



Ref: Agenda/F&GP– 17/03/2026

12th March 2026

Dear Sir/Madam

All Members of the Finance & General Purposes Committee are hereby summoned to the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting of Biggleswade Town Council that will take place on **Tuesday 17th March 2026** at the **Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade** commencing at **7:00pm**, for the purpose of considering and recommending the business to be transacted as specified below.

Yours faithfully.

Karim Hosseini
Interim Town Clerk

Distribution: All Town Councillors
Notice Boards
The Press

Committee Members:

Cllr. D. Strachan (Chairman)
Cllr. I. Agnew (Deputy Chairman)
Cllr. M. Foster
Cllr. M. Knight
Cllr. M. North
Cllr. M. Russell
Cllr. S. Sajid
Cllr. C. Thomas
Cllr. D. Albone (ex-officio Member)
Cllr. J. Woodhead (ex-officio Member)

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires a record be kept of the Members present and that this record form part of the minutes of the meeting.

Members who cannot attend a meeting should tender apologies to the Town Clerk.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive Statutory Declarations of Interests from Members in relation to:

- a. Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item.

If a Member has declared a Disclosable Pecuniary interest, they must withdraw from the meeting during consideration of the item to which the interest relates. If the Member has been granted a dispensation by the Council, they must still declare the interest but may take part in the discussion and vote.

- b. Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item.

This is an interest which is not pecuniary (as defined) but is nonetheless so significant that a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard to be so significant that it would materially impact upon your judgement of the public interest. Upon identification Members can take part in any vote

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

To adjourn for a period of up to 15 minutes to allow members of the public to put questions or to address the Council, through the Chairman, pertaining to matters listed on the agenda.

Please register in advance for this webinar:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_XfKwdzK7QyCfcExjWtjRYg

Each Speaker will give their name to the Chairman, prior to speaking, which will be recorded in the minutes, unless that person requests otherwise. Each Speaker will be allowed **one three-minute slot**.

5. INVITED SPEAKER

None.

6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

7. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

- a. The Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on **Tuesday 06th January 2026** at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

8. MATTERS ARISING

- a. The Minutes of Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on **Tuesday 06th January 2026**.

9. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

- a. **Tranche Two Grant Cycle**

For Members to receive and consider a written report from the Head of Finance.

b. **Budget Planning Cycle**

For Members to receive and consider a written report from the Head of Finance.

10. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

a. **Bank Reconciliation**

The bank reconciliation reports for the third quarter, ending 31st December 2025, were presented to Members at the Council Meeting held on 10th February 2026.

b. **Orchard Centre Update**

The new operating model at the Orchard Community Centre had been implemented and operational since summer 2025, this has resulted in an increase usage of both the Page Hall and the Barnett Room along with increased income. Officers believe it is likely that the building will achieve the budgeted revenue.

11. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

To adjourn for a period of up to 15 minutes to allow members of the public to put questions or to address the Council, through the Chairman, in respect of any other business of the Town Council.

Please register in advance for this webinar:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_XfKwdzK7QyCfcExiWtiRYg

Each Speaker will give their name to the Chairman prior to speaking, which will be recorded in the minutes, unless that person requests otherwise. Each Speaker will be allowed **(one) three-minute slot**.

12. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

The following resolution will be **moved** that it is advisable in the public interest that the public and press are excluded whilst the following exempt items are discussed.

(None).

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the public bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Council **resolve** to exclude the public and press by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.



**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING ON
TUESDAY 06th JANUARY 2026 AT THE OFFICES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN
COUNCIL, THE OLD COURT HOUSE, 4 SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE
COMMENCING AT 7.00PM**

PRESENT:

Cllr D Strachan (Chairman)
Cllr I Agnew (Deputy Chairman)
Cllr M Foster
Cllr M Knight
Cllr M North
Cllr M Russell
Cllr D Albone (Ex-officio member)
Cllr. J Woodhead (Ex-officio member)

Mr E Bour – Head of Finance & Deputy RFO
Ms Helen Calvert – Administration & HR Manager
Miss A Green – Committee Clerk

Members of the Public – 6

Meeting Formalities:

Following a reminder to meeting attendees, both panel and public, that this is a formal meeting, the Chairman advised that members of the public will be given an opportunity to speak during public open session but not at other times. The meeting is being filmed and by being present attendees are deemed to have agreed be filmed and to the use of those images and sound recordings. The Chairman advised that attendees should not disclose any personal information of individuals as this would infringe the Data Protection Rights of the individual. The Chairman asked everyone to mute their microphones when not speaking.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

a. **Apologies were received from the following:**

Cllr. C Thomas.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

a. **Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:**

All Members declared a pecuniary interest in item 9a.

b. **Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:**

No disclosable non-pecuniary interests were declared.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman had no announcements.

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

a. No members of the public were present, either online or in person.

5. **INVITED SPEAKER**

No guest speaker was invited.

6. **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

a. None.

7. **MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

No amendments were made to the minutes.

The minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Tuesday 2nd December 2025.

The Chairman was authorised to sign the minutes.

8. **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matter arising from the minutes.

9. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

a. **2026/2027 Budget and Precept**

The Chairman invited Members to comment on the report presented by the Head of Finance.

Members expressed concern that several appendices were placed on SharePoint, noting that all budget papers should be included within the meeting pack to ensure full transparency and ease of reference.

Members **RESOLVED** that, for the forthcoming precept meeting on 20th January, all relevant budgetary papers would be included within the main agenda pack and not just on SharePoint.

Members raised concern regarding Appendix B, observing that it included an indicative precept figure which appeared premature. Members queried whether this figure had been specifically requested by Members, was required for regulatory reasons, or was simply an internal assumption.

In response, the Head of Finance, advised that the inclusion of such information is a requirement under financial regulations, enabling the Council to maintain oversight of three-year projections.

Members requested that a clear footnote be added to Appendix B to explain this requirement and to emphasise that certain cost increases fall outside the Council's control.

Following discussion, Members **AGREED** the following:

- The draft total income is £2,212,214 and the draft total expenditure is £2,212,214, as presented in Appendix B.
- The draft precept for 2026–27 is £1,930,629 (a 5.01% increase), with a draft Band D charge of £239.71 (a 3.39% increase), as set out in Appendix B.

- The minimum level of General Reserve for 2026/2027, is a sum no lower than £553,054. This recommendation accords with good accounting practice and statutory requirements, representing the equivalent of three months' gross expenditure.
- The Town Council increase the capital reserve by £25,000, enabling the implementation of the surveyor's recommendations for the three sports buildings: the Club House on Fairfield Road, the Cricket Pavilion on Fairfield Road and the Bowls Club Building on Drove Road.

The Committee concluded by expressing thanks to the Finance Team and the Head of Finance for their hard work in preparing the budget materials.

10. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- a. Members noted the information.

11. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

- a. No members of the public were present, either online or in person.

Due to the nature of the business to be discussed Members **RESOLVED** to move into the exempt session.

12. EXEMPT

- a. **Exempt minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting Tuesday 2nd December 2025**

No amendments were made to the minutes.

The exempt minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Tuesday 2nd December 2025.

The Chairman closed the meeting at **7:16pm**

BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL
Town Council Meeting 17th March 2026
Item 9a: Grant Applications 25/26 Tranche Two

Implications of Recommendations

Corporate Strategy: Ensure that the Town Council continues to operate within legislation, regulation, ethical guidelines and best practice.

Finance: Award available budget to support operation and development of Community Clubs, Charities and other organisations in Biggleswade.

Equality: Not applicable.

Environment: Not applicable.

Community Safety: Not applicable.

Purpose of the Report:

To present to Members the applications received for funding from the Community Grant Fund.

Background:

Biggleswade Town Council acknowledges the significant contribution that Community Clubs, Charities and other organisations make to enrich and improve the quality of life for so many residents in the town. Officers emailed organisations to apply for the Community grant and highlighted the deadline of the application window. The BTC Community grant has been advertised in local newspapers, bulletins, social media platforms including websites and the Councils website.

The Town Council has a budget of £20,000 to cover the two tranches of grant applications for the 2025/26 financial year of which £6,482 remains unspent. The applications are considered without prejudice.

Process for awarding grant requests

The Town Council's Grant Policy states that "Finance and General Purposes Committee can approve grants to a maximum of £2,000 and recommend to Council for grants above £2,000". None of the 14 grant applications is above £2,000. The total amount requested is £19,200. The guidelines and criteria for grants are detailed on the Councils website (<https://biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/BTC-Grants-Policy-2025-28.pdf>). The Grant Policy emphasises that "Particular consideration will be given to applications for extraordinary expenditure such as a capital project."

Summary:

The previous and current grant applications are summarised in tabular form in the attached Appendix A. Each individual application is available in full on SharePoint and hard copies will be made available for those Members who express a preference.

Recommendation:

Officers recommend that Members consider each individual grant application without prejudice. The value of the combined requested applications is £19,200 which is above the available budget of £6,482 which remains unspent for the financial year 2025/26. Officers recommend maximum of £6,482 is awarded. This is because it is against the grant policy to award grants more than the annual budget.

Ernest Bour
Head of Finance

Appendices

Appendix A: Previous and current grant applications for 2025/26 Tranche 2 (Printed on A3).

APPENDIX: A

Biggleswade Town Council - Grants Applications 2025-2026

	Organisation	Grants Requested 2025/26 Tranche 2, to be paid by BACS 25.03.25	2023/24 (1)		2023/24 (2)		2024/25 (1)		2024/25 (2)		2025/26 (1)		Tranche 2 2025/26 Awarded
			Requested (£)	Awarded (£)									
1	Biggleswade Community Group	£1,200.00	2000	1000	1200	400	1500	1500	1000	1000	1000	1000	
2	Biggles FM	£1,850.00			1850	1850			1850	1850			
3	Biggleswade United Football Club	£2,000.00			1950	1950							
4	Biggleswade History Society	£900.00			900	900			900	900			
5	Biggleswade Scout Group	£1,500.00	279	279									
6	Biggleswade Sea Cadets	£2,000.00					2000	2000			2000	1500	
7	Biggleswade Swimming Club	£1,000.00											
8	Biggleswade Town Bowls Club	£1,300.00											
9	CHUMS Charity	£2,000.00							2000	2000			
10	Future Action Biggleswade	£250.00							150	150			
11	Keech Hospice Care	£1,000.00			1000	1000			1000	1000			
12	Sue Ryder St John's Hospice	£1,000.00	3000	1000							1500	1000	
13	Tabletop Legends	£2,000.00											
14	Wild Green Blossoms CIC	£1,200.00											
Total (£)		£19,200.00	36661	11411	18250	11000	15538	10937	12870	10870	20624	13518	£ -
% awarded from requested (£)				31%		60%		70%		84%		66%	
Number of applications		14		14		14		13		11		11	
Number of applications over £2,000		0		0		1		1		0		0	

BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL
Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting 17th March 2026
Item 9b: Budget Planning Cycle 2026-27

Implications of Recommendations

Corporate Strategy: FINANCIAL GOVERNANCE: Ensure that the Town Council continues to operate within legislation, regulation, ethical guidelines, and best practice.

Finance: Budget Planning Cycle 2027-28.

Equality: Not applicable.

Environment: Not applicable.

Community Safety: Not applicable.

Background

The new year draft budget cycle is attached as Appendix A.

The draft has the support of the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

Importantly the normal cycle has been adapted to incorporate detailed consultation with all Committees.

The progress of the budget planning cycle will be shared with Members during future Council and Committee meetings, and the status column will be completed accordingly.

Recommendation:

Members to note the report and recommend to Council to adopt the Budget Planning Cycle for 2026-27.

Ernest Bour
Head of Finance

Appendices:

Appendix A: Budget Planning Cycle 2027-28.

DRAFT 2026 – 2027 ORIGINAL ESTIMATE PLANNING CYCLE

Ref	Date	Description	Attendees/Officer Lead	Output	Stages	Status
1.	3rd September 2026	Communicate with Central Bedfordshire Council to acquire deadlines for submission of precept request.	Ernest Bour	Clean CBC timetable.	Determine budget timeline with CBC	
2.	7th September 2026	Clean estimate of all payroll staffing costs, including projection of pay inflation.	Ernest Bour, Helen Calvert	Clean estimate of Staff costs for 26/27.	Produce draft budget	
3.	10th September 2026	Review staff payroll costs.	Nicola Sewell, Ernest Bour and Helen Calvert	Staff costs reviewed in-depth.	Produce draft budget	
4.	14th September 2026	Review latest projected outturn for 26/27 after half-year accounts finalised.	Nicola Sewell and Ernest Bour	Projected outturn 26/27.	Produce draft budget	
5.	15th September 2026	Management Meetings to identify 26/27 growth requirements, revenue projections and price inflation.	Nicola Sewell, Ernest Bour, Karim Hosseini, Harry Henderson, Ian Campbell, Helen Calvert	Identification of 26/27 growth requirements, revenue projections and general reviews.	Produce draft budget	
6.	17th September 2026	Management Meetings to identify 26/27 growth requirements, revenue projections and price inflation.	Nicola Sewell, Ernest Bour, Karim Hosseini, Harry Henderson, Ian Campbell, Helen Calvert	Identification of 26/27 growth requirements, revenue projections, identify cost reductions including efficiencies and general reviews.	Produce draft budget	
7.	22nd September 2026	Provide a thorough update to Mayor, Deputy Mayor F&GP Chair and Deputy Chair.	Nicola Sewell, Ernest Bour Mayor, Deputy Mayor F&GP Chair and Deputy Chair.	Internal progress update meeting	Incorporate Member commentary	
8.	23rd September 2026	Enter suggested new Original Estimate for 27/28, onto Rialtas.	Ernest Bour	27/28 original draft budget in Rialtas.	Produce draft budget	
9.	24th September 2026	Thorough accuracy and sense-check review of suggested new Original Estimate for 27/28, on Rialtas.	Nicola Sewell and Ernest Bour	27/28 original draft budget in Rialtas fully reviewed for accuracy.	Produce draft budget	

10.	29th September 2026	Informal consultation with broader Members at Council.	All Members	Broad Member sign off.	Broad Member consultation	
11.	6th October 2026	Formal evening meeting with Public Lands & Open Spaces Committee members	All PLOS Committee Members, Nicola Sewell, Karim Hosseini, and Ernest Bour	To discuss and review PLOS Budget for 27/28.	Incorporate Member commentary	
12.	20th October 2026	Formal evening meeting with Town Centre Committee members.	All TCM Members, Nicola Sewell, Karim Hosseini, and Ernest Bour	To discuss and review TCM Budget for 27/28.	Incorporate Member commentary	
13.	5th November 2026	Formal evening meeting with Personnel Committee members.	All Personnel Committee Members, Nicola Sewell, Karim Hosseini, and Ernest Bour	To discuss and review Personnel Budget for 27/28.	Incorporate Member commentary	
14.	17th November 2026	Provide a thorough update to Mayor, Deputy Mayor, F&GP Chair and Deputy Chair.	Nicola Sewell, Ernest Bour, & Membres	Fully informed Mayor, Deputy Mayor Chair and Deputy Chair of F&GP.	Mayor , Deputy Mayor , F & GP Chair & Deputy Chair Overview	
15.	1st December 2026	Formal evening meeting with Finance & General Purposes Committee members.	All F&GP Members, Nicola Sewell, Karim Hosseini and Ernest Bour	To discuss and review F&GP Budget for 27/28.	F & GP resolution	
16.	5th January 2027	Reserve F&GP Committee.	All F&GP Members, Nicola Sewell, Karim Hosseini and Ernest Bour	Agree on a formal resolution ready to be presented to Town Council on 19 th January.	Incorporate Member commentary	
17.	22nd January 2027	Sign off at Town Council.	Town Council	Final precept agreed by Members.	Council consideration & resolution	
18.	23rd January 2027	Complete CBC forms with precept request.	Ernest Bour	To be signed by Ernest Bour as RFO.	Communicate precept to CBC	

