CHIPPING NORTON TOWN COUNCIL

THE GUILDHALL, CHIPPING NORTON, OXFORDSHIRE OX7 5NJ

TEL: 01608 642341

Email: townclerk@chippingnorton-tc.gov.uk

Office Hours: Mon – Fri 9am – 1pm

TOWN CLERK and CEO: Katherine Jang

16th September 2025

SUMMONS TO ATTEND A MEETING OF THE FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

TO: All Members of the Finance and Resources Committee

VENUE: The Council Chamber, Chipping Norton Town Hall

DATE: 22nd September 2025

TIME: 6:30pm

Katherine Jang
Town Clerk and CEO

K Jang

Recording of Meetings
Under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 the council's public meetings may be recorded, which includes filming, audio-recording as well as photography.

A G E N D A

1. **Apologies for absence.**
   To receive apologies for absence.
   Committee members who are unable to attend the meeting should notify the Town Clerk (townclerk@chippingnorton-tc.gov.uk) prior to the meeting, stating the reason for absence.

2. **Declaration of interests.**
   Members are reminded to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests in any of the items under consideration at this meeting in accordance with the Town Council's code of conduct.

3. **Minutes**
   To approve the minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee meeting held on 14th July 2025

4. **Public participation**
   The meeting will adjourn for this item.
   Members of the public may speak for a maximum of five minutes each during the period of public participation.

5. **Committee action plan**
   To review the committee action plan.

6. **Correspondence**
   For the committee to note or respond to any letters of correspondence

7. **Income and expenditure**
   To receive detailed current income and expenditure reports by budget heading.

8. **Schedule of payments for approval**
   To receive the schedule of payments.

9. **Retained HR Services**
   To consider a quotation to renew the council's HR services for 2025-26.

10. **Financial procedures forward work plan**
    To receive a report from the Responsible Finance Officer and Deputy Clerk on an action plan to review current financial systems and next steps.

11. **Forward work programme**
    a. To review the following policies:
       i. Social Media Policy

12. **Date of next meeting –** Monday 17th November 2025

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Minutes of a Finance & Resources Committee meeting held on the 14th July 2025 at 6:30pm in the Council Chamber, Chipping Norton Town Hall

PRESENT: Cllrs Ian Finney (Chair), Dom Rickard, Mike Cahill, Ben Bibby, Emily Weaver, Athos Ritsperis

ALSO PRESENT:
Katherine Jang, Town Clerk & CEO
Louise Warren, Responsible Finance Officer & Deputy Clerk
1 Member of the public

FR1	**Election of Chair** Members received nominations for the election of Chair of Finance & Resources Committee for 2025/26. Cllr Cahill nominated Cllr Finney, seconded by Cllr Bibby. No other nominations were received. All in favour, motion carried. **RESOLVED:** That Cllr Finney is elected Chair of Finance & Resources Committee for 2025/26.
FR2	**Election of Vice-Chair** Members received nominations for the election of Vice-Chair of Finance & Resources Committee for 2025/26. Cllr Weaver nominated Cllr Cahill, seconded by Cllr Bibby. No other nominations were received. All in favour, motion carried. **RESOLVED:** That Cllr Cahill is elected Vice-Chair of Finance & Resources Committee for 2025/26.
FR3	**Apologies for absence** Apologies were received from Cllr Coleman.
FR4	**Declaration of interests** FR11 - Declarations were received from Cllrs Bibby and Weaver as Directors of the Chippy Larder. They abstained from voting or discussion during the grant application consideration. - Cllr Bibby's noted that his wife is on the CHAOS committee. He abstained from voting or discussion during the grant application consideration.
FR5	**Minutes** **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the Finance & Resources Committee held on the 17th March 2025 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair. Spelling of Cllr Rickard

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	FR34 – Noted that a meeting to discuss the Safeguarding policy is still due to take place (Cllrs Coleman, Finney, and Weaver).
FR6	**Public Participation** None received
FR7	**Committee Action Plan** Members reviewed the updated committee action plan for the municipal year 2025/26.
FR8	**[Income and expenditure** a. Members received detailed current income and expenditure reports by budget heading. Members queried the EMR movement for the Grounds Maintenance funding. Members agreed to request that the outgoing RFO provides a written report outside of the meeting. b. Members noted a verbal update from the Town Clerk following the Public Works Loan application. The Council did not draw down the entire approved amount (£162,000) and withdrew a lower amount to reflect the final pricing on vehicles and equipment (£118,853) The outgoing RFO has moved the funds into the Grounds Maintenance EMR.
FR9	**Schedule of payments for approval** Members received and noted the schedule of payments which have already been signed by two Cllrs for payment.
FR10	**Forward Work Programme** a. Members reviewed the following policies: a. Co-option Policy No amendments. b. Mayor’s Allowance Policy No amendments. c. Investment Strategy Amendments: 6.1 – Finance & Resources Committee 3.1 Note appetite for risk and armaments and environmental issues. 4.4 –Add in risk assessment 5.0 – Will not invest “directly” **RESOLVED:** That the reviewed policies are sent to Full Council for approval.
FR11	**Grants**

	Members received and considered the first tranche of grant applications for the municipal year 2025/26.

Organisation	Grant Allocated July 25	Funding in kind (approx.)
Be Free Young Carers' Application	£2,000 *Provisionally requesting that they submit the full application form	
Chipping Norton Amateur Operatic Society (CHAOS)	£2,000	
The Chippy Larder	£467	
Chipping Norton Swifts Football Club	0	
Chipping Norton & District Cricket Club	£1,000	
Chipping Norton Community Church	£400	Free use of the Lower Hall
Lawrence Home Nursing Team Ltd.	0	Free use of Glyme Hall for 6 months, with a review Feb 2026
OP Woodcraft	0	
The Branch Trust	0	
Transition Chipping Norton	0	
The Branch Trust on behalf of Thames Valley Police and the Lord Lieutenant initiative	0	Free use of Glyme Hall for the two dates requested
	£5,867	

All members in agreement that the grants are approved as outlined above.
RESOLVED: That the grant applications for Tranche 1 – July 2025 are approved as above.

FR12	**Date of next meeting** Monday 22nd September 2025

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The Chair closed the meeting at 8:20pm

SIGNED________________

DATE___________________

Agenda item 5 – Committee action plan

The committee should review the action plan for the coming municipal year.

It should be noted that this action plan is a working document and can be updated at any point.

Action	Who's involved?	Budget	Commencement	Completion	Notes/Comment
Ensuring the Council has modern, workable, compliant policies and procedures	CNTC		May 19	Ongoing	A full list of policies are on the F&R forward work programme and are being worked through systematically. For review at this meeting: - Social Media Policy
Ensure that the Council's IT software, hardware, systems and documents are professional, safe and secure.	CNTC/STL Systems	£8400 Telephone and comms £3000 IT hardware/software	May 21	Ongoing	The Council's IT and phone systems are managed by Focus Group.
Review the Council's fees and charges annually	CNTC	n/a	Ongoing	Ongoing	The fees and charges for council sites and assets are reviewed annually in March. The Community Committee has reviewed the hiring fees for the Town Hall and Glyme Hall (3 March 2025) The Strategic Planning Committee has reviewed the fees for Worcester Road Cemetery (10 March 2025)
Appoint the internal auditor	CNTC		September 2025	September 2026	The internal auditor was appointed at the F&R meeting September 2025. Internal Auditor appointed at Extraordinary FC meeting 1 Sept 2025
Receive and review internal and external audit reports	CNTC/internal and external auditor	n/a	Annually	Annually	External audit report received raising no issues. Completion of AGAR 2024/25
Ensure that the Council is open and transparent	CNTC		Ongoing	Ongoing	Transparency page and Financial management page published on website. The publication page demonstrates how much is now available to residents via the Council's website.
Ensure that the Council's finances are invested wisely	CNTC		Ongoing	Ongoing	Investment strategy approved July 2022, last reviewed July 2025.
Ensure that the Council's website is compliant, accessible, engaging, up to date and relevant	CNTC	£1000	Ongoing	Ongoing	New website launched. CNTC staff to add news articles/agendas and publications. Monthly newsletter
Ensure that staff and members are suitably trained	CNTC	£3000	July 22	Ongoing	Staff needs assessment complete. All staff training up to date. Member needs assessment has been circulated. Staff and Councillor training policy adopted.
Providing grants to voluntary bodies/organisations in Chipping Norton	CNTC/Organisations/Clubs/Community groups	24-25 £16,500	July 2025	Feb 2026	First tranche of grant applications considered July 2025
Managing Greystones leases	CNTC/tenants		Jul 22	Ongoing	New leases have been drawn up. Land registry scale maps are complete. Valuation is now complete. All leases now signed as of August 2024.

Local Council Awards Scheme	CNTC/NALC	n/a	March 2024	September2 024	Final decision for the Quality award (Silver) received August 2024. The next level of the scheme (Gold) requires a three-year business strategy plan and robust community engagement. Moving forward, we will be looking to achieve the Quality Gold Award within the next two years (before 2028).

Outlook

Grant Funding

From treasurer@cnmf.org.uk <treasurer@cnmf.org.uk>
Date Thu 2025-04-03 17:13
To Katherine Jang <townclerk@chippingnorton-tc.gov.uk>

Dear Katherine

As a condition of receiving grant funding from Chipping Norton Town Council we were required to report back to you after the Festival completion on various aspects of community involvement.

Firstly, various meetings were held with Tania and Sandra Coleman to ensure that outside of festival use, and in fact during festival use, the town hall was available to other users.

In terms of the specifically quoted St Mary's and Holy Trinity Schools we feel that our work with both teachers, support workers and external peripatetic music teachers ensured that both schools became fully engaged in the festival.

The School Workshop programme started in February 25 and took two music teachers, employed by the Festival and supported by Cotswold Arts through Schools, for a morning or afternoon session into each of 7 partnership schools. These sessions involved all of years 5 and 6 in singing in school choir groups and learning a series of short songs celebrating "mountains and rivers". All of these 7 groups from Chadlington, Great Tew, Rollright, Enstone, Middle Barton plus Holy Trinity and St Mary's then came together at the town hall during the festival fortnight to join together to practice and then perform a short concert before parents. In total over 230 pupils attended these two concert performances, including more than 60 from the two town schools.

In addition to this Holy Trinity entered a school choir in the Junior Choir classes with 32 pupils involved, they also had 4 different class groups, with 45 pupils involved in the Speech and Drama classes giving a total involvement of well over 100 students from the school.

St Mary's were also involved in the speech and drama classes with all 6 school years performing and over 160 pupils involved. With the addition of the school workshop then St Mary's had over 200 pupil interactions with the festival.

In addition to the above approximately 30 other pupils from these two schools entered other music classes including vocals, strings, piano and woodwind & brass.

Overall, from our own calculations the festival had 420 class entries, 14 days of classes, 7 concerts, 1700 performers and over 1800 audience participants.

We have had many, many compliments from parents, music teachers and professional adjudicators on how well run and popular the festival is not only for themselves but more importantly for the children, pupils and students involved, as it helps to build confidence and promotes the arts in such a good way. We can share these with you if required.

Also it should be added that many retailers in the town have commented on the additional people around during the festival fortnight, and that can only be good for the town.

We would be grateful if you can share the above comments with the council members responsible for grant funding and look forward to applying again in the coming months.

Kind regards

Chipping Norton Town Council - Financial Management Report (FMR)
Period 5 (1st April 2025 - 31st August 2025)

Income

Line No.	GL Code	Income Type	Annual Budget	Actual YTD	Variance	% of Budget Income Received	Notes
1	3100	Precept Income	494,204	247,102	247,102	50%	Final tranche is due in September 2025.
2	3110	Rents Receivable	2,540	0	2,540	0%	No invoices produced in the financial year. The RFO will action this in September.
3	3111	Rugby Club Right Of Access	175	0	175	0%	No invoices produced in the financial year. The RFO will action this in September.
4	3115	Lettings Income	125,000	36,732	88,268	29%	Delayed invoicing. April - July invoices were issued on 01/08. August invoices were issued on 08/09. See note in RFO report re invoicing in general.
5	3140	WODC Water Rates Contrib	100	0	100	0%	
6	3180	Interest Receivable	25,000	4,794	20,206	19%	RFO to investigate the source of this income in addition to investments.
7	3190	Interments & Memorials	7,000	1,750	5,250	25%	
8	3191	Grave Purchase	1,000	1,435	- 435	144%	
9	3210	Admin Charges	9,600	900	8,700	9%	RFO to investigate the source of this income in addition to Welfare Charities and WFA and ensure invoicing is completed in September.
10	3230	Manorial Land (Pace Petroleum)	15,000	3,750	11,250	25%	RFO to establish the invoicing cycle and ensure invoicing completed in September.
11	3290	Miscellaneous Income	0	119,051	- 119,051		Loan income.
12	3320	S106/grant income	0	3,243	- 3,243		
13	3331	Events income	3,000	1,093	1,907	36%	See note in RFO report.
	Total Income		**682,619**	**419,850**	**262,769**	**62%**	

Expenditure

Line No.	GL Code	Expenditure Type	Annual Budget	Actual YTD	Budget Variance	% of Budget Spent	Notes
14	4100	Salaries/Superann/NI	364,500	139,901	224,599	38%	
15	5110	Stationery	1,000	104	896	10%	Some stationary costs have been miscoded to 5210 Office equipment. Some Journal required to correct.
16	5120	Photocopying Costs	3,200	501	2,699	16%	
17	5140	Promotion	1,500	528	972	35%	
18	5200	Postage	100	18	82	18%	
19	5210	Telephone and Comms	11,000	4,907	6,093	45%	
20	5310	Office Equipment	500	748	- 248	150%	
21	5340	Website Costs	1,000	840	160	84%	
22	5360	Computer Hardware/Software	3,000	1,404	1,596	47%	
23	6110	Heat and Light	17,000	7,663	9,337	45%	
24	6130	Water & Sewerage	3,350	1,254	2,096	37%	
25	6200	Rent	35,150	13,697	21,453	39%	
26	6210	Rates	46,300	14,936	31,364	32%	
27	6230	Window Cleaning	850	333	517	39%	
28	6240	Alarm/Fire Extinguisher Insp	3,000	3,214	- 214	107%	
29	6310	Cleaning / Sanitary Expenses	5,000	3,528	1,472	71%	
30	6320	Vehicle Hire	8,500	69,435	- 60,935	817%	Costs of purchasing vehicles and transfer from EMR included.
31	6321	Vehicle Insurance	1,200	560	640	47%	Insurance renewed in September which will show in the next FMR.
32	6322	Fuel	1,200	1,278	- 78	107%	
33	6323	Machinery Hire	10,000	59,121	- 49,121	591%	Cost of purchasing machinery and transfer from EMR included.
34	6324	Tools & Equipment	200	3,568	- 3,368	1784%	Cost of purchasing tools and transfer from EMR included. Further £4k to be journalled following identified miscoding.

Line No.	GL Code	Expenditure Type	Annual Budget	Actual YTD	Budget Variance	% of Budget Spent	Notes
35	6325	PPE	1,500	1,142	358	76%	Includes uniforms and safety equipment for Grounds Maintenance Team.
36	6330	Waste Disposal	4,800	1,798	3,002	37%	
37	6400	Repairs and Maintenance	19,500	18,027	1,473	92%	Includes £11k for Town Hall, £9k of which on boiler and associated M&E. £4k of expenditure miscoded here and will be journalled to 6324 Tools and Equipment.
38	6407	Xmas Lights/Trees	19,000	0	19,000	0%	
39	6408	New Equipment	5,500	861	4,639	16%	
40	6410	New Equipment	2,500	0	2,500	0%	
41	6414	Events	8,000	7,748	252	97%	Meeting planned with Events and Facilities Officer to review budget and ensure all costs are coded correctly.
42	6417	Maintenance	750	450	300	60%	Pool Meadow.
43	6418	Defibrillators	500	0	500	0%	Invoice received in September.
44	6420	Litter/Dog Bin Emptying	2,700	1,306	1,394	48%	
45	6440	ROSPA Inspection	700	0	700	0%	
46	6455	Agency Staff	1,000	0	1,000	0%	
47	6463	General Maintenance Supplies	750	0	750	0%	
48	6469	Pest Control	1,500	818	683	55%	
49	6470	War Memorial	500	0	500	0%	
50	6471	Skips for cemetery	700	245	455	35%	
51	6485	Plants & Sundries	2,500	0	2,500	0%	
52	6490	Trees/Flower Beds	1,000	0	1,000	0%	
53	6495	Street Furniture	1,500	278	1,222	19%	
54	6498	Contingency Fund	7,500	0	7,500	0%	
55	7100	Travel & Subsistance	200	290	- 90	145%	
56	7300	Staff & Councillors Training	2,500	895	1,605	36%	
57	7410	Service Charges	1,445	14	1,431	1%	GL Code assigned to Grounds Maintenance. RFO to establish what services charges are expected.
58	7500	Legal & Professional Fees	5,000	21,383	- 16,383	428%	Includes the cost of consultancy fees.
59	7510	Audit Fees	2,500	1,901	599	76%	
60	7600	Subscriptions	2,500	1,382	1,118	55%	Includes finance software, ICCM memberships, NALC memberships.
61	7610	Licences	3,500	2,314	1,186	66%	Includes PRS and other licences for events.
62	7630	Bank Charges	300	192	108	64%	Bank and corporate credit card fees.
63	7650	Insurance	13,115	11,131	1,984	85%	
64	7670	Grants-Voluntary Organisations	16,500	5,867	10,633	36%	
65	7671	Grant Theatre C/N	3,000	0	3,000	0%	
66	7672	Grant Lido C/N	5,000	0	5,000	0%	
67	7673	Grant Museum	3,500	0	3,500	0%	
68	7690	Mayors Allowance	1,500	8	1,492	1%	
69	7720	Other Miscellaneous Expenses	1,750	2,563	- 813	146%	Includes £1.5k for Town Hall roof consultant and surveyor costs, both miscoded. RFO to journal to relevant GL code.
70	7730	CCTV Contribution	2,500	0	2,500	0%	
71	7735	HR Retained Service	2,500	0	2,500	0%	
72	7740	Health & Safety Services	2,500	543	1,957	22%	Cost of Opus Safety contract.
Total Expenditure			**669,760**	**408,694**	**261,067**	**61%**	

Total Income		682,619	419,849	262,770		
Total Expenditure		669,760	408,693	261,068	261,068	
Net Income over		12,859	11,157	1,702		
plus Transfer from		0	152,758	- 152,758		
less Transfer to		0	121,853	- 121,853		
Movement		12,859	42,061	- 29,202		

Chipping Norton Town Council
Financial Dashboard
Period 5 (1st April 2025 - 31st August 2025)

FINANCE & RESOURCES				
	Annual Budget	Actual YTD	Variance	%
Income	546,519	378,839	167,680	69%
Expenditure	294,100	140,792	153,308	48%
Net Income over Expenditure	252,419	238,047	14,372	
Less Transfer to EMR	0	121,853	-121,853	
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	252,419	116,194	136,225	

COMMUNITY				
	Annual Budget	Actual YTD	Variance	%
Income	128,100	37,825	90,275	30%
Expenditure	189,400	87,059	102,341	46%
Net Income over Expenditure	-61,300	-49,233	-12,067	
Plus Transfer from EMR	0	17,767	-17,767	
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	-61,300	-31,466	-29,834	

STRATEGIC PLANNING				
	Annual Budget	Actual YTD	Variance	%
Income	8,000	3,185	4,815	40%
Expenditure	186,260	180,842	5,418	97%
Net Income over Expenditure	-178,260	-177,657	-603	
Plus Transfer from EMR		134,990	0	
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve		-42,666	-178,260	

GRAND TOTALS			
	Annual Budget	Actual YTD	Variance
Income	682,619	419,849	262,770
Expenditure	669,760	408,693	261,068
Net Income over Expenditure	12,859	11,157	1,702
Plus Transfer from EMR	0	152,758	-152,758
Less Transfer to EMR	0	121,853	-121,853
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	12,859	42,061	-29,202

Earmarked Reserves

	Account	Opening Balance	Net Transfers	Closing Balance
2135	EMR Skate Park Fund	35,000.00		35,000.00
2138	EMR Pool Meadow Project	15,678.50		15,678.50
2139	EMR Defibrillators	2,424.55		2,424.55
2142	EMR TH Restoration/repairs	127,538.74	-11,126.00	116,412.74
2148	EMR Street Scene Projects	18,675.88		18,675.88
2149	EM Recreation Equipment/Repair	1,860.37		1,860.37
2152	EMR Professional Fees	87.55		87.55
2157	EMR Public Art Project	2,798.24	-3,641.36	-843.12
2160	EMR Elections	5,900.00		5,900.00
2161	EMR Staffing Contingency	17,024.00		17,024.00
2163	EMR 2025 Mayor's Charity Event	855.00		855.00
2164	EMR Grounds Maintenance	26,927.51	-16,137.26	10,790.25
2165	EMR Facilities Equipment	9,443.00		9,443.00
2166	EMR Burial Ground	8,628.00		8,628.00
		272,841.34	**-30,904.62**	**241,936.72**

Report of the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO)

To: Finance and Resources Committee
Date: 22 December 2025

1. Introduction

The Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) was appointed to the role on 30th June 2025. Since appointment, the RFO has undertaken an initial period of fact-finding and review to understand how financial processes and systems currently operate. This has involved:

- Reviewing and becoming familiar with the council's finance software and associated systems.
- Identifying the strengths and limitations of existing processes.
- Bringing customer invoicing up to date.
- Mapping existing contracts, including costs, renewal dates, and review points.
- Drafting a new Procurement Policy.
- Reviewing the way financial information is coded, communicated, and reported.
- Exploring opportunities to automate tasks and make best use of the finance software's capabilities.

The RFO has sought to establish a clear picture of current practice and identify areas for improvement. This report sets out the key findings to date, alongside proposed actions to strengthen financial management and reporting.

2. Finance Software

Findings:

- The current finance software is limited in its reporting capability and does not easily provide information in an analysable format.
- Transaction coding has historically been inconsistent, with 72 General Ledger (GL) codes in use. There is no standard naming convention or rule for descriptions, making trend analysis difficult.

Improvement Actions:

- Review and rationalise the chart of accounts by reducing the number of GL codes and introducing clear naming conventions.
- Develop internal guidance for consistent transaction coding.

- Explore the possibility of supplementary reporting tools (e.g. spreadsheet-based reporting using exports) to improve the clarity of financial information.

3. Budget Management

Findings:

- The current year's budget was not profiled across the year, and there is no documented rationale for allocations made to GL codes.
- The absence of a purchase order process means expenditure is only known when invoices are received.
- Lack of profiling and forecasting makes it difficult to assess likely year-end outturn.

Improvement Actions:

- Implement a purchase order process to strengthen budgetary control and provide early sight of expenditure.
- For 2026/27, build the budget from first principles, ensuring that income and expenditure are properly profiled and aligned with council objectives.
- Work with budget holders to ensure clear accountability for expenditure monitoring.
- Provide regular forecast reports to committee once profiling has been established.

4. Payments Process

Findings:

- The current payments process is manual and paper-based, with invoices sometimes delayed in being passed to the RFO.
- Approval requires three signatures on each invoice before payment.
- Payments are set up and approved individually in the banking system, despite the system supporting bulk file uploads.

Improvement Actions:

- From October, introduce the use of bulk payment files to improve efficiency.
- Review and update the approval process in consultation with councillors to ensure both efficiency and robust internal control.
- Establish clear guidance for staff regarding the timely forwarding of invoices to the RFO.

- Explore options for moving towards a paperless payments process in the longer term.

5. Events Finances

Findings:

- Events are currently planned without formal budget setting, consistent monitoring, or clear approval processes.
- Some events are delivered without clarity on whether they are intended to make a profit, break even, or operate at a loss.

Improvement Actions:

- Work with the Events Officer to establish an end-to-end process for event planning, including costing, approval, and post-event evaluation.
- Ensure each event has a defined financial objective (profit, breakeven, or community benefit).
- In conjunction with the Events Officer, provide regular reporting to committee on the financial and non-financial outcomes of events.

6. Lettings

Findings:

- Lettings income is currently low compared with the expected annual budget.
- Invoicing for April – July 2025 lettings was not completed until the end of July, creating significant debt build-up. August invoices were raised and sent in the first week of September.
- The invoicing process remains manual, though some efficiencies (such as email invoicing in bulk) have been introduced since August.
- There is no automated debt-chasing process.

Improvement Actions:

- Continue to issue invoices in the first week of each month for the preceding month.
- Build a full set of customer contact details into the finance system to maximise use of bulk email invoicing.
- Explore options for automated debt reminders within the software or via supplementary tools.

- In conjunction with councillors and colleagues, review lettings pricing, marketing, and terms and conditions to assess opportunities to increase income.

7. Debt Management

Findings:

- There are currently 179 customer accounts with outstanding debt totalling £49,775.
- Of this, £36.5k relates to 2025/26 lettings invoices (July and August), £10k to 2024/25 lettings, and £3.3k prior to 2024.
- Some debts date back to 2019.

Improvement Actions:

- Seek committee approval to write off debt prior to the 2024/25 financial year.
- Implement a standard debt recovery process - three reminders, followed by escalation (to be determined) if unpaid.
- Present a debt report at each Finance and Resources Committee meeting to monitor progress.
- Provide the Events Officer with a monthly debt report to prevent further venue hire to non-paying customers.
- Review historical debts with customers to confirm accuracy before further action.

8. Conclusion

The first 10 weeks have been focused on understanding the council's current financial arrangements, addressing immediate operational issues such as invoicing, and identifying areas where processes can be improved.

The RFO has already introduced greater timeliness in invoicing and is drafting a Procurement Policy to strengthen governance. Going forward, the focus will be on modernising financial systems, strengthening budgetary control, improving efficiency in payments and debt management, and ensuring that events and lettings are managed with robust financial oversight.

9. Recommendations for Committee

The Committee is invited to:

1. Note the contents of this report and the improvement actions proposed.

2. Approve the draft Procurement Policy (to be presented separately at a later date).
3. Agree that the RFO develops a 2026/27 budget from first principles with reduced and standardised GL codes.
4. Approve the introduction of a purchase order process to improve budget monitoring and expenditure control.
5. Approve the use of bulk payment processing from October, subject to an agreed method for councillor approval of the payment file.
6. Agree that all events should be planned with a defined financial objective (profit, break-even, or community benefit) and that costs should be monitored against approved budgets.
7. Approve the writing-off of debts incurred prior to the 2024/25 financial year, subject to final checks for accuracy.
8. Agree that a debt report should be presented at all future Finance and Resources Committee meetings.

Item 9: Retained HR Services

We have received a quotation to renew the Council's HR services for 2025-26, starting on the 16th October 2025 for £2,450/annum excluding VAT.

This is in line with the provision for the previous year and is within budget (£2,500).

RECOMMENDATION: That the Council considers whether to continue with the current HR services at the quoted price from the 16th October 2025.

Chipping Norton Town Council Current Year
Unity Trust Bank
List of Payments made between 01/07/2025 and 31/08/2025

Date Paid	Payee Name	Amount Paid
02/07/2025	Adobe Systems Software	16.64
04/07/2025	ESPO	19.68
04/07/2025	Print Ready Limited	80.12
04/07/2025	R F Pest Control	255
04/07/2025	Travis Perkins Trading Company	16.42
04/07/2025	West Oxfordshire District Coun	1,857.00
04/07/2025	Cottsway	125
07/07/2025	Amazon Services Eu/Amazon	55.95
07/07/2025	Broadsword	1,689.60
07/07/2025	G. Herbert T/A Cotswold Bathro	100
07/07/2025	Chris Lewis Fire and Security	23.9
07/07/2025	Glyme Construction Ltd	119.66
07/07/2025	Gill & Co (Ironmongers) Limite	32.5
07/07/2025	Institute of Cemetery & Cremat	186
07/07/2025	KM Cleaning	690
07/07/2025	Redacted - Art Project	2,750.00
07/07/2025	Staff expenses	29.99
08/07/2025	British Gas	223.56
09/07/2025	RW Consultancy Services	2,700.00
09/07/2025	Staff expenses	7.9
09/07/2025	Staff expenses	7.82
09/07/2025	Adobe Systems Software	19.97
10/07/2025	Lloyds Bank	3
11/07/2025	Adobe Systems Software Ireland	19.97
14/07/2025	paypal	28.98
15/07/2025	AVON CAPITAL ESTATES LLP	1,152.02
15/07/2025	Smart Energy Business Ltd	86.51
15/07/2025	AVON CAPITAL ESTATES LLP	6,888.00
16/07/2025	West Oxfordshire District Coun	1,029.00
16/07/2025	West Oxfordshire District Coun	341
16/07/2025	West Oxfordshire District Coun	19
18/07/2025	Staff Salaries	19,777.01
18/07/2025	OCC Pension Fund	5,985.54
18/07/2025	HMRC	6,299.07
22/07/2025	Adobe Systems Software Ireland	16.94
22/07/2025	Eon Next Energy Ltd	207.82
22/07/2025	Adobe Systems Software Ireland	-0.3
31/07/2025	Alder King LLP	1,200.00
31/07/2025	Amazon Services Eu/Amazon	612.3
31/07/2025	DJMD Events	100
31/07/2025	Drain Doctor Plumbing	1,296.00
31/07/2025	K J Millard - Skip Hire	294
31/07/2025	Print Ready Limited	605.28

31/07/2025	Redacted	170
31/07/2025	STL Communications Ltd (FOCUS)	1,218.23
31/07/2025	Turney Group (P.A. Turney Ltd)	309.6
31/07/2025	West Oxfordshire District Coun	520
31/07/2025	Amazon Services Eu/Amazon	0.05
31/07/2025	Unity Trust Bank	20.55
01/08/2025	C/N Amateur Operatic Society	2,000.00
01/08/2025	The Chippy Larder	467
01/08/2025	COMMUNITY CHURCH	400
04/08/2025	Staff expenses	28.99
04/08/2025	Staff expenses	4
04/08/2025	Staff expenses	7.65
04/08/2025	Staff expenses	29.99
04/08/2025	Staff expenses	14.97
04/08/2025	BEFREEYOUNGCARERS	2,000.00
05/08/2025	Castle Water Limited	92.48
06/08/2025	Amazon Services Eu/Amazon	30.62
06/08/2025	ESPO	27.72
06/08/2025	Glyme Construction Ltd	119.66
06/08/2025	GH Safety Ltd	310.55
06/08/2025	Gill & Co (Ironmongers) Limite	35.11
06/08/2025	KM Cleaning	1,238.98
06/08/2025	Turney Group (P.A. Turney Ltd)	4,051.58
06/08/2025	Walters Electrical	162
06/08/2025	West Oxfordshire District Coun	7,344.76
06/08/2025	Adobe Systems Software Ireland	69.89
06/08/2025	Adobe Systems Software Ireland	-16.64
07/08/2025	British Gas	273.03
07/08/2025	PAYPAL	106.9
07/08/2025	Nisbets Limited	36.33
11/08/2025	Lloyds Bank	3
18/08/2025	Smart Energy Business Ltd	114.38
20/08/2025	Staff Salaries	20,634.00
20/08/2025	OCC Pension Fund	6,189.79
20/08/2025	HMRC	7,280.91
20/08/2025	Staff Salaries	0.86
22/08/2025	THE OVEN HYGIENE COMPANY	345
22/08/2025	Amazon Services Eu/Amazon	106.15
22/08/2025	Broadsword	82.8
22/08/2025	Canopy	720
22/08/2025	Castle Water Limited	16.46
22/08/2025	DJMD Events	60
22/08/2025	Hook Norton Brewery Co Ltd	109.98
22/08/2025	Iain Shadbolt Electrical	48
22/08/2025	Institute of Cemetery & Cremat	105
22/08/2025	Nisbets Limited	104.68
22/08/2025	P2 SURVEYORS LIMITED	498
22/08/2025	Thames Valley Water Services L	54

22/08/2025	Eon Next Energy Ltd	212.87
22/08/2025	Hook Norton Brewery Co Ltd	-0.1
22/08/2025	Oxfordshire County Council	1,061.00
26/08/2025	Staff expenses	44.99
26/08/2025	Staff expenses	19.99
26/08/2025	Staff expenses	6.25
26/08/2025	PAYPAL	144.99
28/08/2025	SSE Southern Electric	1,643.72
28/08/2025	DJMD Events	60
28/08/2025	Dragon Play & Sports	1,357.20
28/08/2025	S I PUMPS LTD.	486
28/08/2025	Thames Valley Water Services L	108
28/08/2025	Moore East Midlands	1,669.50
28/08/2025	R F Pest Control	120
28/08/2025	Justin Bucknell Electrical Ltd	1,146.00
28/08/2025	QUILLS OFFICE SUPPLIES LTD	588
28/08/2025	Amazon Services Eu/Amazon	47.68
28/08/2025	Gills Locksmith Shop	472.25
28/08/2025	Adobe Systems Software Ireland	19.97
28/08/2025	STL Communications Ltd (FOCUS)	1,250.44
28/08/2025	S I PUMPS LTD.	405
28/08/2025	AJK LOCKS	108
28/08/2025	AVON CAPITAL ESTATES LLP	6,920.70
28/08/2025	C/N Cricket Club	1,000.00
31/08/2025	Unity Trust Bank	17.4
	Total payments	**133,424.71**

RFO High Level Forward Plan - September 2025

This plan is a high level draft. It is intended to inform councillors about projects and tasks that are on the radar. Dates and priorities may change. Over the next few weeks the plan will be formalised. Councillors are invited to provide items to be included in the plan.

Workstream	Action	Timeline	Success Measure
Governance & Statutory Responsibilities	Review Standing Orders, Financial Regs, Scheme of Delegation	Oct–Dec 2025	Compliance with statutory requirements
	Maintain asset register & insurance	Ongoing	Accurate and up-to-date records
Finance Systems & Software	Rationalise GL codes & introduce naming conventions	Oct–Dec 2025	Reduced codes and consistent use
	Develop coding guidance	Oct–Dec 2025	Staff follow standard rules
	Explore supplementary reporting tools	Jan–Mar 2026	Improved clarity of reports
Budget & Financial Planning	Profile current year budget	Jan - March 2026	Budget profiled across 12 months
	Introduce quarterly forecasts	Apr-26	Reports to committee in place
	Develop purchase order process	Oct - Dec 2025	Expenditure known in advance
	Build 2026/27 budget from scratch	Oct 2025–Jan 2026	Evidence-based approved budget
	Cost analysis of operating costs		
	Explore alternative finance software	26/27 financial year	
Payments & Expenditure Control	Introduce bulk payment processing	Oct–Dec 2025	Faster payment runs
	Implement paperless invoice approval system	Apr-26	Reduced paper use
	Set payment run schedule	Oct–Dec 2025	Payments on time
	Review and streamline payroll process		
	Data cleanse suppliers in finance system to include bank account details and email address to enable automatic bulk payments and remittance advice notes to be sent	Jan - Mar 2026	
Income & Debt Management	Continue monthly invoicing	Ongoing	Invoices issued by 5th working day
	Complete hirer contact details in finance system	Oct–Dec 2025	100% records complete
	Seek approval for debt write-offs (pre-2024/25)	Oct–Dec 2025	Historic debt cleared
	Implement debt recovery process for historic debt	Jan–Mar 2026	50% reduction in arrears by Sep 2026
	Implement debt recovery process for current debt/BAU	Jan–Mar 2026	50% reduction in arrears by Sep 2026
Events Finance	Introduce events budget planning & approval	Oct - Dec 2025	Budgets approved before commitment
	Clarify financial objectives for each event	Ongoing	Defined as profit, break-even, or community benefit
	Provide post-event evaluation	Oct - Dec 2025	Committee receives reports
Contracts & Procurement	Seek approval for Procurement Policy	Oct–Dec 2025	Policy adopted
	Complete contract register	Dec-25	Central record maintained
	Introduce renewal reminder system	Jan–Mar 2026	No missed renewals
	Review all contracts for value for money and financial compliance in terms of procurement		
Financial Reporting & Communication	Redesign financial reports	Jan–Mar 2026	Clearer reports delivered
	Introduce monthly internal management reports	Jan–Mar 2026	Staff informed
	Provide quarterly monitoring reports	Ongoing	Committee receives updates
Audit & Risk Management	Prepare year-end accounts & AGAR	Apr–Jun 2026	Submitted on time
	Maintain financial risk register	Dec-25	Reviewed regularly
Training & Development	Attend SLCC/NALC finance training	Feb-26	Skills developed
	Develop finance process manual for resilience	Jul–Sep 2026	Manual completed

Chipping Norton Town Council

Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy

The use of digital and social media and electronic communication enables the Town Council to interact in a way that improves the communications both within the Council and between the Council and the people, businesses and agencies it works with and serves.

The Council has a website, Facebook page, Instagram page, Twitter account and uses email and Mailchimp to communicate. The Council will always try to use the most effective channel for its communications. Over time the Council may add to the channels of communication that it uses as it seeks to improve and expand the services it delivers. When these changes occur this Policy will be updated to reflect the new arrangements.

The Council's social media intends to provide information and updates regarding activities and opportunities within our Town and promote our community positively.

Communications from the Council will meet the following criteria:

- Be civil, tasteful and relevant;
- Not contain content that is knowingly unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive;
- Not contain content knowingly copied from elsewhere, for which we do not own the copyright;
- Not contain any personal information.
- If it is official Council business it will be moderated by the Clerk and Deputy Clerk to the Council;
- Social media will not be used for the dissemination of any political advertising.

In order to ensure that all discussions on the Council page are productive, respectful and consistent with the Council's aims and objectives, we ask you to follow these guidelines:

- Be considerate and respectful of others. Vulgarity, threats or abuse of language will not be tolerated.
- Differing opinions and discussion of diverse ideas are encouraged,

  but personal attacks on anyone, including the Council members or staff, will not be permitted.
- Share freely and be generous with official Council posts, but be aware of copyright laws; be accurate and give credit where credit is due.

- Stay on topic.
- Refrain from using the Council's social media for commercial purposes or to advertise market or sell products

The site is not monitored 24/7 and we will not always be able to reply individually to all messages or comments received. However, we will endeavour to ensure that any emerging themes or helpful suggestions are passed to the relevant people or authorities. Please do not include personal/private information in your social media posts to us.

Sending a message/post via social media will not be considered as contacting the Council for official purposes and we will not be obliged to monitor or respond to requests for information through these channels. Instead, please make direct contact with the council staff and/or members of the council by emailing.

We retain the right to remove comments or content that includes:

- Obscene, harmful or racist content
- Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language
- Potentially libellous statements.
- Plagiarised material; any material in violation of any laws, including copyright
- Private, personal information published without consent
- Information or links unrelated to the content of the forum
- Commercial promotions or spam
- Allegations of a breach of a Council's policy or the law

The Council's response to any communication received not meeting the above criteria will be to either ignore, inform the sender of our policy or send a brief response as appropriate. This will be at the Council's discretion based on the message received.

Any information or comments posted on the Facebook page not in line with the above criteria will be removed as quickly as practically possible. Repeat offenders will be blocked from the Facebook page.

If the post alleges a breach of a Council's policy or the law the person who posted it will be asked to submit a formal complaint to the Council or report the matter to the Police as soon as possible to allow due process.

Town Council Website.
Where necessary, we may direct those contacting us to our website to see the required information, or we may forward their question to one of our Councillors for consideration and response. We may not respond to every comment we receive particularly if we are experiencing a heavy workload.

Town Council email.
Email accounts are monitored mainly during office hours, Monday to Friday, and we aim to reply to all questions sent as soon as we can. An 'out of office' message should be used when appropriate.

Officers are responsible for dealing with email received and passing on any relevant mail to members or external agencies for information and/or action. All communications on behalf of the Council will usually come from the Clerk or Deputy Clerk, and/or otherwise will always be copied to the Clerk. All new Emails requiring data to be passed on, will be followed up with a Data consent form for completion before action is taken with that correspondence.

Individual Councillors are at liberty to communicate directly with residents in relation to their own personal views, if appropriate, copy to the Clerk.
NB any emails copied to the Clerk become official and will be subject to The Freedom of Information Act.

These procedures will ensure that a complete and proper record of all correspondence is kept.

Do not forward personal information on to other people or groups outside of the Council, this includes names, addresses, email, IP addresses and cookie identifiers.

Staff and Councillors should also be careful only to cc essential recipients on emails i.e. to avoid use of the 'Reply to All' option if at all possible, but of course copying in all who need to know and ensuring that email trails have been removed if possible.

SMS (texting).
Members and staff may use SMS as a convenient way to communicate at times. All are reminded that this policy also applies to such messages.

Video Conferencing.
If this medium is used to communicate please note that this policy also applies to the use of video conferencing.

Internal communication and access to information within the Council. The Council is continually looking at ways to improve its working and the use of social media and electronic communications is a major factor in delivering improvement.

Responsibilities of Members
Councillors must remember that they are personally responsible for the content they publish on any form of social media.

It is good practice for councillors to clearly separate professional, personal, or political aspects of their communication.

Councillors must ensure that they are familiar with the guidance that is set out within this policy and that their use of social media is not damaging to the reputation of the authority.

Social media sites are in the public domain and it is important that councillors are confident about the nature of the information they publish. They must not publish or report on meetings or discussions that are meant to be private or internal to the Council.

As more and more information becomes available at the press of a button, it is vital that all information is treated sensitively and securely. Councillors are expected to maintain an awareness of the confidentiality of information that they have access to and not to share confidential information with anyone. Failure to properly observe confidentiality may be seen as a breach of the Council's Code of Conduct and will be dealt with through its prescribed procedures (at the extreme it may also involve a criminal investigation).

Responsibilities of Officers

Officers using social media in a personal capacity must ensure that this use is strictly personal, and not professional or political.

As members of the public may nevertheless recognise officers as employees of the Council it is important that officers ensure that their personal use of social media is not damaging to the reputation of the Council.

If an officer receives any threats, abuse or harassment from members of the public through their use of social media then they must report such incidents to the Town Clerk.

Where officers use social media in a professional capacity to represent the town council, the town council's corporate identity will be used and not that of any individual officer.

Town council email addresses will be used.

The use will be non-party political.

Officers must not download any software, shareware or freeware, unless this has been approved and authorised by the Town Clerk.

Failure to comply with the guidelines could result in disciplinary action being taken

Accessibility

These guidelines are intended to help the Council create social media content that is accessible to people with disabilities. Since, in many cases, there are limitations to the accessibility of a platform, one should check its associated documentation to determine which of its features support accessibility.

Alternative Text Descriptions for Images

When social media platforms allow for alternative text descriptions on images, you should provide them. Such text descriptions of images will be read aloud to non-sighted or low-sighted users who rely on screen readers to consume social media content.

Note that alternative text is only available to screen reader users. If there is visible text in your image that is small, low-contrast or low-resolution (cannot be enlarged), low-vision users who do not use a screen reader may not be able to read it.
Captioning of Videos

For video content, the Council should provide captions of the audio for the benefit of those without hearing, who are hard-of-hearing, and who are non-native speakers. Captions can be either closed captions (where a user can turn them on and off) or open captions (where the text is embedded into the video and cannot be turned on or off).

Context for Animated GIFs

On platforms that allow for alternative text descriptions on GIFs, the Council should provide them in the same manner as for still images.

Note that this alternative text is only available to screen reader users. Many users who do not use screen readers may have trouble reading images of text in a GIF that are low-resolution, low-contrast, distorted or only shown briefly.

In either case, make sure the post can be understood through its non-graphical text alone, even if this means the text seems visually redundant to the image.

CamelCase Hashtags

Hashtags are an important component of social media posts. When authoring hashtags that are made up of multiple words, use initial capitalization, also known as CamelCase. Utilizing this simple technique makes the hashtag easier to read for all users and is more consumable by screen readers since their synthesized voices can recognize and pronounce individual words, and won’t concatenate and garble them.