



Minutes of the Finance, Governance and General Purposes
Committee held on Monday 30th June 2025 at 7 pm in Russell House,
Market Square, Westerham

In attendance: Town Clerk: Mrs A Howells (AH)

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	period for the public to exercise their rights to see the accounts commenced on the 9th June and was notified via the Council website and noticeboard as required. Kent Pension Fund were proposing to pool the fund from 1st April 2026 and launched a consultation on the 4 June 2025. This was specifically for town and parish councils, in preparation for the 31 March 2025 triennial valuation results which were expected later this year. The consultation would close on the 4th August 2025. Following discussion, it was agreed that Cllrs Boyle and Breminer would review the consultation and pass on comments to the Finance Officer for her to respond to the consultation by 25th July. <u>April 2025 Pay Award</u> - The National Employers for Local Government Services made a full and final pay offer of 3.2% on all NJC pay points. Members of Unite had voted to reject the offer. Unison and GMB had also advised members to reject the offer and the consultation period had just drawn to a close. The negotiations were likely to be lengthy with agreement once again being made in the Autumn. <u>Crockham Hill Business Rates</u> – The Finance Officer had sought advice from NALC's Legal Advisor, who concurred that WTC should be exempt. The Finance Officer had raised a check on that basis, which is the first stage and takes approximately a month for a response. A challenge was not possible until a check had been undertaken. <u>KGF VAT advice</u> – The Finance Officer had instructed the Parkinson Partnership as agreed. This was for a fixed price of £1000 plus VAT, the Partnership had no availability until the end of July. <u>Archiving Project</u> – The Finance Officer had almost completed sorting through the old files and had started to create a system to re-file archive material. The paintwork in the small office had many water marks and needed repainting and the carpet tiles replacing. Following discussion, it was agreed that the Town Clerk would obtain quotes for painting and re-carpeting for the next meeting, to come out of the chamber fund. <u>Office Chair</u> The Finance Officer requested a replacement chair for home working at a cost of £165.84. This was agreed. 5.2 Payments and receipts list to 30th April 2025 – Cllr Sheen had no issues to bring to the Committee's attention. The Payment List would be recommended to Council for approval. The Finance Officer had no areas of concern to bring to the Committees' attention at this point in the financial year. The Lloyds account now charged £4.25 per month. This had been notified after the budgets were set for the year hence WTC did not currently have a budget line for bank charges – the expenditure would be taken from the FG&GP contingency budget. 5.3 Committee Accounts to 30th April 2025 – The End of Year F&GP Accounts had been circulated and there were no queries. WTC's Annual insurance policy had been paid at a cost of £8,336.47, versus a budget of £8,320. Following training the Town Clerk had attended; a proposal was presented to purchase a Local Council Data Protection Toolkit at a discounted price of £495. This was approved and the Finance Officer had advised that the	EB/IB DM AH
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	expenditure would be met from the contingency or PC/Software Support budget. The Town Clerk had also attended a Heliocentrix course on Microsoft CoPilot (Council IT provider) and it had been recommended that a one-year Licence was bought at a cost of £700 to improve efficiency of administration tasks. This was approved and the Finance Officer had advised that the expenditure would be met from the contingency or PC/Software Support budget. The Town Clerk advised of ongoing efforts to install meters in various WTC assets. Cllr Sheen requested the Utility Suppliers Record was updated. 5.4 Grant application from Air Ambulance – Cllr Sheen had reviewed the Grant Application form and following discussion it was agreed to recommend to Council a grant of £500. 5.5 Grant application from 'We are Beams' - Cllr Sheen had reviewed the Grant Application form and following discussion it was agreed to recommend to Council a grant of £250. 5.6 Grant application from Westerham Town Partnership – Cllr Sheen had reviewed the Grant Application form and following discussion it was agreed to recommend to Council a grant of £500.	AH
6.	<u>Governance</u> 6.1 Gold Award - The Action Plan had been updated and circulated. Following discussion, it was agreed that the Working Group would reconvene in August to discuss a timetable for the identified actions. 6.2 Strategic Business Plan – The updated Plan had been circulated, following discussion it was agreed to add a timescale of 2027 to the plan and to complete the action for the RH car park. 6.3 ECO Policy – The updated Policy had been circulated. Following discussion, it was agreed to discuss with OSA Committee regarding sustainable planting in the borders at the back of the RH car park to tidy up the area. Policies and Procedures to review/approve: 6.4 Russell House Hiring Agreement – The agreement had been circulated and following discussion and review was agreed. The Town Clerk confirmed that any hirers of Russell House would also be given a copy of WTC Child Protection Procedures for hirers, this would be circulated to the Committee. 6.5 Russell House Charging Policy – The Current charging Policy had been circulated. Following discussion, it was agreed not to increase the charges. They would remain at £7 + VAT per hour and £20 + VAT for a session.	SS/IB/AH AH AH/CDB AH
7.	<u>General Purposes</u> <u>Land Issues</u> 7.1 Doctors Surgery – The Surgery had still not received a response from the ICB – Integrated Care Board regarding the rent and had agreed to chase for a response. The Town Clerk would speak to the Practice Manager about the feasibility of installing a meter outside surgery hours. Councillors agreed to support the attendance on site to reduce the need for overtime working. 7.2 Churchill School – Negotiations were still ongoing regarding the lease for land adjacent to the School. 7.3 KGF Footpath SR341 re-diversion – The Town Clerk reported that she and	

	the Deputy Clerk were meeting two KCC Public Rights Of Way PROW Officers at KGF 1st July. Darent Valley Path Extension - The Town Clerk advised that new signage had been installed just to the north of the bridge from the car park. The Town Clerk had requested an update on the status of the entire route. Russell House 7.4 Maintenance Plan – The updated Maintenance Plan was noted. Following discussion, it was agreed that the Town Clerk would obtain quotes to identify the likely future cost for the re-surfacing of RH car park as the surface was deteriorating.	AH
8.	<u>Correspondence</u> None.	
9.	<u>Reports from Councillors</u> Cllr Boyle reported that he had met with a local business regarding investment in KGF. Cllr Boyle reported that he had met with SDC Cllr Maskell regarding Westerham issues. The Town Clerk had attended the celebration of the Darent Valley Landscape Partnership.	
10.	<u>TN16, Crockham Hill Village newsletter and Website</u> None.	
11.	<u>Matters for District and County Councillors</u> None.	
12.	<u>Further Matters for Consideration at the next meeting</u> None.	
13.	<u>Date of next meeting</u> Monday 29th September 2025	

The meeting was concluded at 8.35 pm.

Minutes confirmed as a correct record:

Chairman