

To Members of the Town Council

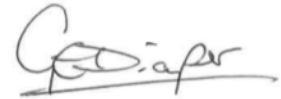
Cllr Adelson
Cllr. Bale
Cllr. Beck
Cllr. Gillard

Cllr. Holdcroft
Cllr. Kneebone
Cllr. Leach
Cllr O' Nolan

Cllr. Miller
Cllr. Pegg
Cllr. Phipps
Cllr. Rogerson

Cllr. Sanders
Cllr. Sutton
Cllr. Walsh
Cllr. Wilks

You are hereby summoned to **attend the Extraordinary Meeting of the Town Council** to be held at the **Shire Hall** on **Wednesday 6th December at 7pm**



Greg Diaper
Town Clerk

1st December 2023

Public Attendance

Members of the public and press are welcome to attend. The public will be invited to give their views/question the Town Council on issues on the agenda, or raise issues for consideration of inclusion at future meetings. This item will be limited to 30 minutes duration.

The Town Council, members of the public and press may record/ film or broadcast this meeting when the press and public are not lawfully excluded. Any member of the public who attends this meeting is advised that the Town Council cannot control 3rd party recording.

Agenda

496. Apologies

497. Declarations of interest

To receive any declarations of interest and to consider requests for dispensations from Members on matters in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest, other registerable or non-registerable interest.

498. Public question time

For the public to ask questions of the Council or raise issues for consideration at a future meeting of the Council. Fifteen minutes maximum.

499. To agree and approve the minutes of the meeting held 22nd November 2023



- 500. To consider the Elmhurst Park Changing Places project (to follow)**
- 501. To review the Interim Report of the Independent Internal Auditor for 2023/24 and agree appropriate action on any matters raised.**
- 502. To consider the Council's Statement of Internal Control.**
- 503. To consider the quotes received for an e-bike for the Council's Maintenance Officer.**
- 504. To note the Mayors 'Activity Report'.**
- 505. To consider if the Council wishes to become a member of the 'Rural Market Town Group'.**
- 506. To consider the use of Microsoft Lists in order to provide project updates for Members.**
- 507. To note the response from LINK regarding a request for Community Cash access.**
- 508. To consider a request from the Finance Committee regarding the Council's proposed grant giving in the 2024/25 draft budget, as well as consider the Council's Grant Policy.**
- 509. Closure.**

Minutes of the of the **Town Council** meeting held at the Shire Hall on **Wednesday 22nd November 2023** at **7pm**

Councillors:

Present: D Adelson, S Bale, E Beck, P Gillard, M Kneebone, S Miller, E O’Nolan, N Phipps, D Pegg, T Rogerson R Sanders, M Sutton, C Walsh, and M Wilks.

Apologies: G Holdcroft and R Leach.

In Attendance: Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, Ash Jones (Suffolk News) and twenty-two members of the public.

448. Apologies

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Holdcroft and Leach.

449. To receive declarations of interest

Cllr. Adelson declared a registerable pecuniary interest in item 462 as his wife is an Allotment holder.

Cllr. Bale declared a registerable interest in item 461 as a trustee of the Woodbridge Riverside Trust.

Cllr. Sutton declared a registerable interest in item 461 as a trustee of the Tide Mill.

Cllr. Miller declared a registerable interest in item 461 as her spouse is involved with Sutton Hoo Ships Company.

Cllr. Gillard declared a registerable interest in item 461 as a trustee of the Tide Mill.

450. Public Question Time

The Chair of the Sutton Hoo Ships Company spoke to the Council regarding the request to be considered at item 461.

Four Kingston Field allotment holders spoke to the Council regarding the tenancy terms outlined in Item 462, and offered a few ideas to consider including working with the council to ask East Suffolk Council for opportunities for additional allotment space.

451. To agree and approve the minutes of the meeting held 18th October 2023

The Council agreed and approved the signing of the minutes of the meeting held 18th October 2023 as a true record.

452. To consider, question and agree the following Financial Reports

The Council noted the receipt of and approved the following financial reports:-

- a. Income to 31st October 2023 - **£ 498,977.00**
- b. Expenditure to 31st October 2023 - **£ 216,234.00**
- c. Income and Expenditure against Budget to 31st October 2023
- d. Bank Reconciliation and Supporting Bank Statements to 31st October 2023 - **£742,485.57**
- e. The Accounts and Payments List for November 2023 - **£37,054.08**
- f. The HSBC Net reports for November 2023 - **£18,727.18**
- g. The HSBC Corporate Card report for October 2023 - **£461.43**
- h. Summary of Direct Debit payments to 31st October 2023 - **£35.00**
- i. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payment of £2,831.18 received on 24 October 2023
- j. Debtors Report to 31st October 2023

The Committee noted the invoices for payment had been signed off by Cllrs Miller and Wilks.

453. To note the receipt of the minutes from this Council's Committees

The Council noted the receipt of the following minutes:-

- a. Planning – 18.10.23
- b. Finance – 25.10.23
- c. Planning – 08.11.23
- d. Amenities – 08.11.23
- e. Staffing – 15.11.23

454. To present the Potter Cup to Charmian Berry

The Potter Cup was presented to Charmian Berry.

455. To receive a presentation from representatives of Sizewell C

The Council received a presentation from the Community Relations team from Sizewell C.

With the approval of those Members present, the Chair re-ordered the agenda to consider first those items relevant to the members of public present.

468. To consider grant applications toward Christmas events in Woodbridge

It was agreed to approve the two grant applications and the following sums were agreed to be awarded from the Council's Grants Budget (4800).

Woodbridge Riverside Trust - £300

Woodbridge Festival -£1200

462. To consider the Kingston Field allotment agreement

It was agreed to add the following clause to the tenancy agreement, relevant to current tenants and those on the waiting list before it was submitted to the Council's solicitors for comment.

The Tenant(s) shall be exempt from the 10-year tenancy clause specified in this agreement if they have private access to a personal garden smaller than a statutory-sized allotment *(250 square metres).

475. To receive an update on the Changing Places toilet project

The Council requested the Amenities Committee to call an emergency meeting to discuss the project.

456. To review the Interim Report of the Independent Internal Auditor for 2023/24 and agree appropriate action on any matters raised

The Council agreed to defer this item.

457. To consider an update regarding the Council's Wayfinding project

The Council agreed to allocate an additional £500 from the Amenities Committee budget (5100) to the project and delegated the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk and the Chair of the Amenities Committee to finalise designs.

458. To consider the report received from the District Valuer regarding the valuation of the Theatre Street toilet site

The Council agreed to defer this item until the final report is received from the District Valuer and asked the Property Working Party to seek expert opinion and submit a proposal to Town Council.

459. To consider the placement of planters on Tide Mill Way

The Council considered the proposals from CRATE and decided to mandate The Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk and Councillor Kneebone to install alternate planters, using native trees on Tide Mill Way using budget already approved.

460. To consider a request from the Boathouse Restaurant for permission to install planters on Whisstocks Place

This item was deferred until the Council considers the Sutton Hoo Ships Company item. Councillors requested a dimensional plan for both projects.

461. To consider a request from the Sutton Hoo Ships Company regarding Whisstocks Place

The Council requested more detailed information from the Sutton Hoo Ships Company including a detailed plan, dimensional plan, Pre-application response from Duty Planner at East Suffolk Council, opinions of neighbours and local businesses, a photo of the proposed structure and insurance details.

463. To consider if the Council wishes to create a Parish Infrastructure Plan

The Council agreed that the Town Clerk create a draft plan for consideration.

464. To request volunteers for the Council's Christmas Lights event

Councillors Beck, Bale, Phipps and Sutton agreed to volunteer at the event.

465. To consider a recommendation from Property Working Party regarding 15 Tide Mill Way

The Council agreed with the recommendations from the Property Working Party with the modifications made by Cllr. Phipps to make an exemption to the clause requesting for decoration/renovation of the building at the end of the lease and that the Kiln is left onsite at the Art Club's own risk.

There was a recorded vote taken, Cllr. Walsh voted against and all remaining councillors voted for the recommendations.

466. To consider a draft management agreement regarding the management of the Whisstocks foreshore

The Council asked the Town Clerk to circulate the comments from Cllr Sanders to the Council's solicitor.

467. To receive an update from Cllr. Phipps following his visit to Mussidan

The Council received an update from Cllr. Phipps.

469. To consider the Council's schedule of meetings

The Council agreed to move the December Town Council Meeting from the 20th of December to the 19th of December as to not clash with the Town's Annual Carol Concert.

The Council also agreed to reinstate monthly meetings for Amenities Committee and Climate Emergency Committee for 2024.

With the approval of those Members present, the Chair re-ordered the agenda to consider the confidential item before the closure of the meeting.

476. To exclude the Public and Press from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 because of the confidential information being discussed

The Council agreed to exclude the Public and Press from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 because of the confidential information being discussed.

477. To consider recommendations from the Staffing Committee

The Council agreed the following recommendations from the Staffing Committee:

- A 4% increase in hourly pay, back dated to April 2023, for the Council's Wedding Officers.
- A request from the Deputy Town Clerk to reduce her working week to 27.5 hours.

470. To consider the Council's Statement of Internal Control

The Council agreed to defer this item.

471. To consider the quotes received for an e-bike for the Council's Maintenance Officer

The Council agreed to defer this item.

472. To note the Mayors 'Activity Report'

The Council agreed to defer this item.

473. To consider if the Council wishes to become a member of the 'Rural Market Town Group'

The Council agreed to defer this item.

474. To consider the use of Microsoft Lists in order to provide project updates for Members

The Council agreed to defer this item.

478. Closure

The meeting was closed at 10pm.

Councillor O'Nolan
Chair

Item 500

To consider the Elmhurst Park Changing Places project.

Council considered the following item at it's meeting on November 22nd:

Item 475

To receive an update on the Changing Places toilet project.

The Amenities Committee received an update on the Changing Places toilet project at their meeting on November 8th, and the full agenda item is provided below and the supporting documents from that item added to SharePoint:

Item 424 (Amenities)

To receive an update on the Elmhurst Park Changing Places toilets project, and consider quotations received for the potential bricklaying required.

Since the last meeting of this Committee when the design requirements for the Changing Places toilets were first discussed, Full Council have been forced to overrule the decision made by the Committee to ensure that the colours chosen meet the approval of the Planning Authority.

The latest submission to the Planning Authority was made on October 25th, with confirmation of their acceptance of the Council's submission received on November 2nd – both of these documents are available on SharePoint.

At the current time Officers are still investigating the options open to the Council for installing the modular facility into the park.

Option 1 – Crane inc. road closure and Network Rail permission.

The original plan was for the modular facility to be lowered into place using a crane positioned on Lime Kiln Quay Road. This will require a road closure (A Temporary Traffic Regulation Order costs £1560 <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/roadworks/apply-for-a-temporary-road-closure-or-restriction>), and a license from Network Rail to operate a crane in the proximity of the railway (estimated cost £7500 – confirmation is currently being sought).

Option 2 – Removal of a section of the boundary wall to allow the unit to be offloaded directly at the site.

Following the advice from Network Rail of the costs to be incurred for option 1, a second option was proposed which seeks the removal of a section of the boundary wall between Elmhurst Park and Lime Kiln Road in order to allow a delivery vehicle with a crane to directly offload the toilet onto the existing foundations.

The advantage of this option is that a full road closure is not required, however additional costs such as a footpath closure (due to the danger posed during the wall removal and build), and the installation of matting to prevent damage to the park. A temporary closure of a public right of way costs £970 – costs are being sought for the placement of matting (as previously seen during the installation of play equipment on Kingston Field). The existing play equipment in the park will also need to be temporarily removed, and heras fencing installed should the wall be removed.

One question which has been raised and now potentially puts this option in doubt is the ownership of the wall – uploaded to SharePoint is the conveyance document between Woodbridge Town Council (the tenant) and Suffolk County Council (The Council) for the sale of a section of Elmhurst Park to allow Suffolk County Council to build the relief road in the early 80's.

(5) The Trustee has agreed to sell the property hereinafter described to the Council for an estate in fee simple in possession free from encumbrances for the sum of One thousand two hundred and forty pounds.

NOW THIS DEED WITNESSETH as follows :-

1. IN consideration of the sum of ONE THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED AND FORTY POUNDS (£1,240) paid to the Trustee (the receipt whereof the Trustee hereby acknowledges) the Trustee pursuant to the Order made by the Council hereby conveys to the Council and its successors in title ALL THAT parcel of land approximately 1,256 square metres in area adjoining the eastern boundary and forming part of Elmhurst Park Woodbridge in the County of Suffolk which is more particularly delineated and coloured pink on Drawing Number B1438/14/L9A annexed hereto and all such estate right title and interest in

and to the same as the Trustee is or shall become seised or possessed of TO HOLD the property to the Council and its successors in title in fee simple absolute in possession

2. THE Council hereby agrees with the Trustee to carry out the following accommodation works on the land/ if they have not been performed by the date of this Conveyance :-

- (i) To build on the new highway boundary a 9 inch brick wall with $13\frac{1}{2}$ inch brick piers at 6 ft. centres to a height of approximately 5 ft. 3 inches above ground level of the Park and the design to be as agreed between the



Whilst further guidance might be required, the document appears to state that WTC sold the land SCC, who were then required to build the brick wall to provide a boundary between the park and road. Ownership of the wall is therefore unclear.

Quotations have been received the work to remove and rebuild the wall, and these are uploaded to SharePoint.

The Council's appointed contractor requires four weeks to build the modular facility – if production can be started in December, the toilet can be scheduled for installation in February.

Members are asked to consider how to proceed with the Changing Places toilet project.

The Town Clerk was asked to confirm the ownership of the wall whilst Cllr. Sanders was asked to provide his opinion on the agreement between WTC and Rise Adapt regarding the responsibilities for facilitating the installation into the park. The Town Clerk was also asked to seek an extension from East Suffolk Council regarding their match funding for the project.

- Suffolk County Council have confirmed that they considered WTC responsible for the wall (email uploaded to SharePoint).
- East Suffolk Council have provided an extension, via Central Government, until the end of June 2024, but would now like to receive a project milestones plan.
- Cllr. Sanders opinion on the contract is provided via SharePoint, as well as his view regarding the potential requirement for planning permission should we seek to remove a section of wall to facilitate installation.
- An additional quotation (uploaded to SharePoint) has been received from a local builder to facilitate access into the park via the main gate. Suffolk Highways have confirmed that this would be possible, but the removal of the pedestrian guardrail and some traffic management may be required.
- A quotation has been received for the installation of protective matting (uploaded to SharePoint).

At the meeting of the Property Working Party, the Town Clerk was asked to approach RISE regarding their opinion on the responsibilities for facilitating the installation into the park based on the response from Cllr. Sanders. RISE have been contacted for comment but at the time of writing no response has been received.

Members are asked to consider the update on the Changing Places toilet project.

The following decision was recorded:

475. To receive an update on the Changing Places toilet project

The Council requested the Amenities Committee to call an emergency meeting to discuss the project.

Now that this extraordinary meeting of the Town Council has been called, Full Council is required to discuss the future of the project.

Finances:

The total cost of the project to Woodbridge Town Council is £125,100.00.

Modular CP Pod: £96,800.00

Design, build, delivery, installation, commissioning, registration, training, and warranties.

Demolition, Groundworks & Services: £26,500.00

Concrete foundation system with services connections. Includes all professional fees.

Total Cost: £123,300.00

Excluding VAT. Pricing valid for 90-days. Payment terms TBC.

Enhanced Equipment Warranty: £1,800 (Optional)

Additional 2-years equipment maintenance, as detailed on page 08.

The payment schedule agreed with RISE is as follows:

CONTRACT VALUE	
CONTRACT TOTAL NET	£125,100.00
VAT @20%	£25,020.00
CONTRACT TOTAL	£150,120.00

PAYMENT SCHEDULE			
	1st stage payment 40% Upon sign up	2nd stage payment 50% CP pod – Structure and ground works complete.	Final Payment (10%) On completion
Total	£60,048.00 inc vat	£75,060.00 inc vat	£15,012.00 inc vat

1st stage payment ex VAT – £50,040.00 (Paid in September)

2nd stage payment ex VAT – £62,550.00

3rd stage payment ex VAT – £12,510.00

Should the project proceed the Council has created an EMR with the following contributions:

£40,000 – Woodbridge Town Council precept request (2022/23)

£47,600 – Woodbridge Town Council CIL money.

£37,500 – Contribution from East Suffolk Council**

Total – £125,100.

** East Suffolk have agreed to provide £40,000 at the completion of the project.

RISE have confirmed that they do not consider themselves financially responsible for facilitating the installation into the park – they have absorbed some costs already so any additional project managements cost seem to fall at the feet of the Council:

I mentioned that we're prepared to absorb £2k of costs, as we were previously going to absorb the costs of a crane, which would now no longer be required. I'll increase that to £3k, no longer considering the extra time spent on site visits and advice to date, which would allow us to progress this project in its current form.

Officers have provided the following potential options for the project for discussion:

1 – Continue with the project and accept the associated project management costs

Associated costs (for vehicular delivery into the park):

Traffic management for the removal of the pedestrian barriers and access into park – Unknown, estimate £1,000 – £3,000.

Removal of the wall and Elmhurst Park gate – £10,000 (estimate from Chapel Properties)

Protective matting for Elmhurst Park – £4,000 (estimate from Grassform Plant Hire)

The Council will need to fund these overspends from the current year budget and EMR's.

2 – Reduce the size of the proposed installation and the use the savings to cover the associated project management costs.

In discussions with RISE there is a potential for some savings to be made by reducing the size of the toilet installation:

One alternative would be keeping the existing toilet block, and installing one of our CP+1 units next to it. While I don't have full costs right now, the reduction would be over £20,000.00, allowing us to progress with the access plan you've kindly organised.

Another alternative would be keeping the existing toilet block, and installing one of our CP+0 units next to it. The reduction in cost would be over £40,000.00, allowing enough for both the access proposal, which would still be required, and for a renovation of the existing toilet block.

A CP+1 unit is a Changing Places facility plus one unisex toilet, A CP+0 unit is solely the Changing Places facility. The current plan is to install a CP+2.

Both options would still require the associated project management costs, but with the overall cost of the project (payable to RISE) being reduced. East Suffolk Council have confirmed they will continue to support a project as long as the Changing Place element remains:

'In principle, I would have no objection to just putting in a CP pod. We would need to get the design approved by MDUK'.

The Council would however still be left with the existing toilet facility which would require significant improvement (steel doors to prevent late night vandalism, internal improvements etc). Officers would need to work with RISE to calculate the potential costs to the main project, and of updating the existing facility, in order to understand the final costs of this option.

3 – Seek permission to locate the CP facility elsewhere in Woodbridge.

At the November meeting of the Council there was discussion about the potential to locate the facility elsewhere in Woodbridge, with the most likely options being close to the existing East Suffolk Council toilets in either Hamblin Road or Station Road car parks. Officers have not discussed these options with ESC.

One concern of locating the facility elsewhere on the Council estate is that we will not be able to claim back VAT as our registration only covers the Council estate. (20% on a large project could represent a significant amount of money).

4 – Withdraw from the project.

Cllr Sutton has provided the following option for consideration:

Resolution:

This Council resolves to withdraw from the current Changing Places contract. The Council will be responsible for up to £15K of work undertaken so far by the contractor.**

Rationale

In weighing up the pros and cons of continuing with the Changing Places project we need to set the potential benefits of completing the project against the financial consequences this entails.

Financially heavy expenses associated with putting the unit in Elmhurst have emerged. There is now a large overspend involved in putting it in Elmhurst, on top of a very large agreed original input. The original commitments and the additional costs are set out elsewhere for this agenda item. Completing the project will require monies to be found from reserves at a time when next year's essential projects will have further heavy demands on Council finances.

Looking at alternative strategies, such as re-siting the unit also has problems outlined previously and elsewhere in this agenda – possible planning requirements, issues of costs having to include VAT when off our premises. All set against a background of end of June deadline for completing the project – or lose the ESC grant.

There are other hybrids of the original plan proposed and these have some merit in terms of reducing costs but also entail further preparatory work. None of the alternatives reduces one overriding problem the Council experiences and that is vandalism, especially to the existing block. The maintenance of this block (services, cleaning routine maintenance and repairs to vandalism) costs the council around £6K a year. There is an argument to be explored that removing that block, without replacement facility, releases money to be used in conjunction with the community to provide concessionary toilets at 3-4 places around the town.

****Email from the contractor when questioned about costs incurred so far on the project:**

As a cancellation fee, while we don't have anything formal in place (yours would be the 1st project at RISE that requires a refund), I'd base it on the fact that we've had to commission works in preparation for the construction, structural engineer, architects, quantity surveyors, site manager visits, etc., so we'd likely be somewhere in between £10k and £15k.

Members are asked to consider the Elmhurst Park Changing Places project.

Item 501

To review the Interim Report of the Independent Internal Auditor for 2023/24 and agree appropriate action on any matters raised.

WTC are audited twice per year by an independent internal auditor, which in line with the decision taken at the Council's AGM is SALC for 2023/24 year. The interim audit was undertaken on Thursday 19th October, the auditor working on behalf of SALC is Vicky Waples, Clerk of Thurston Parish Council.

The full report is uploaded separately to SharePoint and details the Council's effectiveness and good financial practice.

Section 14 (page 18) of the report provides the following comment from the auditor which Members are asked to consider:

Whilst the minutes show apologies noted (where applicable), it is not always apparent as to whether the Council formally recorded that it has approved the apologies submitted.

Recommendation: Council is advised to review the provisions of s85 of the 1972 Act which states that "if a member of a local authority fails throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of his last attendance to attend any meeting of the authority, he shall, unless the failure was due to some reason approved by the authority before the expiry of that period, cease to be a member of the authority."

Council might wish to ensure that all absences are not merely recorded but approved by the Council thereby ensuring that the absence is not treated as unapproved. An accidental or unforeseen absence at a subsequent meeting could then lead to an unnecessary disqualification.

Council might wish to consider the exclusion of members of the public for approval of councillors' absences as this matter could contain sensitive personal data which must be protected under the Data Protection Act.

NALC LTN 5 provides further clarity on this matter including the good practice of seeking approval for an apology in writing.

Email communication between the Town Clerk and auditor during the audit is provided below:

From: Town Clerk <townclerk@woodbridge-suffolk.gov.uk>

Sent: 19 October 2023 14:22

To: Thurston Parish Council <info@thurstonparishcouncil.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: Interim internal audit

Hi Vicky,

Thanks for your comments so far, I'll address these and then respond re Petty Cash. Karen is working on the Show Me documents.

1 – Apologies – In my time at the Council it has changed a little bit – when I first started the then Clerk did not record anything in the minutes for apologies, it was simply shown at the top of the document (as it still is). Her replacement followed this trend but did at one point attempt to record and have approved the reasons for absence, but the majority quickly asked for this to be removed. Her replacement introduced a minute specifically to note the apologies received, and I have continued this since he left. Members must submit apologies to me in advance of the meeting but I don't require any further detail - I consider the reason for absence to be the private business of that Councillor, and therefore no register is kept. Whilst I haven't checked and would be happy to be advised otherwise, I don't recall any reference in the Council's Standing Orders (Meeting section), nor the Practitioners Guide that states apologies must be approved.

My concern about asking Councillors to provide a reason for their absence and subsequently having to have it approved at the meeting is that Councillors would simply not attend the meeting which in the (sometimes quite regular for us) occurrence of when a meeting is close to not achieving a quorum, I'd have no way of knowing in advance should the legality of the meeting be in jeopardy. Under the current system, Councillors are happy to submit apologies and I always encourage them not to be afraid to do so – life is far more important than the Council. A detailed record of meeting attendance is kept in order that I can track any Councillors who may be approaching six months without attendance and the risk of being disqualified.

From: Thurston Parish Council <info@thurstonparishcouncil.gov.uk>
Sent: Thursday, October 19, 2023 2:48 PM
To: Town Clerk <townclerk@woodbridge-suffolk.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: Interim internal audit

Hi Greg,

Thanks for your explanation

Apologies understand the issue regarding Councillor attendance and the thorny subject of giving and approving apologies but

I refer to paragraphs 27 - 29 of LTN 5 (as produced by NALC and attached) and would recommend that you consider implementing a system whereby the apology is submitted to you as the Proper Officer, you confirm (after consultation with the Chair of the meeting) that it is a verified apology which will then allow Council to consider whether to approve the apology or not. With no formal approval of an apology of absence the clock starts ticking.....

27. The names of those councillors present at a meeting of the council must be recorded and included in the minutes of the meeting (paragraph 40 of schedule 12 to the 1972 Act). For ease of reference, the minutes should also record the names of those councillors who are absent from a meeting.
28. If a councillor wants his absence from a meeting to be approved by the council, they should submit his written request together with the reason for absence before the meeting takes place. A councillor cannot continue in office if they fail to attend a meeting of the council, a committee, sub-committee (or joint committee, joint board or similar body by which any of the council's functions are being discharged or which are advising the council about the discharge of its functions) for a period of six consecutive months and the reason for his absence has not been formally approved before the expiry of the six month period (s.85 (1) of the 1972 Act). Approval cannot be retrospective. See also Legal Topic Note 8 (Elections).
29. The minutes of the meeting must record if it resolved to approve a councillor's absence from the meeting, and if possible, the councillor's reason for absence. The recording of such information must not conflict with a council's duty to handle personal data or sensitive personal data in accordance with its obligations under data protection legislation. For example if a councillor's absence at meetings was due to ill health, the minutes of the meeting may document this simple fact but not the detail of his ill health. A council cannot disclose the details of the councillor's physical or mental health without his permission. This is because the information relating to a person's physical or mental health constitutes sensitive personal data. Further guidance on a council's data protection obligations is given in Legal Topic Note 38 (Data Protection).

From: Town Clerk

Sent: Thursday, October 19, 2023 3:55 PM

To: Thurston Parish Council <info@thurstonparishcouncil.gov.uk>; Finance Assistant <financeassistant@woodbridge-suffolk.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: Interim internal audit

Hi Vicky,

I note your comment regarding apologies – if you make a formal comment on the audit then I will talk to the Chair about a new process, which I'd suggest we'll ask the Council to agree before formulating. A quick search of other local council suggests many are not following the guidance...

Haverhill Town Council

Apologise for Absence The above apologies were noted.

Melton PC

23.93 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Bourne, Brown, Darby, Gradwell, Holmes and James

Felixstowe TC

61. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies for absence were received from Cllr D Rowe and Cllr D Underwood.

Aldeburgh TC

1. Apologies: Cllr Langley and Cllrs Daley and Whitelock ESC

The agenda and minutes from the auditors own Council:

AG E N D A

1.	Opening including Statement
2.	Apologies – a) Council to receive apologies for absence. b) Council to consent to accept apologies received.

2. APOLOGIES –

- a) Verified apologies of absence were received from Cllrs. Bond, Cornell, Smith and West.
- b) **Council consented to accept the apologies as submitted, aif.**

At the current time apologies are recorded in the minutes as being received. As detailed in the communication with the internal auditor, Officers hold an excel spreadsheet to record meeting attendance – a screenshot of this document is provided below. Should any Member be in danger of disqualification via the six-month rule, that Member and the leader of their political group would be informed as a matter of courtesy.

Key to table contents:																	Count for last 6 months:			
1	A - Attended	21	8	24	5	12	6	18	10	22	13	14	22	1	2	12	8	Attendance when due		
2	N - Not due	7	16	5	9	7	9	7	15	0	9	15	6	25	26	12	17	Not due		
3	P - Apologised	2	5	1	15	11	13	4	5	8	8	1	2	4	2	6	5	Apologies when due		
4	W - Absent w/o apology	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Absence without apologies when due		
5	-- not yet filled in																			
6		08/11/2023	25/10/2023	08/11/2023	19/07/2023	27/09/2023	18/10/2023	08/11/2023	08/11/2023	08/11/2023	27/09/2023	08/11/2023	08/11/2023	20/09/2023	08/11/2023	08/11/2023	08/11/2023	Last attendance		
7	Cllr	Bale	Rogerson	Sanders	Gillard	Holdcroft	Kneebone	Leach	Miller	O'Nolan	Phipps	Sutton	Adelson	Beck	Pegg	Walsh	Wilks			
8		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17			
9	Meeting	Date																		
51	FTC	18/10/2023	A	P	A	P	P	A	A	P	A	P	A	A	P	A	P	A		
52	FSC	25/10/2023	A	A	A	P	P	N	N	P	P	P	A	N	N	N	P	N		
53	PC	08/11/2023	A	N	A	P	P	P	A	N	A	P	N	A	P	N	N	N		
54	AC	08/11/2023	N	N	A	N	N	P	P	A	A	N	A	A	N	A	A	A		
55																				

The Council has in the past approved long-term absence due to illness (in order that the Member avoids disqualification), however one-off absences have not been accepted, simply received.

Further to the recommendation from the internal auditor, it may be considered that the Council has the following options:

- That all apologies submitted to the Town Clerk in advance of a Council or Committee meeting must include detail of reasons for the Members absence, and then the subsequent Council or Committee are then asked to agree and verify the requests received. (The Council may need to create a policy on what constitutes an acceptable absence...)
- The Council retains the current system of simply receiving apologies, noting that an unverified apology, received by the Council (in the existing way) does not re-set the six month clock in terms of qualification due to non-attendance.

Members are asked to consider the recommendation from the internal auditor regarding the Council's process of recording/ approving Members apologies.

Item 502

To consider the Council's Statement of Internal Control.

Woodbridge Town Council is a local authority funded largely by public money and is responsible for ensuring its financial business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently, and effectively.

The Council is required to review at least annually the effectiveness of its system of financial control, and the internal auditor will check to ensure that this work has been undertaken.

The Council's current statement is provided overleaf (and also as a separate document on SharePoint), and **Members are asked to recommend any changes and to agree to adopt a statement of internal control.**

Item 503

To consider the quotes received for an e-bike for the Council's Maintenance Officer.

The Finance Committee considered this matter at their September meeting and mandated the Town Clerk to further investigate a trial period with a view to the future purchase of an e-bike for the Council's Maintenance Officer.

The Town Clerk and Maintenance Officer have discussed the idea and the Maintenance Officer would be delighted to use an e-bike in order to complete his daily maintenance tasks – a trial period may not be required as the Maintenance Officer is an experienced cyclist and knows the type of bike he would prefer to use – a smaller trade style bike rather than a cargo bike, which would be difficult in terms of storage.

Options with the two bike shop in Woodbridge, Hasnips and Virtue Electric Bikes, have been considered, and these are provided below and overleaf, with more detailed provided on SharePoint:

From: kevin hasnip
Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2023 11:44 AM
To: Town Clerk <townclerk@woodbridge-suffolk.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: Planning advice

Hi Greg

An electric bike with bosch motor bosch battery low step with rack for panniers is

£1999.99

helmet £35.00

so total would be £2034.99

we always give a free lock either key or combination type which is 1.5 meters long

Regards

Kevin

It is proposed that the bike will be stored and charged inside the Elmhurst Park gardeners shed – the Maintenance Officer uses Elmhurst Park as his base for operations, so this makes logistical sense.

Officers can approach both organisations if Members wish for a trial period to be undertaken.

If Members wish to purchase from one of the options provided, Officers propose that the current underspend on the Councils Grounds Maintenance budget line is utilised for this purpose.

Members are asked to consider the quotes received for an e-bike for the Council's Maintenance Officer.

FT2 C... E-URBAN 4.4

2200
£2,399.00



Technical Specification

Essentials

Brake Lever Shimano MT200
 Brakes Front Shimano SMRT10 160mm / 160mm Center lock
 Fork RST Volant 50mm travel
 Frame New e-Urban Bosch Integrated
 Handlebar Lapierre alloy 6061DB, Width: 640mm, Rise: 25mm,
 Backsweep : 35°, Ø: 31.8mm
 Headset VP-J213PE, Black Finish, 1.1/8"-1.5"
 Pedals VP VPE-461
 Stem Lapierre adjustable, 0-70°, Ø: 31.8mm, Length: 85mm

Electric bike

Battery Watts per Hour 400Wh
 Display Purion
 Motor Bosch Active line plus "25kph" / Intube battery 400Wh
 / Purion display

Comfort

Grips XLC Ergonomic grips
 Saddle Selle Royal Wave
 Seat Post Lapierre Aluminium 6061 Ø: 31.6mm, Longueur :
 350mm, Offset : 5mm

Wheels

Rim Ryde ECO21 32H, 584x21C, Black Eyelets
 Tyres Continental Contact Urban 55-584, SafetyPro, PureGrip
 Compound, Bande réfléchissante (27,5") (Front & Rear)



Max Distance
80 Miles



Battery Power
400wh Bosch Power Tube



Motor
Bosch Active Line Plus



Display
Bosch Purion Display



Bike Weight
27.5 Kg

F20 FAT TYRE FOLDING EBIKE

VEE E-BIKES

£1,999.00



Technical Specification

Model: VEE F20

Frame: 6061 Aluminium Alloy

Including Free Mudguards, Rear Rack & Front Basket

Rated voltage: 48V

Motor: 48V / 250W Rear geared brushless motor

Battery: 48V / 672WH LG Li-ion removable battery

Controller: 48V 9 MOSFETS

Display: Full-colour U2 High-Definition LCD

Fork: Suspension Fork

Brake: Disc Brake

Light: LED front light

Tyre: 20" * 4.0 60 TPI KENDA fat tires

Derailleur: 7 Speed Shimano

PAS: 1:1 intelligent pedal assistant system

Modes: 3 riding modes – pedal mode, power assist mode, and full electric mode

Charger: UK 240V, 5-6 hour charging time

FREE FRONT AND FRAME BASKET, MUDGUARD AND RACK WORTH OVER £150.00



Gears
7 Speed Shimano



Max Distance
40-70 Miles



Battery Power
Lg 672wh



Motor
Vt 48v 250w Rear Brushless



Display
U2 Hd Colour Lcd



Bike Weight
28kg

Item 505

To consider if the Council wishes to become a member of the 'Rural Market Town Group'.

Officers have received the following communication inviting the Council to become a member of the 'Rural Market Town Group':

From: admin <admin@sparse.gov.uk>

To: Town Clerk <townclerk@woodbridge-suffolk.gov.uk>

Subject: Rural Market Town Group

Dear Greg and Belinda

We are the [Rural Services Network](#), a membership organisation that provides a national campaigning voice for rural communities. We have over 500 organisations in membership, and support both rural local authorities, and rural Parish and Town Councils.

We would like to invite you to join our Rural Market Town Group, a grouping of larger Parish and Market Towns in England where we aim to share best practice, and enable the group to contribute to our national campaigning work. Rural Local Authorities have been underfunded by successive Governments, leaving rural residents **living in in rural areas including towns like your own**, receiving less in Government funding, paying higher council tax and receiving less services which cost more to provide.

Our primary aim is to campaign for fairer funding for rural areas, however we also work on key issues such as affordable housing, the rural economy, access to health and care services and public transport.

[This link provides more information about the group and the services that we provide.](#)

These services include:

- Weekly Rural Bulletin delivered to your inbox setting out key rural news stories and monthly Funding Digest highlighting potential funding opportunities for you and your local organisations
- Free attendance at RSN seminar programme – 8 events held online annually
- Opportunity to share your news and good practice with the group and wider RSN
- Dedicated RMTG newsletter six times a year
- Two bespoke meetings a year for Councillors and Clerks
- Discounted access to tickets for online RSN National Rural Conference

We are currently offering free membership for six months to those joining the group, (from September 2023 to end of February 2024) and after that date, if you chose to stay with us, the subscription varies between £97 and £133 depending on your population. There is no requirement to join us after the free six month period.

If you'd like to take us up on the offer to join, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Alternatively, if you'd welcome a chat to find out more, let us know and we can arrange a time that suits.

Best wishes

Kerry

Kerry Booth

Chief Executive

RURAL SERVICES NETWORK

From: David Inman <david.inman@sparse.gov.uk>

To: Town Clerk <townclerk@woodbridge-suffolk.gov.uk>

Subject: RURAL MARKET TOWN GROUP - WOODBRIDGE T.C. Suffolk

Dear Belinda and Greg,

We recently sent out to you an invitation to have a free period of membership of the Rural/Market Towns Group. (details set out below). We very much hope that you can take up this one up and we can work with you for a while.. It is important that, at this difficult time, rurally and semi rurally based local councils do come together to their mutual benefit. Rural in definition encompasses a range of localities and we need the widest possible group. The comprehensive rural case struggles to be heard if places don't' come together. Please do send me an e mail taking up this offer.

I do very much hope to hear from you.

Kindest regards,

David

David Inman

Consultant to the Rural Services Network

Members are asked to consider if the Council wishes to become a member of the 'Rural Market Town Group'.

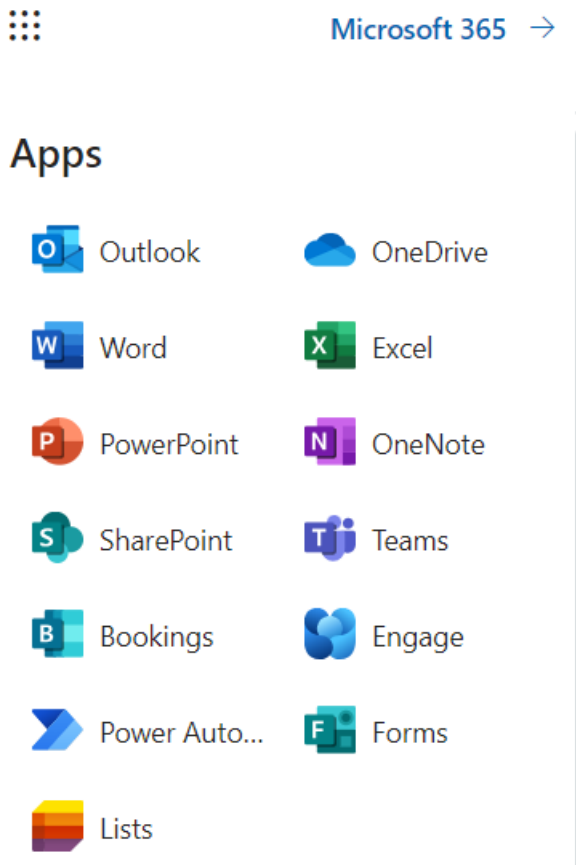
Item 506

To consider the use of Microsoft Lists in order to provide project updates for Members.

As a Council with a large number of ongoing projects, Officers are aware that Members wish to be provided with regular updates regarding the progress of these projects. Officers endeavour to provide project updates when requested, but appreciate that a check list, accessible by all would be useful.

Members and Officers are able to access Microsoft Lists via SharePoint, and Officers are (at the time of writing), working to create a project database using this App.

The Lists App can be accessed by clicking on the 'nine dots' at the top right of your SharePoint browser – the following drop down menu should appear and the Lists App shown at the bottom:



A direct link will be circulated to Members once the List is updated to the satisfaction of Officers.

To consider the use of Microsoft Lists in order to provide project updates for Members.

Item 507

To note the response from LINK regarding a request for Community Cash access.

Members will recall the item from the September meeting of the Council concerning an application to LINK for a review of community access banking facilities in the town:

317. To consider applying to LINK for a review of Woodbridge community access to banking facilities.

The Council agreed to apply to LINK for a review of Woodbridge community access to banking facilities.

Following the submission of the online request for a review, the following response was received:

From: Emma Pople

To: Town Clerk <townclerk@woodbridge-suffolk.gov.uk>

Subject: Community Request - Access to Cash/Woodbridge

Dear Greg Diaper

Thank you for contacting LINK and taking the time to undertake an application in respect of Woodbridge to review access to cash. How we assess access to cash in communities is available on LINK's website I have attached the link for your information. <https://www.link.co.uk/help/banking-hubs-help/how-we-assess-access-to-cash-in-communities/>

Unfortunately under the current criteria due to this location currently having a bank open our assessment is that the current level of access to cash provision is suitable for the community and therefore a new solution is not considered to be necessary at the present time.

Should Lloyds close in the future LINK will automatically review the community for access to cash and make a recommendation at that time.

I have included a link to our Cash Locator, which helps consumers find their nearest access to cash provision <https://www.link.co.uk/consumers/locator/>

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any further assistance.

Kind Regards

Emma Pople

Financial Inclusion Officer



Members are asked to note the response from LINK regarding a request for Community Cash access.

Item 508

To consider a request from the Finance Committee regarding the Council's proposed grant giving in the 2024/25 draft budget, as well as consider the Council's Grant Policy.

The Finance Committee are currently considering the Council's budget for 2024/25, and at their meeting on November 29th made the following request as part of the consideration of draft 2 of the budget:

The Finance Committee also request that Town Council consider the Council's current proposed grant giving in the 2024/25 draft budget, as well as consider the Council's Grant Policy.

As Members are aware the Council provides grants to local organisations and charities each year, the budget for which is currently set at £14,500. The Council has traditionally provided grant funding to the Tide Mill Trust to assist with the running costs of the Council's and Woodbridge's most iconic building, the Tide Mill, which in the current draft is proposed to increase to £10,000 (following a request from the Trust). There is also a small grant to the Woodbridge Regatta Association which is recognised as the Town Council's gift to support the town's most famous and long-running event. This covers the cost of the insurance of the event.

	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	RBS Code		Budget item	Cost Centre	Location	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
2								
77	4800		Grants	170	Comm. Wellbeing	£12,000.0	£14,500	£14,500
78	4805		Regatta grant	170	Comm. Wellbeing	£588.0	£600	£600
79	4810		Tide Mill grant	170	Comm. Wellbeing	£7,500.0	£7,500	£10,000

Rather than bring this to the Council immediately prior to the budget requiring approval, the Finance Committee request that the Council consider if it is happy with the proposed level of grant provision in the draft budget.

The Finance Committee have also asked that the Council consider it's Grant Policy prior to public release as part of the 2024 grant awarding. The current policy is uploaded to SharePoint.

Members are asked to consider a request from the Finance Committee regarding the Council's proposed grant giving in the 2024/25 draft budget, as well as consider the Council's Grant Policy.