



Needham Market Town Council

Needham Market town Council Office, Community Centre, School Street, Needham Market, Suffolk IP6 8BB
01449 722246

<https://www.needhammarket-tc.gov.uk/>
Town Clerk/RFO: Georgina de Cova
Assistant Clerk: Jessica Green

Governance and Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday 4th August 2026

Held at: The Green Room, Community Centre, School Street, Needham Market.

Meeting started at 19:00

Councillors Present:

J Reardon (Chair), K Hunter, C Goodchild, T Cooke, and I Mason

Also in Attendance:

G de Cova (Town Clerk and RFO)

GF/26/033 Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Clennell (illness), Blake (prior commitment) and Smith (prior commitment)

Cllr Goodchild proposed that apologies be accepted. Seconded by Cllr Hunter. All in favour.

It was **Resolved** to accept the Apologies for Absence.

GF/26/034 To receive declarations of interest from members relating to items on this agenda

No interests were declared

GF/26/035 To approve any Dispensations with respect to Disclosable Non-Pecuniary Interests

As no interests were declared, no dispensations were needed.

GF/26/036 To receive and confirm the Minutes of the Governance and Finance Meeting held on Tuesday 2nd June 2026

Councillors received the previous minutes for review ahead of the meeting. Cllr Cooke proposed to confirm the minutes of the previous meeting. Seconded by Cllr Hunter. All in favour

It was **Resolved** to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 2nd April



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GF/26/037 To discuss matters arising from previous meetings minutes

Any matters arising were to be discussed under the relevant agenda items within this meeting.

GF/26/038 To receive questions from any members of the public present

No members of the public were present

GF/26/039 To receive a report from the Town Clerk/RFO

Councillors received a report from the Town Clerk. It was confirmed that the VAT for quarter 1 was ready to be submitted. Information was given on the 4 vacancies for Councillors, and that 3 of the 4 vacancies were eligible for Co-option at this time. It was noted that any expressions of interest would be taken to Full Town Council for consideration.

GF/26/040 To receive and confirm the Committees Terms of Reference

Councillors were reminded that although the Terms of Reference for this committee had been adopted, no specific budget provision existed within the current structure. It was agreed that any implementation of budgets would be inappropriate at this time, and that any budget lines would be included in the budget setting process. It was suggested that rather than creating entirely new budget headings, delegated committees could be authorised to spend against existing budget lines relevant to their areas of responsibility. Members agreed that this matter should be considered as part of upcoming budget discussions during the budget setting process for 2027/28.

GF/26/041 To receive an update on the AGAR 2025/26

It was confirmed that all information had been sent to the External Auditor within the required timescales. At the time of the meeting, there had been one query from PKF Littlejohn relating to the External Audit which had been responded to. No further correspondence had been received. The Clerk informed Councillors that the final outcome of the External Audit was expected at some point in September.

GF/26/042 Update on Governance and Finance Arrangements

GF/26/042/a To monitor the Council's approved Budget 2026/27 against actual expenditure

Members reviewed the budget for the year to date. The Clerk informed members that July's figures had not yet been input, due to the timing of the meeting.



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GF/26/042/b Review of the Council's Financial Management Procedures

The Clerk outlined a new procedure to members to ensure that payments would have an extra check prior to any approval on the banking system. The new procedure would mean that payments would be set up on the bank ahead of Full Town Council Meetings, the payment confirmation sheet would be printed, and this would then be counterchecked by a Councillor in attendance at the meeting against the invoices.

GF/26/042/c Review of Council's Community Infrastructure Levy priorities and expenditure

Members reviewed the updated CIL priorities spreadsheet, which had replaced the PDF version

GF/26/042/d Review of Council's policies

No policies were reviewed at this meeting

GF/26/042/e Review of the Council's Risk Assessment

Members reviewed the Risk Assessment document. They were advised that further information has been provided by the Council's insurers which had now been incorporated into the document.

Members noted that risk management should be considered an ongoing process rather than a static annual review exercise. Particular reference was made to recent vandalism incidents at Crowley Park and the need for risk ratings to reflect changing circumstances where appropriate. Members also discussed the importance of identifying emerging risks, including potential future liabilities or financial exposures, and ensuring that mitigation measures remained proportionate and effective.

GF/26/042/f Review of the Council's Reserves Position

The Clerk updated Councillors on the Council's reserves position. £20,000 that had been previously allocated to Chalkeith Conservation had now been released for use. Following this, the total reserves remained at over £200,000.

GF/26/042/g Review of the Council's Investment Strategy

Discussion took place regarding whether the Council's current investment arrangements remained appropriate in light of increasing reserve balances. Members noted that future consideration may be given to alternative notice periods or investment products where these could offer improved returns whilst maintaining sufficient accessibility of funds.



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The Clerk was requested to continue pursuing access arrangements with one of the bank accounts held.

GF/26/043 To review fees charged

Members reviewed the fees currently charged by the Council, including newsletter advertising charges and arrangements relating to Phoenix Football Club's use of Council facilities. The Committee also discussed use agreements with local sports clubs, including historic arrangements with the Bowls Club and Boxing Club. Members acknowledged the wider community benefits provided by these organisations and the historical nature of existing lease arrangements. Given that discussions remained ongoing, members agreed that no changes to fees should be made at this stage.

GF/26/044 To receive an update on the Register of Interests for Councillors

Members were reminded of their responsibility to ensure declarations remained accurate and up to date.

GF/26/045 To scrutinise any matters referred from, or to, The Council's Community and Assets Committee and/or Planning Committee

No matters were referred to this committee

GF/26/046 Matters to be raised by members

A member raised a query regarding the trustees of Chalkeith Conservation. It was confirmed that trustee information was publicly available through Companies House and the Charity Commission websites.

GF/26/047 To confirm the Date, Time and Location of the next Governance and Finance Committee Meeting

The next scheduled meeting is on Tuesday, 6th October 2026 at 7PM in the Green Room of Needham Market Community Centre.

Meeting closed at 19:36

Chair.....



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Date.....