

FINANCE & ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE
SAFFRON WALDEN TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the FINANCE & ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE MEETING held in the Town Hall, Saffron Walden on Monday 15 September 2025 at 7.30pm

Present Councillors: Ahmed, Coote, de Vries (Chair), Freeman, Hawke-Smith, Parker and McLellan

Officers: Town Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer (RFO)

Public: Representative of Saffron Walden Round Table

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| F & E 109-25 | Apologies for absence Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Eke and McBirnie. |
| F & E 110-25 | To receive any Declarations of Interest Cllrs Ahmed, Coote and Freeman declared a generic non-pecuniary interest as District Councillor for Uttlesford District Council. Cllr Hawke-Smith declared a generic non-pecuniary interest as a Saffron Hall supporter. |
| F & E 111-25 | Public Speaking Time There were no questions arising. |
| F & E 112-25 | Minutes of the Finance & Establishment Committee 21.07.2025 The 21.07.2025 minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of that meeting and were signed by the Chairman. |
| F & E 113-25 | It was agreed to bring forward agenda item 11b, SWRT grant application |
| F & E 114-25 | Grant Application - SW Round Table – Free of charge hire of the Common - £800 The SWRT representative noted the success of the annual fireworks, which raises approximately £10k for local causes. The grant request is seeking free of charge hire of the Common including utility costs (£800). It was unanimously resolved: To grant the free of charge hire request. The SWRT representative thanked committee and left the meeting. |
| Financial Matters | |
| F & E 115-25 | Expenditure – to be authorised (a) Payment of the accounts received since 26.08.25 were approved. (b) Payment of the invoices received since 16.07.25 to 25.08.25 were retrospectively approved, (these payments were made during the August recess period). (c) Payment of accounts for payments already made since 26.08.2025 were approved. |

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| F & E 116-25 | <p>Tourist Information Centre</p> <p>The Committee received and noted the profit and loss account for July and August 2025</p> |
| F & E 117-25 | <p>Monthly Reports</p> <p>Committee received and noted the following monthly reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Bank reconciliation statement with supporting statements (b) Cash Book – showing all income and expenditure for July and August 2025 combined (c) Income report broken down by budget code – year to date including comparison of income year to date against previous years. |
| F & E 118-25 | <p>Committee Hi-Light Reports</p> <p>The Committee received and noted the Hi-Lighted reports from the RFO. There were no specific items to note or action to be taken in relation to these documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8(a).1 = income and expenditure to end of July 2025 8(a).2 = income and expenditure to end of August 2025 8(a).3 = narrative on income and expenditure covering July and August 2025 8(b) = EMR covering July and August 2025 8(c) = cashflow forecast to 31.3.26 |
| F & E 119-25 | <p>Risk assessments for financial year ending 31.3.26</p> <p>It was resolved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) To recommend the revised Risk Assessment to Full Council for adoption (b) To appoint Cllr Eke as the primary councillor, with Cllr Parker as reserve, to review the internal control measures and report back to the December 2025 F&E Committee meeting |
| F & E 120-25 | <p>Committee Reports – as per June F&E</p> <p>Committee noted currently the following monthly reports are presented</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) List of payments for approval (mandatory) (b) List of payments made since last payment (ie DD/STOs/Credit card) (mandatory) (c) Profit and loss account for Tourist information Centre (discretionary) (d) Bank reconciliation statement (as per financial regulations) (e) Cash book (as per financial regulations) |

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| | <p>(f) Income report</p> <p>(g) Update on the progress of grants SWTC has applied for (discretionary)</p> <p>Committee is requested to consider:</p> <p>It was resolved:</p> <p>(a) Not to reinstate the TIC quarterly report</p> <p>(b) To present the TIC, cashflow and EMR reports (items c and e above) on a quarterly basis</p> |
| F & E 121-25 | <p>Grant Applications - Club 41 – Free of charge hire of the Council Chamber – equivalent to £220</p> <p>It was resolved: To grant the Free of Charge hire request.</p> |
| F & E 122-25 | <p>Saffron Hall Trust (SHT) - Grant Funding</p> <p>Committee noted the following for information:</p> <p>(a) As agreed at the January 2025 Full Council meeting as an integral part of the 2025/26 budget, (FC 008-25), the £8,000 grant has been awarded to Saffron Hall in furtherance of their arts and culture activities in Saffron Walden.</p> <p>(b) The Service Level Agreement for 2025/26 has been signed between SWTC and SHT which clearly identifies the roles and responsibilities of both parties, working towards shared goals and outcomes.</p> <p>(c) To request a representative from Saffron Hall to attend a future meeting to speak further on the benefit/use of the grant from SWTC</p> |
| F & E 123-25 | <p>SW Initiative – Grant Monitoring Form £500 towards PA & FOC Hall Hire</p> <p>Committee received the grant monitoring from SW Initiative concluding this grant request.</p> |
| F & E 124-25 | <p>Policies</p> <p>The following policies were considered:</p> <p>(a) Exit Interview</p> <p>(b) Access to Information</p> <p>(c) Equal Opportunities</p> <p>(d) Privacy</p> <p>(e) Reserves</p> <p>Resolved: Re-adoption of the above policies, (a-e) with no changes</p> <p>(f) IT policy</p> <p>Resolved: Re-adoption with the following change:</p> |

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| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Re-wording paragraph four, to say, “<i>SWTC reserves the right to monitor and read emails on a case-by-case basis and in the event of any suspect security breach</i>” 2. Paragraph 2.4 was acknowledged and supported, preventing use of external USB or charging of mobile devices on SWTC devices, unless it is a SWTC device – in this eventuality, plugging in was permitted <p>(g) Mental Health Policy Resolved: Adoption being re-named to “Employee Mental Health Policy”</p> |
| F & E 125-25 | <p>Website Accessibility</p> <p>Committee received and noted the report detailing the Council’s legal obligation to comply with digital, data and information governance, as part of the newly introduced requirement under the AGAR reporting system.</p> <p>It was resolved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) To support officers in progression of the outstanding actions listed in appendix A of the report, including those which require actioning by 31.03.2026 ensuring legal compliance. (b) To authorise the Town Clerk to resource this project as required and to a maximum of £10k utilising the staffing EMR. (c) Upon completion of the compliance issues, that the Clerk be authorised to seek alternative website arrangements, including the potential joining of the SWTC/TIC websites |
| F & E 126-25 | <p>Urgent Information Items</p> <p>There were no matters raised.</p> |
| F & E 127-25 | <p>Date and time of Next Meeting</p> <p>Next meeting to be held on Monday 13 October 2025 at 7.30pm in the Town Hall, Saffron Walden</p> |
| F & E 128-25 | <p>Committee Future Meeting Date for December 2025</p> <p>Committee noted:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The 03.09.25 Budget sub-committee meeting agreed to next meet in December and once the Band D figure was advised by UDC. (b) In accordance with its terms of reference, the Budget sub-committee reports into F&E Committee. It is likely that the next Budget sub-Committee meeting will be held |

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| | <p>on Monday 15th, Tuesday 16th or Weds 17th December 2025. The December F&E Committee meeting is scheduled for Monday 8th December.</p> <p>To ensure the sub-Committee reports into the F&E committee prior to the budget being considered at the January 2026 Full Council meeting, it is suggested the December F&E Committee meeting is rescheduled.</p> <p>It was resolved: To reschedule the F&E Committee meeting to Friday 19th December at 10.00am.</p> |
| F & E 129-25 | <p>Confidential Item – Exclusion of Press and Public (Part II meeting)</p> <p>It was resolved under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by s.100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the public and accredited representatives of newspapers be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.</p> <p>This item is confidential because it involves employee personal information, publishing would breach data protection.</p> |
| F & E 130-25 | <p>1st Draft Budget 2026/27</p> <p>It was unanimously resolved: To support the papers presented, recommending the first draft budget to the October Full Council meeting for adoption.</p> |

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.35pm