceed the annual per elector limit of £10.81 per elector*

The council has adopted the General Power of Competence (GPC), and the Section 137 threshold does not apply.

*Check receipt of VAT refund matches last submitted VAT return*

The council submits its VAT return on a quarterly basis. I reviewed the submission for the period ending 31 March 2024 which showed a refund amount due of £12,386.18 and was fully supported by the required details. I was able to confirm the receipt of the refund amount the council's bank account on 22 August 2024. The council is up to date with its VAT submissions.

*Confirm that checks of the accounts are made by a councillor*

The system noted above details internal review takes place and I am under no doubt that council properly approves expenditure.

### **C. RISK MANAGEMENT AND INSURANCE**

**Internal audit requirement**

*This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.*

**Audit findings**

The council has a Risk Assessment which is published on the council website and was last approved by the Policy and Finance Committee at its meeting held on 18 March 2023 (minute ref 71).

I reviewed the risk assessment in detail, which assesses the potential hazards, the specific risks related to the hazards, provides an overall risk rating, the mitigation measures in place and any additional actions required.

This is a thorough approach and includes analysis of all risks typically associated with a council of this size with its range of services and facilities. The assessment is scheduled for further review in March 2025, and I encourage the council to ensure the assessment is reviewed before the end of the financial year.

I confirmed that the council has a valid insurance policy in place with Hiscox Insurance through Gallagher which covers the year under review. The policy includes Public Liability and Employers Liability cover of £10 million each and a Fraud and Dishonesty (Fidelity Guarantee) level of £1.1 million which is sufficient for a council of this size, although the council is advised to keep this figure under review to ensure it covers the maximum balance held at any point during the year.

### **D. BUDGET, PRECEPT AND RESERVES**

**Internal audit requirement**

*The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.*

**Audit findings**

The council set a precept of £869,580 for 2024/25. With a tax base of 12,555.3, this equates to a band D equivalent of £69.26 (compared to the average in England of £85.89).

The RFO confirmed that the 2025/26 budget setting process is underway, with each committee scheduled to review its own part of the budget at their next meeting and the final approval due to be agreed by the council at the January 2025 meeting.

The RFO produces regular income and expenditure reports from the accounting package which are reviewed at each committee meeting on a bi-monthly basis.

The report for the end of September shows income reported at 96.0% of budget and expenditure at 45.0% (excluding reserve movements), suggesting that the budget has been accurately set and carefully monitored throughout the year.

There is evidence within the minutes of meetings that councillors receive income and expenditure reports for review, providing them with sufficient financial information to make informed decisions.

At the date of the interim audit, the council held circa £398,000 in earmarked reserves, spread across a range of clearly identifiable projects. I checked the purpose of these earmarked reserves with the Clerk and am satisfied they are all for legitimate future planned projects of the council.

The Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) Practitioner's guide provides updated guidance on the appropriate level of general reserves that councils should retain as below:

*5.33. The general reserve of an authority comprises its cash flow and contingency funds to cover unexpected inflation, unforeseen events and unusual circumstances.*

*5.34. The generally accepted recommendation with regard to the appropriate minimum level of a smaller authority's general reserve is that this should be maintained at between three and twelve months of net revenue expenditure.*

*5.35. The reason for the wide range is to cater for the large variation in activity level between individual authorities. The smaller the authority, the closer the figure may be to 12 months expenditure, the larger the authority, the nearer to 3 months. In practice, any authority with income and expenditure in excess of £200,000 should plan towards 3 months equivalent general reserve.*

*5.36. In all of this it is important that each authority adopt, as a general reserve policy, the level appropriate to their size, situation, risks and plan their budget so as to ensure that the adopted level is maintained. Consideration of the minimum level of reserves requires not only consideration of level of income and expenditure but also the risks to that income.*

*5.37. Authorities with significant self-generated income (other than the precept or levy) should take into account situations that may lead to a loss in revenue as well as increased costs and adapt their general reserve accordingly.*

A review of the general reserve balance will be conducted as part of the year-end internal audit, and the council is recommended to follow the JPAG guidance in determining an appropriate level.

## **E. INCOME**

### **Internal audit requirement**

*Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.*

### **Audit findings**

Apart from the precept, the council's primary sources of budgeted income are from the burial ground, allotment rents, lettings of the Town Hall, WSCC grants and MSDS grants.

A review of the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee confirms that the fees were reviewed and agreed at the November committee meeting (minute ref 10), with agreed changes taking place with effect from 1 April 2024.

I reviewed a sample of invoices issued for the cemetery and was able to confirm charged amounts matching the published prices on the council website. From a review of the accounting records, income appears to be recorded with sufficient narrative detail to identify the source and allocated to the most appropriate nominal code.

## **F. PETTY CASH**

### **Internal audit requirement**

*Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved, and VAT appropriately accounted for.*

### **Audit findings**

The council maintains a small petty cash float of £150 used for incidental expenditure. The RFO controls the petty cash and receipts are retained as evidence of expenditure with records kept in a petty cash book.

The petty cash is balanced monthly, and I have no doubt that the council has in place an effective system for the management of petty cash, although it is worth checking that the processes match the newly adopted Financial Regulations and amending if necessary.

## **G. PAYROLL**

### **Internal audit requirement**

*Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.*

### **Audit findings**

The council has fourteen employees on the October payroll. All staff members have signed contracts of employment based on the NALC template. Office and outdoor staff members are paid in accordance with the NJC salary scale, with the NJC back-dated pay rise included in the November salary payments.

Payroll is processed in house using SAGE. I reviewed the payroll summaries and payslips for the last two months and was able to confirm salary deductions amounts for tax and national insurance and pension contributions appear to be calculated correctly.

I was able to confirm HMRC and pensions payments are up to date and that the council is correctly not claiming the employment allowance for national insurance contributions.

There is a councillor allowance scheme in place with payment made half-yearly to eligible councillors through payroll in accordance with the statutory requirements.

## **H. ASSETS AND INVESTMENTS**

### **Internal audit requirement**

*Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.*

### **Audit findings**

Testing to be conducted at final internal audit.

## **I. BANK AND CASH**

### **Internal audit requirement**

*Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.*

### **Audit findings**

Testing to be conducted at final internal audit.

## J. YEAR END ACCOUNTS

### Internal audit requirement

Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.

### Audit findings

Testing to be conducted at final internal audit.

## K. LIMITED ASSURANCE REVIEW

### Internal audit requirement

IF the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2023/24, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2023/24 AGAR tick “not covered”)

### Audit findings

The council did not certify itself exempt in 2023/24 due to exceeding the income and expenditure limits and this test does not apply.

## L: PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION

### Internal audit requirement

The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation

### Audit findings

Testing to be conducted at final internal audit.

## M: EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS - INSPECTION OF ACCOUNTS

### Internal audit requirement

The authority has demonstrated that during summer 2024 it correctly provided for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

### Audit findings

Inspection – key dates	2023/24 Actual
Date AGAR signed by council	24 May 2024
Date inspection notice issued	27 June 2024
Inspection period begins	28 June 2024
Inspection period ends	8 August 2024
Correct length (30 working days)	Yes
Common period included (first 10 working days of July)	Yes

I am satisfied the requirements of this control objective were met for 2023/24, and assertion 4 on the Annual Governance Statement can therefore be signed off by the council.

## **N: PUBLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

### **Internal audit requirement**

*The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2023/24. Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities must publish the following information on the authority website / webpage.*

*Before 1 July 2024 authorities must publish:*

- *Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited*
- *Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2023/24, approved and signed, page 4*
- *Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2023/24, approved and signed, page 5*

*Not later than 30 September 2024 authorities must publish:*

- *Notice of conclusion of audit*
- *Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate*
- *Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review.*

*It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.*

### **Audit findings**

Testing to be conducted at final internal audit.

## **O. TRUSTEESHIP**

### **Internal audit requirement**

*Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.*

### **Audit findings**

The council has no trusts, and no further testing is required under this internal control objective,

## Achievement of control assertions at interim audit date

Based on the tests conducted during the interim audit, our conclusions on the achievement of the internal control objectives to date are summarised in the table below.

	INTERNAL CONTROL OBJECTIVE	YES	NO	N/A
A	Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year	✓		
B	This authority complied with its Finance Regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved, and VAT was appropriately accounted for	✓		
C	This authority assesses the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these	✓		
D	The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E	Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for	✓		
F	Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved, and VAT appropriately accounted for	✓		
G	Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H	Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	To be tested at final internal audit		
I	Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	To be tested at final internal audit		
J	Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	To be tested at final internal audit		
K	If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2023/24, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. <i>(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2023/24 AGAR tick "not covered")</i>			✓
L	The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation	To be tested at final internal audit		
M	The authority, during the previous year (2023/24) correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations <i>(evidenced by the notice published on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).</i>	✓		
N	The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2023/24 AGAR.	To be tested at final internal audit		
O	Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓

Should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me. Yours

sincerely



**Andy Beams**

**Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd**

**Interim Audit - Points Carried Forward**

<b>Audit Point</b>	<b>Interim Audit Findings</b>	<b>Council comments</b>
<b>B. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS, GOVERNANCE AND PAYMENTS</b>	It is not clear which minutes are draft or final and I recommend that on the pages where minutes are published a statement is added stating ' <i>All minutes are in draft format until approved at the next meeting.</i> '	

**Committee Meeting: Policy and Finance**

**Report of:** Committee Clerk

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025

**Subject:** Grant Applications

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**Purpose of Report:**

1. The purpose of this report is to present for consideration grant applications made by third party organisations.

**Summary:**

2. Members will find attached seven grant applications as laid out in Appendix 1-3 of this report.

**Recommendation(s):**

**Members are asked to consider the recommendation for three grant applications, the summary of which is attached as Appendix 1-3 of this report and decide on the level of funding to allocate.**

**Background:**

3. The Town Council allocates monies on an annual basis to enable the award of grants to third party organisations that endeavor to enhance the well-being of the local community.
4. The ethos of the grants provided by this Council is for 'pump priming' in the context of enabling the applicants to lever in monies from other organisations, grant-giving charities and national schemes.
5. The grant criteria provides for grants to be made for one off purchases and in some instances running costs. There is also funding for capital costs and new initiatives.
6. It is asked that Members note that grants are made using the free resource (S.137 Local Government Act 1972) which talks about benefitting the area or groups of individuals – not an individual. Therefore, there is no power to grant to an individual. The Clerk has noted that this has happened in the past and would suggest until another mechanism is found the Council do not grant to an individual in the future.

**Financial Implications**

7. The budget for Grants and Subsidies for the financial year 2024/25 is £17,000, of which £11,158 has been allocated or spent, leaving a balance of £5,842 to be allocated.

**Legal Implications**

8. Further to the section 137 legislation, the Town Council can make a grant under the General Power of Competence, which the Town Council meets the criteria of as exercised and resolved at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council dated 13<sup>th</sup> May 2019 under minute 17.



Grant Applications

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Grant Requested</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Reason</b>
Sussex Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus	£500		Running Costs
St Peter and St James Hospice	£500		Running Costs
Bentswood Community Partnership	<b>£950</b>		Start Up Grant
<b>Total cost</b>	<b>£1950</b>		

**Organisation:** Sussex Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus

**Total Project Cost:** £5,036

**Funding Category:** Running Costs

**Grant Requested:** £500

**Purpose of Grant:** Continued support for local families

**Breakdown of costs:**

Item	Total cost	Amount requested
Advice and Advocacy Services	£2,132	
Socially inclusive activities	£1,488	
Digital inclusion activities	£178	
Local Support Group	£247	
Residential, respite breaks	£533	
Core costs	£458	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£5,036</b>	<b>£500 Running Costs</b>

**Information:**

SASBAH is an independent charity formed in 1965 providing lifelong support for over 1000 children and adults in Sussex affected by spina bifida and hydrocephalus. They also support families and carers and enable people of all ages to meet their everyday challenges and lead the lives they want to. They have 466 adult service users and 74 junior users, of which 5% live in Haywards Heath.

This application is supporting SASBAH's existing work that is meeting the ongoing and deepening needs of people with complex disabilities in Haywards Heath, which are exacerbated by the continuing cost of living crisis. A grant will contribute to the costs of supporting 27 residents in Haywards Heath with complex disabilities, plus approximately 20 family members/carers. It will enable children and adults affected by spina bifida, hydrocephalus (SB&H) and other physical and learning disabilities to access a range of services that offer practical support for social and economic welfare, including the Mid-Sussex local support group meetings, individually tailored, professional advice and advocacy, social inclusion activities and residential / respite breaks.

The above costs are an apportionment at 5% of the overall SASBAH 2024 service costs listed below, with an estimated uplift of 3% for 2025. 2024 costs were:

- Advice and Advocacy Services: £41,400
  - Socially inclusive activities: £28,900
  - Digital inclusion activities: £3,450
  - Local support group: £4,800
  - Residential, respite breaks: £10,350
  - Core costs: £8,890
- TOTAL: £97,790**

**Website Link:** [www.sasbah.org.uk](http://www.sasbah.org.uk)

**Grants awarded since 2019/20 Financial Year:**

Year of application	Grant awarded	Purpose of grant
2024	£350	Running costs

2023	£250	Running costs
2021	£250	COVID Support
2020	£250	Running costs

**Other funding sought:**

SASBAH have secured £2,340 from: The B&L Leach Family Trust, Marsh Charitable Fund, RTR Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation and Southern Gas Network. They have further bids pending with: the Friarsgate Trust, Murphy Neumann Charty, Bassil Shippam & Alsford Trust and the Robert McAlpine Foundation.

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that a grant award of this value would be in line with the council's grant guidance notes and criteria.

## Grant Application

## Appendix 2

**Organisation:** St Peter and St James Hospice

**Total Project Cost:** £5.7 million

**Funding Category:** Running Costs

**Grant Requested:** £500

**Purpose of Grant:** Continued support for local families

### Information:

St Peters & St James Hospice was formed in 1996 and provides expert care to adults living with life limiting illnesses across Burgess Hill, Haywards Heath, Lewes and Uckfield . They also offer support to friends and families. They provide: Community Services, Supporter Care Services and care at an In Patient Unit. The hospice is open to everyone with referrals coming via GPs and nurses. In 2023/24 1853 people used the hospice's services, with approximately 30% of these living in Haywards Heath.

The grant application is for £500 to contribute towards running costs. To provide care in the Community and at the hospice it costs £10,000 a day and with only 13% funding from central government they have to raise over £6 million through fund raising and retail each year.

**Website Link:** <https://stpjhospice.org>

### Grants awarded since 2019/20 Financial Year:

Year of application	Grant awarded	Purpose of grant
2024	£500	Running costs
2020	£500	One off cost
2019	£500	One off cost

### Other funding sought:

The hospice do apply to other trusts, foundations, parish councils and corporate organisations for funding but none were named in the grant application.

### Recommendation:

It is recommended that a grant award of this value would be in line with the council's grant guidance notes and criteria.

## Grant Application

## Appendix 3

**Organisation:** Bentswood Community Partnership

**Total Project Cost:** £1,096

**Funding Category:** Running Costs

**Grant Requested:** £950

**Purpose of Grant:** To start up a new reading group for children with SEND

### Breakdown of costs:

Item	Total cost	Amount requested
Venue hire at £15/session x20 (to summer 2025)	£300	
Volunteer payment at £10/session x20	£200	
Refreshments at £5/session x20	£100	
10 books	£62.03	
Soft toys	£54.47	
Fabric tiles and squares	£42.31	
Musical instruments	£49.55	
Lights	£20.00	
Water/Sand stand and toys	£257.99	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,086.35</b>	<b>£ 950</b>

### Information:

The Bentswood Community Partnership, a registered charity set up in 2015, aims to create A thriving community by undertaking projects to support the residents of Bentswood, by working with a wide range of local partners. There are around 30 adults who use the charity's services and numerous children.

They are applying for a grant to help the start up of a new community project; the Story Activity Club. This will be a reading group for children with SEND, which aims to support children and parents with their reading and enhance their social skills and wellbeing, The group will be will run in conjunction with West Sussex County Council Libraries and Haywards Heath library staff will be running at least one session per month. Sessions will occur fortnightly, with a certified SEND Leader and volunteers running the sessions when library staff are unavailable. SEND experts have recommended that the group should involve 10 children to begin with, although this may increase as the project continues.

Bentswood Community Partnership work with local schools and parents and this has led them to identify the need for the SEND reading group. They have been running successful cookery and gardening sessions for SEND children during the summer, with cookery sessions continuing into autumn. These have been so successful that they were oversubscribed and there has been great feedback, with some children showing remarkable progress with their confidence and social skills due to the sessions.

### Grants awarded since 2019/20 Financial Year:

No records of previous grants.

### Other funding sought:

Haywards Heath Town Council is the first place that the Partnership have applied to for financial help with this project.

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that a grant award of this value would be in line with the council's grant guidance notes and criteria.

**Committee Meeting: Policy and Finance**

**Report of:** Town Clerk  
**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025  
**Subject:** Council Committee Timetable 2025 - 2026

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**Purpose of Report:**

1. The purpose of this report is for Members to consider and agree the Council's committee timetable.

**Summary:**

2. Members will find attached the proposed calendar of meetings for the 2025-2026 Council year for approval and a suggested date for the 2025 Annual Town Meeting.

**Recommendation(s):**

**Members are recommended to;**

- (a) Agree the timetable of Council meetings for the next Council year 2025 – 2026 including the date of the 2025 Annual Town Meeting.**
- (b) Consider the start time of Standing Committee and Full Council meetings.**

**Background:**

3. The Council's meeting timetable is set on an annual basis, please note the following issues, which have directed the production of the timetable attached.
  - Six Full Council meetings have been programmed for the year. These meetings will be serviced by one Policy and Finance meeting, one Environment and General Purposes meeting and three Planning meetings. There will be five meetings of Policy and Finance and Environmental and General Purposes Committee. Extra-ordinary meetings are of course available if required.
  - Planning meetings have been set on a three-weekly basis to ensure comments are made within the statutory timescale for response as required by Mid Sussex District Council. Please note that;
    - a) So, to ensure a three-week cycle is maintained there will a planning meeting on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2025 the night after the Annual Meeting of Full Council is formed.
    - b) due to the 25<sup>th</sup> August 2025 being a Bank Holiday the Planning Committee will be held on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> August 2025
    - c) There will be an extend break of four weeks for the Planning Committee over the Christmas period due a low number of applications. Any applications falling out the three-week timescale will be delegated to the Town Clerk in liaison with the Chair and Ward Members.
    - d) Due to availability of the Town Clerk a meeting will be held on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2025.
  - The annual meeting of the Council will be held on the 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025..

- It is suggested that the 2026 Town Meeting be held on the 27<sup>th</sup> April 2026.
4. The normal start times for all meeting is 7.00pm. If Members wish to consider a different start time for some or all of meeting then this will need to be decided under this report and then recommended to Council.

**Town Clerk**

## CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2025 - 2026

Meeting of the Council    
  Planning Committee

Environment & General Purposes

Policy & Finance Committee

Town Meeting

Bank Holidays

May						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

June						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

July						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

August						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

September						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

October						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

November						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

December						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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14	15	16	17	18	19	20
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28	29	30	31			

January						
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February						
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March						
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April						
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**Committee Meeting: Policy and Finance**

**Report of:** Town Clerk  
**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025  
**Subject:** Standards of Behaviour

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**Purpose of Report**

- 1) The purpose of this report is for Members to consider a response to a government consultation.

**Summary:**

- 2) The government has announced that it intends to introduce a new council standards regime. This follows campaigns by NALC, SSLC and Sir Julian Lewis MP to address widespread mis-behaviour and the failure of the current system to tackle the issue. A consultation has been released.

**Members are recommended to;**

- a) **Approve the following responses to the government's Councillor Standards consultation and delegate the to the Town Clerk the completion of the survey on behalf of the Town Council.**

**Background**

- 3) The government considers that the current local authority standards and conduct regime is in certain key aspects ineffectual, inconsistently applied and lacking in adequate powers to effectively sanction members found in serious breach of their Codes of Conduct.
- 4) The proposals being consulted upon include:
  - 6)
    - The introduction of a mandatory minimum code of conduct for local authorities in England
    - A requirement that all principal authorities convene formal standards committees to make decisions on code of conduct breaches, and publish the outcomes of all formal investigations
    - The introduction of the power for all local authorities (including combined authorities) to suspend councillors or mayors found in serious breach of their code of conduct and, as appropriate, interim suspension for the most serious and complex cases that may involve police investigations
    - A new category of disqualification for gross misconduct and those subject to a sanction of suspension more than once in a 5-year period
    - A role for a national body to deal with appeals
  - 5) Please see appendix 1 for suggested responses to questions in this consultation.

**Financial Implications and Legal Implications**

- 6) None.

**Town Clerk**

**Strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England – a government consultation**

This consultation seeks views on introducing a mandatory minimum code of conduct for local authorities in England, and measures to strengthen the standards and conduct regime in England to ensure consistency of approach amongst councils investigating serious breaches of their member codes of conduct, including the introduction of the power of suspension.

<b>No</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Response</b>
2	Do you think the government should prescribe a mandatory minimum code of conduct for local authorities in England?	Yes
3	If yes, do you agree there should be scope for local authorities to add to a mandatory minimum code of conduct to reflect specific local challenges?	Yes – it is important that local authorities have flexibility to add to a prescribed code
4	Do you think the government should set out a code of conduct requirement for members to cooperate with investigations into code breaches?	Yes
5	Does your local authority currently maintain a standards committee?	No, as a town council we are not able to maintain a standards committee.
6	Should all principal authorities be required to form a standards committee?	Yes
7	In most principal authorities, code of conduct complaints are typically submitted in the first instance to the local authority Monitoring Officer to triage, before referring a case for full investigation. Should all alleged code of conduct breaches which are referred for investigation be heard by the relevant principal authority's standards committee?	Yes, decisions should only be heard by standards committees
8	Do you agree that the Independent Person and co-opted members should be given voting rights?	Yes – this is important for ensuring objectivity
9	Should standards committees be chaired by the Independent Person?	Yes
10	If you have further views on ensuring fairness and objectivity and reducing incidences of vexatious complaints, please use the free text box below.	Standards committees should include at least one co-opted person representing the town and parish council sector unless the authority has no town or parish councils. Staff employed by town and parish councils should be able to raise grievances about

		individual councillors through a normal employee grievance process within their own council, outwith the code of conduct complaints process.
11	Should local authorities be required to publish annually a list of allegations of code of conduct breaches, and any investigation outcomes?	Yes - the public should have full access to all allegations and investigation outcomes Additionally examples should be published of best practice so that complainants can identify likely levels of misbehaviour which are considered to be a breach of the code to avoid them being bullied for making complaints which do not meet the required level for a breach.
12	Should investigations into the conduct of members who stand down before a decision continue to their conclusion, and the findings be published?	Yes
13	If responding as a local authority, what is the average number of complaints against elected members that you receive over a 12-month period?	Complaints made by officers - 1 Complaints made by other elected members - 1 Complaints made by the public - 1 Complaints made by any other source - 0
	Questions 14-16 are for individuals only.	
17	In your view, what measures would help to ensure that people who are victims of, or witness, serious councillor misconduct feel comfortable coming forward and raising a complaint?	Additionally examples should be published of best practice so that complainants can identify likely levels of misbehaviour which are considered to be a breach of the code to avoid them being bullied for making complaints which do not meet the required level for a breach. Staff employed by town and parish councils should be able to raise grievances about individual councillors through a normal employee grievance process within

		their own council, outwith the code of conduct complaints process. Support and guidance should be provided by officers of the principal authority.
18	Do you think local authorities should be given the power to suspend elected members for serious code of conduct breaches?	Yes – authorities should be given the power to suspend members
19	Do you think that it is appropriate for a standards committee to have the power to suspend members, or should this be the role of an independent body?	No - a decision to suspend should be referred to an independent body
20	Where it is deemed that suspension is an appropriate response to a code of conduct breach, should local authorities be required to nominate an alternative point of contact for constituents during their absence?	Yes – councils should be required to ensure that constituents have an alternative point of contact during a councillor’s suspension
21	If the government reintroduced the power of suspension do you think there should be a maximum length of suspension?	Yes – the government should set a maximum length of suspension of 6 months
22	If yes, how frequently do you consider councils would be likely to make use of the maximum length of suspension?	Frequently – likely to be applied in most cases, with some exceptions for less serious breaches
23	Should local authorities have the power to withhold allowances from suspended councillors in cases where they deem it appropriate?	Yes – councils should have the option to withhold allowances from suspended councillors
24	Do you think it should be put beyond doubt that local authorities have the power to ban suspended councillors from council premises and to withdraw the use of council facilities in cases where they deem it appropriate?	Yes – premises and facilities bans are an important tool in tackling serious conduct issues
25	Do you agree that the power to withhold members’ allowances and to implement premises and facilities bans should also be standalone sanctions in their own right?	Yes
26	Do you think the power to suspend councillors on an interim basis pending the outcome of an investigation would be an appropriate measure?	Yes, powers to suspend on an interim basis would be necessary
27	Do you agree that local authorities should have the power to impose premises and facilities bans on councillors who are suspended on an interim basis?	Yes - the option to institute premises and facilities bans whilst serious misconduct cases are

		investigated is important
28	Do you think councils should be able to impose an interim suspension for any period of time they deem fit?	Yes
29	Do you agree that an interim suspension should initially be for up to a maximum of 3 months, and then subject to review?	Yes
30	If following a 3-month review of an interim suspension, a standards committee decided to extend, do you think there should be safeguards to ensure a period of interim extension is not allowed to run on unchecked?	No – councils will know the details of individual cases and should be trusted to act responsibly
31	Do you think councillors should be disqualified if subject to suspension more than once?	Yes – twice within a 5-year period should result in disqualification for 5 years
32	Is there a case for immediate disqualification for gross misconduct, for example in instances of theft or physical violence impacting the safety of other members and/or officers, provided there has been an investigation of the incident and the member has had a chance to respond before a decision is made?	Yes
33	Should members have the right to appeal a decision to suspend them?	Yes - it is right that any member issued with a sanction of suspension can appeal the decision
34	Should suspended members have to make their appeal within a set timeframe?	Yes – within 5 days of the decision is appropriate to ensure an efficient process
35	Do you consider that a complainant should have a right of appeal when a decision is taken not to investigate their complaint?	Yes
36	Do you consider that a complainant should have a right of appeal when an allegation of misconduct is not upheld?	Yes
37	If yes to 35 or 36, what do you think is the most suitable route of appeal?	Appeals should be within 5 days and made to an external national body
38	Do you think there is a need for an external national body to hear appeals?	Yes – an external appeals body would help to uphold impartiality
39	If you think there is a need for an external national appeals body, do you think it should:	Be to hear elected member and claimant appeals
40	In your view, would the proposed reforms to the local government standards and conduct framework particularly benefit or disadvantage individuals with protected characteristics, for	It would benefit individuals with protected characteristics

	example those with disabilities or caring responsibilities?	
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**Ends**