



EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN COUNCIL

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Town Clerk: Samantha Heynes BA (Hons), FSLCC

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FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 20th January 2026

Committee Members: Cllr Farren (Chair)
Cllr M Belsey (Vice Chair)
Cllr J Belsey (Town Mayor)
Cllr S Barnett
Cllr L Gibbs
Cllr I Gibson
Cllr E Godwin
Cllr S Ody
Cllr S Reeves

In attendance: Town Clerk
Responsible Finance Officer (RFO)

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

2 members of public were present. They spoke regarding East Grinstead Museum and their current financial situation, explaining how without the National Lottery Heritage Fund Grant their future was in jeopardy. The grant was being applied for to enable the museum to expand in size and therefore achieve improved fundraising through the increased provision of events. The scoping and feasibility work for this grant would take approximately 18 months to develop. This item would be discussed further in item 43 East Grinstead Museum Grant.

30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

31. MINUTES

RESOLVED: To accept and approve the minutes of the last meeting dated 30th September 2025.

32. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Ody declared his interest in agenda item 43 East Grinstead Museum Grant as he was a Council representative trustee for the museum.

33. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

SEW had not communicated with the Town Council at all throughout the recent water outage. The MP contacted the Leader to arrange for East Court to become a water station; this was set up 2 days after the outage began. As the Town Council was not a statutory body they were not permitted to be part of the Sussex Resilience Forum and were therefore dependent upon communications from MSDC Emergency Forum. The Town Council was creating a new emergency response document and a process would be implemented to

hopefully ensure MSDC would liaise with the Town Council should a crisis occur in future.

The cold winter spell prior to this had raised some concerns regarding the information shared by WSCC Highways. The Town Council was looking to clarify their role to ensure misleading advice was not being offered.

A profit of £21,411 was shown in the Chequer Mead Annual Report. It had been a very tricky 2 years and this was a good position to be in. This report would be included on the Full Council agenda for noting on 26th January 2026.

34. TO RECEIVE THE LIST OF APPROVED PAYMENTS FOR SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER, NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2025

The account entries for the dates above were noted.

35. TOWN COUNCIL FINANCES – POSITION STATEMENT

The committee noted the position. No queries were raised, the Head of Finance was thanked for his comprehensive report.

36. TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT BUDGET FOR 2026/2027

A review of the draft budget papers for 2026/2027 took place to consider budget requirements and propose a formal recommendation to Council:

- a. Consider and approve the recommendations from the other Committees;
- b. Approve their own budget for cost centres under their control, namely:
 - Democratic representation (cost centre 100),
 - Corporate management (cost centre 200),
 - Community support (cost centre 400) including the grants to community organisations, central administration and support (cost centre 1100); and
 - Charities (cost centre 1000)

RESOLVED: The budget was reviewed and committee resolved to recommend the above cost centres and budget recommendations for approval by Full Council.

37. TO FORMALLY RECOMMEND THE OVERALL TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET FOR THE 2026/2027 FINANCIAL YEAR TO COUNCIL

- a. That the draft budget be approved by Council to become the Town Council's budget for 2026/2027 financial year;
- b. That the Town Council's estimated expenditure of £1,760,828 and estimated income of £370,830 in the 2026/2027 financial year be approved, resulting in a net cost of £1,389,998.
- c. That Council, on 26th January 2026, be requested to approve an actual precept for the 2026/2027 financial year of £1,389,998. This will represent an annual Band D council tax of cost of £114.59 based on the known tax base of 12,130.3.

RESOLVED: Committee resolved to recommend the above budget and proposed precept for approval at the Full Council meeting on 26th January 2026.

38. DELEGATED DECISIONS

The Committee noted the £1,500 estimate for additional electrical work to be carried out in the Council Chamber to allow for installation of the upgraded AV equipment.

39. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2026-2027

Committee considered the proposed committee meeting dates for 2026-2027.

RESOLVED: Committee resolved to accept the committee meeting dates as laid out below for 2026-2027.

Committee	Day	Dates
Planning	Thursday	21 st May 11 th June 2 nd July 23 rd July 13 th August 3 rd September 24 th September 15 th October 5 th November 26 th November 17 th December 7 th January 2027 28 th January 18 th February 11 th March 1 st April 22 nd April
Estates & Environment	Thursday	4 th June 10 th September 3 rd December 4 th March 2027
Community & Tourism	Thursday	18 th June 17 th September 10 th December 18 th March 2027
Finance & General Purposes	Thursday	25 th June (AGAR Approval) 1 st October 14 th January 2027 (Precept Recommendation) 25 th March
Annual Town Meeting	Tuesday	9 th March 2027

40. COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCES 2026-2027

Committee considered the councillor allowances for 2026-2027 and the proposal to make an increase of 3.2%.

RESOLVED: Committee resolved not to accept the 3.2% increase for the 2026-2027 council year.

41. YOUTH SPORTS GRANTS

One observation raised was to consider whether there was a process by which a more detailed review and assessment of the grant requests received could be implemented.

RESOLVED: To agree the allocation of funds as detailed below for the Youth Sports Grants.

Organisation	Recommendation
Felbridge & Sunnyside Cricket Club	£300
Mid Sussex Active	£150
East Grinstead Swimming Club	£500
Ashurst Wood Junior FC	£400
East Grinstead Rugby Club	£800
Crawley Down Cricket Club	£300
Southdown Netball Club	£500
East Grinstead Meads FC	£550
Total	£3,500

42. DESIGNATED PREMISES SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITY

A report to consider disapplying the premises licence and nominating the F&GP Committee to be responsible for the sale and supply of alcohol on behalf of the Town Council instead of an individual named staff member was reviewed.

RESOLVED: Committee considered the proposal and agreed that the F&GP Committee should assume responsibility for the sale and supply of alcohol, with specific roles authorised to represent the committee during day to day activities. Those roles were the Deputy Clerk, Bookings Administrator, Estate & Support Services Administrator, Caretaking Supervisor and Community & Tourism Manager.

The Town Clerk would proceed with completing all paperwork required by MSDC to effect this change.

43. EAST GRINSTEAD MUSEUM GRANT

Committee considered the request from the museum to increase their annual grant from £3,500 to £15,000. It was noted that the museum had 17 funders and sponsors and perhaps these could be contacted to request additional support for their funding position, however it was stated these were not all current.

A further observation was made that the grant had not been increased for many years.

RESOLVED: Committee resolved not to increase the grant for the 2026-2027 budget but to liaise with the museum to establish how to further support them as part of the 2027-2028 budgeting process.

44. POLICIES

RESOLVED: The committee considered the following new and updated policies for adoption and approved implementation effective immediately. The Severe Weather Policy would be deferred to the next round of policy approvals after some minor changes to reflect a more accurate expectation of what was possible for the Town Council to achieve in the event of severe weather in future.

Re-adoption:

Freedom of Information Publication Scheme
 Vexatious Complaints Policy
 Home Working Policy

Freedom of the Parish Policy
Communications & Publicity Policy

New or Updated Policies:

Social Media Policy
Respectful Workplace Policy
ICT Policy - monitoring may be permitted in the event
Alcohol & Substance Abuse Policy
Compassionate Leave Policy
Grievance Policy – Town Clerk
Grievance Policy
Disciplinary Policy – Town Clerk
Disciplinary Policy
Code of Conduct
Driving for Work Policy
Maternity, Paternity & Adoption Leave Policy
TOIL & Overtime Policy
Flexible Working Policy
Lone Working Policy
Sickness Policy

45. ACTION LIST

No open actions to review.

There being no other business the Chair announced that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on **Tuesday 31st March 2026** and ended the meeting at 20:05.

SIGNED:

CHAIRMAN