

EMPLOYMENT, FINANCE & STRATEGY GROUP MEETING

Meeting 16th October 2025

10:00am Parish Offices

Minutes

1. Present Cllr Sharp, Perry, Martin, Cllr Arger by Teams plus the RFO and the Clerk

2. Apologies for Absence Cllr Hotson

Absent Cllr Riordan

3. Dispensations - NA

4. Minutes of last meeting – agreed by those present.

5. Budget 2025/26

a) First draft budget - RFO led the discussions.

3G project budget implications – Cllr Arger and Clerk updated the group.

- Planning due this week
- The aim is for the design and build consultants will forward a “provisional final fee” to Council by early November 2025.
- Therefore, a Cllr workshop to review the funding gap / can we afford it or not.
- RFO to bring details of Consultants fees so we have a whole project cost.
- Aim to tender submissions back by early December 2025.

Jubilee Field 2026/27 budget will either be.

the current Council budget updated.

or

A management fee / small miscellaneous budget

Therefore, suggest that the Council meeting 12/1/26 is on 3G project and then EGM on 19/1/26 to approve budget.

If 3G pitch agreed start on site March 2026 – open summer 2026.

The RFO noted current estimate about £30,000 under in 2025/26 due to savings in areas such as: on Youth Club Worker, Parade toilet, staffing etc.

As a general rule, increased costs by 3% or where know an increase / decrease is due.

RFO to amend first draft as discussed, included.

Retain CCTV at Jubilee Field, Churchyard increase to £17,000, projects Surrenden Field pavilion TBC, Jubilee Field sinking fund £5,000 plus some drainage works

required, retain £6,000 Parade Toilets sundries, sinking fund, Retain Display Boards, £3,000, uplift website to £5,500, Information £2,000, obtain quote for new carpet tiles in the office, £500 to office sundries.

Playground equipment – may need new piece of equipment also await result of consultation.

Community Warden – need to fully explore options of a joint project.

a) fees and charges were discussed and proposed the following.

| Fees and Charges for 2026/27 - VAT does not apply | | | | |
|--|----------------|------------------|----------------|---|
| Youth Club 1st April 2026 – 30th March 2027 | | | | |
| | Morning | Afternoon | Evening | Comment |
| Community Group; Without membership fees such as NDPR Group, SCEG, Council working groups | £0 | £0 | £0 | Same as 2025/26 |
| Community organisation / society with membership fees | £12.50 | £12.50 | £12.50 | Increase from £10 in 2024/25, £12.50 in 2025/26. |
| Commercial / private hire | £40 | £40 | £80 | Increase from £30 in morning / afternoon and from £60 in evening from 2024/25. Same as 2025/26 |
| Allotments from 1st September 2026 until 31st August 2027 | | | | |
| Per plot for year 1 st September 2025 – 31 st August 2026 | | | £120 | Same as 2025/26 |
| Jubilee Field from 1st August 2026 – 31st July 2027 | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|--|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| SMFC CIC senior section - ground hire per year includes extra refreshments | | | £9,132.75 or £761.06 per month | 10% increase from 2025/26 £8,302.50 or £691.87 per month |
| The cost of floodlighting for matches and training will be charged monthly at 25.99p per kwh. | | | be charged monthly at 25.99p per kwh. | Electrical supply contract the same as 2025/26 |
| SMFC CIC youth section pitch hire per year | | | £7,815.21 or £651.26 | 5% increase from 2025/26 £7,443.06 or £620.25 per month |
| One off grass pitch hire with changing rooms – need to include cost for putting up and taking down posts – RG check and report back | | | | |
| Standard pitch hire | | | £60 | £60 in 2024/25 and 2025/26 |
| Main grass pitch hire | | | £100 | £100 in 2024/25 and 2025/26 |
| Main grass pitch hire, with lights | | | £150 | £150 in 2024/25 and 2025/26 |
| Ground hire – if charging entry | | | £250 | £250 in 2024/25 and 2025/26 |

Additional fees discussed

Jubilee Field Five Star football - £2.50 per head per day for football course. Same for three years – proposed to increase to £3.00 per head per day.

Scenic to discuss general community hires for events at Jubilee Field / Surrrenden Field and report back.

6. Contracts – RFO updated the meeting the only contract was the ongoing N-Power unmetered supply for streetlights – just need a Council minute.

Cllr Perry proposed and Cllr Sharp seconded to propose to Council – agreed unanimously.

7. External Audit Report – RFO lead the discussion.

Following discussion Cllr Martin proposed and Cllr Perry seconded to recommend the following – agreed unanimously.

1. An excellent external Audit report with no financial irregularities
2. Note that we published the AGAR for 31 days rather than 30 days.
3. Note that we published the AGAR 1 week later than we could have but with the required time period.
4. Note that we did not exceed the 15% increase in Fixed Assets and we are confused why Forvis Mazars wanted the information.
5. Noted that the Risk Assessment went through the EFS Group and should have gone to Council to be minuted. In 2025/26 this has already happened.
6. Challenge the finding of the Forvis Mazars, the external Auditor, as the report is factual inaccurate.

- Bank reconciliations had been performed by an ex- Councillor on a quarterly basis.
- The internal audited carried out a half year audit in December 2024.

8. Grant applications

- i. VOB – grant application was discussed, Cllr Martin proposed, and Cllr Perry seconded to recommend £,1000 grant aid – agreed.
- ii. Note SEHT insurance this year is £382.20.

9. Complaints policy review - attached.

The national template does not include a reference / appeal to local Government Ombudsman, see advice from KALC below.

Hi Richard

Thanks for you call and sorry I missed you. I have just checked the **LG and Social Care Ombudsman** website, and it does have a section for Local Councils, but it takes the line I do below that it's invariably a NO. However, it does make the point that there may be exceptional circumstances (so this maybe where an LC is working on behalf of another local authority (so I would guess a s.101 1972 LGA delegated authority) and these are rare, but an agency agreement might be relevant. Therefore, I think generally it's a NO, but you could check the GOV website here to see if your specific case/ issue is one of the exceptions to this.

Otherwise, I think you are back to my **points below**: have a policy/process applying it at common law and an appeal process is best practice (usually your unconflicted committee or a reciprocal arrangement).

We know that if it is a complaint against individual councillors and it cannot be headed off/mediated by your internal set up then it falls to the Code of Conduct; either at the outset (or too serious) or if this emerges during any internal complaint

process (i.e. filtering) (and your internal complaints set up can only cover procedures, process, governance, and staff) then it falls to the Monitoring Officer and seek that input ASAP.

Cllr Martin proposed, and Cllr Perry seconded to recommend the Complaints Policy to Council - agreed.

10. Model Publication Information - was discussed, Cllr Sharp proposed and Cllr Martin seconded to recommend the Model Publication Information to Council – agreed.

11. Next Meeting 20th November 2025