

Wem Town Council

Wem-Birthplace of the Modern Sweet Pea

Town Clerk and Treasurer:
Mrs. P. E. O'Hagan

Wem Town Council Offices
Wem Library
High Street
Wem, Shropshire
SY4 5AA



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To Members of the Finance & Corporate Governance Committee

Dear Councillor

I write to inform you a meeting of this Committee has been arranged to take place on Thursday 21st May 2026 at 7pm in The Meeting Room, Wem Library, Wem

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "A Roberts".

Amanda Roberts
RFO

15th May 2026

AGENDA

1. **To elect a committee chair**
2. **Apologies** - to receive any apologies and reasons for absence
3. **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**
 - a) Declaration of any disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter to be discussed at the meeting and which is not included in the register of interests.
 - b) To consider any applications for dispensation.
4. **Committee Minutes** - to approve as a correct record the minutes of a meeting of the Finance & Corporate Governance Committee held on 15th January 2026.
5. **Progress Report** – to note.
6. **Accounts**
 - a) 2025-26 Accounts - to approve the accounts and supporting papers for the year ending 31 March 2026.
 - b) Internal audit report - to review and consider recommendations.

c) Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025-26.

- i. To consider the Town Council's response to questions on section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return - The Annual Governance Statement.
- ii. To consider section 2 of the AGAR, 2025-26 accounting statements.
- iii. To consider explanation of variances and date of publishing AGAR.

7. Earmarked Reserves

To note reserve levels and agree new earmarked reserve transfers

8. Financial regulations – to review updated financial regulations in advance of the May meeting of the Town Council.

9. Banking

To approve the process for managing the mayor's fundraising account

10. Date and time of next meeting – to note

Minutes of a Meeting of the Finance & Corporate Governance Committee held on Thursday 16th January at 7.00pm in the Council Meeting Room, Wem Library.

Present Cllrs B Barker, P Broomhall, D Hill, M Hudson, L Gilchrist, R Gascoigne, B Cotterall, E Towers

Mrs A Roberts (Responsible Finance Officer)

1 Apologies - to receive any apologies and reasons for absence.

The following apologies were noted:

Cllr P Johnson, Cllr D Parry, Cllr M Meakin, Cllr G Soul

2 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

a) Declaration of any disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter to be discussed at the meeting and which is not included in the register of interests.

None declared

b) To consider any applications for dispensation.

None received.

3 Committee Minutes - to approve as a correct record the minutes of a meeting of the Finance & Corporate Governance Committee held on 5.12.24.

Resolved:- to approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Finance & Corporate Governance Committee held on 5.12.24 and they were duly signed by the chairman.

4 Progress Report – to note.

Resolved:- to note.

The outstanding Data Sharing agreement with Shropshire Council payroll was raised as a concern and is to be escalated if not resolved within 14 days.

5 Accounts

a) To consider 3rd quarter budget report to 31.12.24.

A query was raised about overspending on overtime.

Resolved:- to note the report.

b) Budget 2025-26 - to review the Administration budget as considered at the December Full Council.

Resolved: to make the following budgetary recommendation to Full Council

- **The budget allocation for Office Room Hire is to be set at £21,217.**

c) Earmarked Reserves: to agree revisions

Resolved: to make the following changes to Earmarked Reserves:

- Move £1,250 from Heads Up to Transformation
- Move £165 from Poppies to Event Infrastructure
- Move £1,500 from Office to Transformation

6 Banking

a) To consider proposals for setting up and managing a Mayor's Charity bank account

Resolved: To set up a new Mayor's Charity account with Unity Trust Bank, revise the Council's Financial Regulations to cover management of the account and the Charity funding, and introduce a clear account management process to be approved by Full Council.

b) To approve new signatories for the CCLA account

Resolved: Cllr Towers and Cllr Gilchrist will act as signatories for the CCLA account.

c) To approve payment by Direct Debit for IT support

Resolved: To pay for IT support by Direct Debit.

7 Date and time of next meeting – to note.

Resolved:- to note that the next meeting will be held on 22nd May 2026 at 10.00.

Meeting ended 7.40 pm

Chairman.....

Progress Report – Finance and Corporate Governance Committee

Item	Progress	Status
Earmarked Reserves	To be reviewed and updated	
VAT	Quarter 1 claim made in July Quarter 2 Claim made in October Quarter 3 Claim made in January Quarter 4 Claim made in April	
GDPR	Staff continue to work to principals of GDPR.	
	Working towards new AGAR requirement: Digital and data compliance. Website administration demo 13 th May	
Internal Audit	All information submitted.	
Data sharing agreement with payroll processor	Received from Shropshire Council – included within the contract.	

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Detailed Balance Sheet - Excluding Stock Movement**Month 12 Date 31/03/2026**

<u>A/c</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Actual</u>	
	<u>Current Assets</u>		
100	Debtors	600	
105	VAT Control A/c	6,639	
110	Prepayments	39	
120	Stock	1,590	
230	Unity Bank	38,880	
235	CCLA	330,739	
240	Nationwide Business Saving	118,272	
250	Petty Cash	23	
	Total Current Assets		496,781
	<u>Current Liabilities</u>		
510	Accruals	8,449	
	Total Current Liabilities		8,449
	Net Current Assets		488,333
	Total Assets less Current Liabilities		488,333

Represented by :-

300	Current Year Fund	51,843	
310	General Reserves	263,734	
320	EMR - Bulmer Cott Fund	28,511	
321	EMR - Wilmot Meadow S106	34,909	
322	EMR - Digitisation of records	1,000	
323	EMR - Transformation	38,491	
325	EMR Neighbourhood Fund	6,610	
326	EMR Elections	7,365	
327	EMR Pensions	7,572	
328	EMR Play equipment	9,500	
329	EMR recreation Ground toilets	6,601	
330	EMR Swimming Pool Liner	3,000	
331	EMR Highways Projects	1,886	
333	EMR Cemetery Extension	10,000	
334	EMR Public Toilets	690	
335	EMR Christmas Festival	1,932	
337	EMR Christmas Lights	2,952	
338	EMR Skate Park	2,900	
341	EMR Christmas Lights Comp	600	
342	EMR Christmas Fest Deposits	100	
343	EMR WEF	1,598	
345	EMR Allotment Deposits	250	
347	EMR Jubilee Square Tree	80	
348	EMR Mayoral Chain	2,325	
349	EMR Event Infrastructure	1,120	
350	EMR Staffing Projects	665	
351	EMR Website Upgrade	1,000	
352	EMR Market Infrastructure	1,100	
	Total Equity		488,333

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Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 31/03/2026

Month No: 12

Cost Centre Report

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual	Variance Annual	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
<u>100 Staffing</u>							
1320 Misc income	154	0	(154)			0.0%	
Staffing :- Income	154	0	(154)				0
4000 Clerk	53,106	52,057	(1,049)		(1,049)	102.0%	
4001 Office Staff Overtime	0	1,500	1,500		1,500	0.0%	
4002 Project assistant	13,933	13,535	(398)		(398)	102.9%	
4005 Facilities Officer	12,228	11,900	(328)		(328)	102.8%	
4006 Staff Training	413	2,000	1,587		1,587	20.7%	
4008 Staff travel expenses	280	500	220		220	56.0%	
4010 Groundsman	34,434	34,200	(234)		(234)	100.7%	
4011 Groundsman's Overtime	1,961	1,500	(461)		(461)	130.7%	
4012 Msc non salary	801	2,000	1,199		1,199	40.1%	
4015 Casual Staff	1,798	3,153	1,355		1,355	57.0%	(665)
4020 HMRC contributions	14,442	14,260	(182)		(182)	101.3%	
4030 TC Pension contributions	20,216	22,900	2,684		2,684	88.3%	
4045 Payroll Administration fee	1,396	1,300	(96)		(96)	107.4%	
4046 HR Support	1,750	2,100	350		350	83.3%	
Staffing :- Indirect Expenditure	156,757	162,905	6,148	0	6,148	96.2%	(665)
Net Income over Expenditure	(156,603)	(162,905)	(6,302)				
6000 plus Transfer From EMR	(665)	0	665				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(157,268)	(162,905)	(5,637)				
<u>110 Administration</u>							
1076 Precept	423,915	423,915	0			100.0%	
1080 Bank Interest	15,009	16,000	991			93.8%	
1320 Misc income	23	0	(23)			0.0%	
Administration :- Income	438,947	439,915	968			99.8%	0
4065 Postage	59	500	441		441	11.8%	
4070 Telephone/ Broadband	2,045	1,750	(295)		(295)	116.8%	
4075 Stationery	673	513	(160)		(160)	131.1%	
4080 Printer/ copier	878	1,025	147		147	85.6%	
4085 Office hire	16,102	20,500	4,398		4,398	78.5%	
4090 Computer	1,778	2,050	272		272	86.7%	
4092 Tablet Purchase and Support	5,905	2,600	(3,305)		(3,305)	227.1%	2,000
4093 Digitisation of Records	0	1,000	1,000		1,000	0.0%	(1,000)
4094 Gov.uk email addresses	600	600	0		0	100.0%	
4095 Web site / Communication	215	615	400		400	35.0%	

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Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 31/03/2026

Month No: 12

Cost Centre Report

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual	Variance Annual	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
4105 Membership	3,104	3,100	(4)		(4)	100.1%	
4106 HS Support	1,625	1,975	350		350	82.3%	
4110 Audit	2,098	1,750	(348)		(348)	119.9%	
4120 Chain of Office	20	1,025	1,005		1,005	2.0%	(1,005)
4125 Mayors Allowance	1,000	1,000	0		0	100.0%	
4130 Mayors Hosp. All.	607	750	143		143	80.9%	
4135 Honours Board	25	154	129		129	16.2%	
4140 Insurance	2,644	2,563	(81)		(81)	103.2%	
4145 Election Costs	3,684	1,025	(2,659)		(2,659)	359.4%	2,659
4150 Legal Fees	0	1,025	1,025		1,025	0.0%	
4155 Bank Charges	528	1,025	497		497	51.5%	
4165 Pat Testing	128	205	78		78	62.2%	
4175 RBS	1,316	1,435	119		119	91.7%	
4870 Msc.	174	0	(174)		(174)	0.0%	
Administration :- Indirect Expenditure	45,208	48,185	2,977	0	2,977	93.8%	2,654
Net Income over Expenditure	393,739	391,730	(2,009)				
6000 plus Transfer From EMR	2,654	0	(2,654)				
6001 less Transfer To EMR	1,000	0	(1,000)				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	395,394	391,730	(3,664)				
<u>120 Cllr Expenses</u>							
4050 Training/Conferences	375	1,000	625		625	37.5%	
4055 Travel expenses	0	75	75		75	0.0%	
Cllr Expenses :- Indirect Expenditure	375	1,075	700	0	700	34.9%	0
Net Expenditure	(375)	(1,075)	(700)				
<u>150 Grants/ Town Promotion</u>							
1000 Donations & Grants	0	0	0			0.0%	800
1011 Christmas Festival	856	0	(856)			0.0%	900
1012 Christmas Festival Market	515	0	(515)			0.0%	
1013 Creative Kids	1,600	0	(1,600)			0.0%	800
Grants/ Town Promotion :- Income	2,971	0	(2,971)				2,500
4187 Climate Change	0	500	500		500	0.0%	
4188 Christmas Lights	12,593	10,000	(2,593)		(2,593)	125.9%	7,821
4300 Small Grants	3,100	3,500	400		400	88.6%	
4305 Christmas Festival	3,982	3,000	(982)		(982)	132.7%	724
4310 Larger Grant Contributions	4,500	4,500	0		0	100.0%	

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Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 31/03/2026

Month No: 12

Cost Centre Report

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual	Variance Annual	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
4320 Wem Economic Forum	9	500	492		492	1.7%	
4870 Msc.	40	0	(40)		(40)	0.0%	40
4885 Events	3,862	3,500	(362)		(362)	110.3%	365
Grants/ Town Promotion :- Indirect Expenditure	28,085	25,500	(2,585)	0	(2,585)	110.1%	8,950
Net Income over Expenditure	(25,115)	(25,500)	(385)				
6000 plus Transfer From EMR	8,950	0	(8,950)				
6001 less Transfer To EMR	10,296	0	(10,296)				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(26,461)	(25,500)	961				
<u>200 Recreation</u>							
1319 Grants Received	400	0	(400)			0.0%	
Recreation :- Income	400	0	(400)				0
4400 WSSA contribution	14,000	14,000	0		0	100.0%	
4405 WSSA - Reserve Fund	7,000	7,000	0		0	100.0%	
4410 Repairs & Maintenance	3,467	5,000	1,533		1,533	69.3%	
4420 Inspections	640	800	160		160	80.0%	
4425 Play equipment	12,322	8,000	(4,322)		(4,322)	154.0%	19,421
4427 Skate ramps	0	2,000	2,000		2,000	0.0%	(2,000)
4430 Tree Works	1,994	2,000	6		6	99.7%	
4431 Climate change works	226	500	274		274	45.2%	
4435 Litter bin emptying	850	1,000	150		150	85.0%	
4870 Msc.	1,525	0	(1,525)		(1,525)	0.0%	
Recreation :- Indirect Expenditure	42,025	40,300	(1,725)	0	(1,725)	104.3%	17,421
Net Income over Expenditure	(41,625)	(40,300)	1,325				
6000 plus Transfer From EMR	17,421	0	(17,421)				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(24,204)	(40,300)	(16,096)				
<u>220 Swimming Pool</u>							
1501 Solar Grant	(98)	0	98			0.0%	
Swimming Pool :- Income	(98)	0	98				0
4410 Repairs & Maintenance	10,952	10,000	(952)		(952)	109.5%	
4500 Contribution	55,000	55,000	0		0	100.0%	
4510 Liner	0	3,000	3,000		3,000	0.0%	(3,000)
4870 Msc.	1,693	5,300	3,607		3,607	31.9%	
Swimming Pool :- Indirect Expenditure	67,645	73,300	5,655	0	5,655	92.3%	(3,000)
Net Income over Expenditure	(67,743)	(73,300)	(5,557)				
6000 plus Transfer From EMR	(3,000)	0	3,000				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(70,743)	(73,300)	(2,557)				

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Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 31/03/2026

Month No: 12

Cost Centre Report

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual	Variance Annual	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
300 Public Toilets							
1085 Toilet Income	1,407	1,500	93			93.8%	
Public Toilets :- Income	1,407	1,500	93			93.8%	0
4410 Repairs & Maintenance	919	5,000	4,081		4,081	18.4%	
4600 Toilet Cleaning	13,613	14,000	387		387	97.2%	
4605 Toilet Utilities	2,344	2,800	456		456	83.7%	
4870 Msc.	205	1,000	795		795	20.5%	4,310
Public Toilets :- Indirect Expenditure	17,081	22,800	5,719	0	5,719	74.9%	4,310
Net Income over Expenditure	(15,674)	(21,300)	(5,626)				
6000 plus Transfer From EMR	4,310	0	(4,310)				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(11,364)	(21,300)	(9,936)				
310 Bus Shelter							
4410 Repairs & Maintenance	0	700	700		700	0.0%	
4655 Cleaning	1,130	1,100	(30)		(30)	102.7%	
Bus Shelter :- Indirect Expenditure	1,130	1,800	670	0	670	62.8%	0
Net Expenditure	(1,130)	(1,800)	(670)				
320 Street lighting							
4410 Repairs & Maintenance	3,808	9,000	5,192		5,192	42.3%	
4700 PWLB Loan	3,471	3,700	229		229	93.8%	
4705 Energy	9,558	10,000	442		442	95.6%	
4710 Upgrade to Lighting	11,080	35,000	23,920		23,920	31.7%	5,000
4870 Msc.	150	0	(150)		(150)	0.0%	
Street lighting :- Indirect Expenditure	28,067	57,700	29,633	0	29,633	48.6%	5,000
Net Expenditure	(28,067)	(57,700)	(29,633)				
6000 plus Transfer From EMR	5,000	0	(5,000)				
6001 less Transfer To EMR	5,000	0	(5,000)				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(28,067)	(57,700)	(29,633)				
330 Cemetery							
1300 Transfer of Exclusive Rights	70	0	(70)			0.0%	
1305 Interment fees	7,170	6,000	(1,170)			119.5%	
1310 Plot purchase	7,990	6,000	(1,990)			133.2%	
1315 Memorial fees	4,975	6,000	1,025			82.9%	

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Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 31/03/2026

Month No: 12

Cost Centre Report

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual	Variance Annual	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
1316 Income Gravedigging	5,520	2,000	(3,520)			276.0%	
Cemetery :- Income	25,725	20,000	(5,725)			128.6%	0
4410 Repairs & Maintenance	830	4,100	3,270		3,270	20.2%	
4435 Litter bin emptying	560	2,350	1,790		1,790	23.8%	
4750 Rates	140	100	(40)		(40)	140.5%	
4755 Cont. Whitchurch Rd	2,000	2,000	0		0	100.0%	
4760 Expenditure Gravedigging	5,835	2,000	(3,835)		(3,835)	291.8%	
4766 Extension works	0	2,000	2,000		2,000	0.0%	
4767 Hedge Removal and Fencing	0	13,000	13,000		13,000	0.0%	
4870 Msc.	60	0	(60)		(60)	0.0%	
Cemetery :- Indirect Expenditure	9,425	25,550	16,125	0	16,125	36.9%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	16,300	(5,550)	(21,850)				
<u>340 Allotments</u>							
1320 Misc income	30	0	(30)			0.0%	
1400 Allotment Rents	2,165	2,200	35			98.4%	
1401 Waiting list	45	0	(45)			0.0%	
1402 Allotment Deposits	355	0	(355)			0.0%	150
Allotments :- Income	2,595	2,200	(395)			118.0%	150
4410 Repairs & Maintenance	0	1,000	1,000		1,000	0.0%	
4800 Water by Meter	694	500	(194)		(194)	138.8%	
Allotments :- Indirect Expenditure	694	1,500	806	0	806	46.3%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	1,901	700	(1,201)				
6001 less Transfer To EMR	150	0	(150)				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	1,751	700	(1,051)				
<u>345 Markets</u>							
1405 Market rents	3,243	1,500	(1,743)			216.2%	1,260
1406 Litter Bin	235	0	(235)			0.0%	
1410 Market Licences	2,260	1,500	(760)			150.7%	
Markets :- Income	5,738	3,000	(2,738)			191.3%	1,260
4435 Litter bin emptying	1,353	0	(1,353)		(1,353)	0.0%	5,186
4886 Market Expenditure	1,234	1,000	(234)		(234)	123.4%	160
Markets :- Indirect Expenditure	2,587	1,000	(1,587)	0	(1,587)	258.7%	5,346
Net Income over Expenditure	3,151	2,000	(1,151)				
6000 plus Transfer From EMR	5,346	0	(5,346)				
6001 less Transfer To EMR	1,260	0	(1,260)				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	7,237	2,000	(5,237)				

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Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 31/03/2026

Month No: 12

Cost Centre Report

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual	Variance Annual	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
<u>350</u> <u>Miscellaneous</u>							
1090 Story of Wem	120	0	(120)			0.0%	
1320 Misc income	1,251	0	(1,251)			0.0%	
Miscellaneous :- Income	<u>1,371</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>(1,371)</u>				<u>0</u>
4850 Floral Planters	5,757	6,000	243		243	96.0%	
4855 CCTV Scheme	3,779	6,000	2,221		2,221	63.0%	
4860 Wem Town Hall	14,000	14,000	0		0	100.0%	
4871 Town Improvement Projects	2,752	5,000	2,248		2,248	55.0%	480
Miscellaneous :- Indirect Expenditure	<u>26,289</u>	<u>31,000</u>	<u>4,711</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4,711</u>	<u>84.8%</u>	<u>480</u>
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>(24,918)</u>	<u>(31,000)</u>	<u>(6,082)</u>				
6000 plus Transfer From EMR	480	0	(480)				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>(24,438)</u>	<u>(31,000)</u>	<u>(6,562)</u>				
Grand Totals:- Income	479,210	466,615	(12,595)			102.7%	
Expenditure	425,368	492,615	67,247	0	67,247	86.3%	
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>53,843</u>	<u>(26,000)</u>	<u>(79,843)</u>				
plus Transfer From EMR	40,496	0	(40,496)				
less Transfer To EMR	17,706	0	(17,706)				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>76,632</u>	<u>(26,000)</u>	<u>(102,632)</u>				

Wem Town Council 2025/2026
Income and Expenditure Account for Year Ended 31st March 2026

31st March 2025		31st March 2026
	Income Summary	
400,000	Precept	423,915
<u>400,000</u>	Sub Total	<u>423,915</u>
	Operating Income	
452	Staffing	154
21,559	Administration	15,032
2,443	Grants/ Town Promotion	2,971
572	Recreation	400
103,161	Swimming Pool	(98)
1,550	Public Toilets	1,407
22,960	Cemetery	25,725
2,123	Allotments	2,595
4,722	Markets	5,738
0	Miscellaneous	1,371
<u>559,541</u>	Total Income	<u>479,210</u>
	Running Costs	
146,001	Staffing	156,757
31,415	Administration	45,208
49	CIr Expenses	375
41,999	Grants/ Town Promotion	28,085
54,186	Recreation	42,025
174,516	Swimming Pool	67,645
20,912	Public Toilets	17,081
1,130	Bus Shelter	1,130
50,034	Street lighting	28,067
9,058	Cemetery	9,425
902	Allotments	694
665	Markets	2,587
26,352	Miscellaneous	26,289
<u>557,218</u>	Total Expenditure	<u>425,368</u>
	General Fund Analysis	
230,162	Opening Balance	240,944
559,541	Plus : Income for Year	479,210
<u>789,703</u>		<u>720,154</u>
557,218	Less : Expenditure for Year	425,368
<u>232,485</u>		<u>294,787</u>
(8,459)	Transfers TO / FROM Reserves	(20,790)
<u>240,944</u>	Closing Balance	<u>315,577</u>

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2025/26

We acknowledge as the members of:

ENTER Wem Town Council RITY

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2026, that:

	Agreed		'Yes' means that this authority:
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
3. We have assured ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓		has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A
			✓
10. We have put in place arrangements for the effective IT and data management in accordance with proper practices during the year under review.	✓		has made suitable arrangements for its IT and data management and has complied with proper practices in doing so.

*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

DD/MM/YYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

www.wem.gov.uk ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2025/26 for

Wem Town Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2025 £	31 March 2026 £	
			<i>Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.</i>
1. Balances brought forward	432,167	434,490	<i>Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.</i>
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	400,000	423,915	<i>Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.</i>
3. (+) Total other receipts	159,541	55,295	<i>Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.</i>
4. (-) Staff costs	141,052	152,117	<i>Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.</i>
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	3,616	3,471	<i>Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).</i>
6. (-) All other payments	412,550	269,779	<i>Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).</i>
7. (=) Balances carried forward	434,490	488,333	<i>Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).</i>
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	452,030	487,914	<i>The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.</i>
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	1,736,645	1,758,332	<i>The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.</i>
10. Total borrowings	10,500	7,500	<i>The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).</i>

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	
11 Do the figures in the accounting statements above exclude any trust transactions?	✓		<i>For guidance refer to the Practitioners' Guide sections 2.31 to 2.33.</i>

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2026 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval.

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

DD/MM/YYYY

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Explanation of variances – pro forma

Name of smaller authority: [REDACTED]
 County area (local councils and parish meetings only): [REDACTED]

Insert figures from Section 2 of the AGAR in all Blue highlighted boxes

Next, please provide full explanations, including numerical values, for the following that will be flagged in the green boxes where relevant:

- variances of more than 15% between totals for individual boxes (except variances of less than £200);
- variances of £100,000 or more require explanation regardless of the % variation year on year;
- **New from 2025/26 onwards:** variances of £500,000 or more in Box 3 require explanation regardless of the % variation year on year for smaller authorities with income and/or expenditure exceeding £6,500,000

	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	Variance £	Variance %	Explanation Required?	Automatic responses trigger below based on figures input, DO NOT OVERWRITE THESE BOXES	Explanation from smaller authority (must include narrative and supporting figures)
1 Balances Brought Forward	432,167	434,490				Explanation of % variance from PY opening balance not required - Balance brought forward agrees	
2 Precept or Rates and Levies	400,000	423,915	23,915	5.98%	NO		
3 Total Other Receipts	159,541	55,295	-104,246	65.34%	YES		In 2026-27 Christmas Festival income increased by £1047 Neighbourhood fund income reduced by £1006 Bank Interest reduced by £5540 Toilet income reduced by £136 Stock in come increased by £120 Cemetery Income increased by £2795 Misc income increased by £453 Insurance claims reduced by £551 Allotment income increased by £442 Markets income increased by £1016 Grants income reduced by £102,859 (one off grant for £103K for solar project received in previous year) Training income reduced by £27
4 Staff Costs	141,052	152,117	11,065	7.84%	NO		
5 Loan Interest/Capital Repayment	3,616	3,471	-145	4.01%	NO		
6 All Other Payments	412,550	269,779	-142,771	34.61%	YES		Compared to 2024-25: Staff non-salary costs reduced by £308 Councillor expenses increased by £326 Administration costs increased by £13,342 (Main changes = £6.4 k for new IT equipment and support, £3.38k on HR and H&S support and £3.68k for elections, other cost changes were insignificant) Grants and events costs reduced by £13,462 (£11.8k heads up grant no longer given out, spending on event infrastructure reduced) Recreation costs reduced by £12,162 (£22k spent on play equipment in 24-25, only £12k in 25-26. No spending on recreation ground toilets, or lamp column painting in 25-26) Swimming Pool costs reduced by £106,870 (in 24-25 solar panels were installed at a cost of £103441. Repair costs in 25-26 were down by £1.8k) Toilet costs reduced by £3831 due to reprocurment of the cleaning contract. Street lighting costs reduced by £21,822 because the column replacement programme was completed but electrical connections have not been completed or invoiced) Cemetery Costs increased by £367 due to increases in gravedigging costs, business rates and repairs) Allotment costs reduced by £208 due to reduced maintenance required Market Costs increased by £1922 due to investment in new infrastructure Miscellaneous costs reduced by £64
7 Balances Carried Forward	434,490	488,333				VARIANCE EXPLANATION NOT REQUIRED	
8 Total Cash and Short Term Investments	452,030	487,914				VARIANCE EXPLANATION NOT REQUIRED	
9 Total Fixed Assets plus Other Long Term Investments and	1,736,645	1,758,332	21,687	1.25%	NO		
10 Total Borrowings	10,500	7,500	-3,000	28.57%	YES		Balance has reduced because £3000 was repaid in 25-26

Rounding errors of up to £2 are tolerable

Variances of £200 or less are tolerable

CONFIRMATION OF THE DATES OF THE PERIOD FOR THE EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS

This form is only for use by smaller authorities subject to a review and should not be published on your website

Please submit this form to PKF Littlejohn LLP with the AGAR Form 3 and other requested documentation

Name of smaller authority: **Wem Town Council**

County Area (local councils and parish meetings only): **Shropshire**

On behalf of the smaller authority, I confirm that the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights are as follows:

Commencing on _____ **Wednesday 3 June 2026**

and ending on _____ **Tuesday 14 July 2026**

Signed:



Role: RFO

Review of Earmarked Reserves

Background

The Council currently holds £219,932 in earmarked reserves, as detailed below. A review of underspent budgets from 2025-26 has resulted in a recommendation to move additional funding into reserves.

Account	Opening Balance	Net Transfers	Closing Balance
320 EMR - Bulmer Cott Fund	28,511.36		28,511.36
321 EMR - Wilmot Meadow S106	34,908.61		34,908.61
322 EMR - Digitisation of records	1,000.00		1,000.00
323 EMR - Service Support	38,491.26	0.00	38,491.26
324 EMR - Street Lighting Column r	0.00	29,633.00	29,633.00
325 EMR Neighbourhood Fund	6,610.24	768.11	7,378.35
326 EMR Elections	7,364.69		7,364.69
327 EMR Pensions	7,572.00		7,572.00
328 EMR Play equipment	9,500.00		9,500.00
329 EMR recreation Ground toilets	6,600.51		6,600.51
330 EMR Swimming Pool Liner	3,000.00		3,000.00
331 EMR Highways Projects	1,886.00		1,886.00
332 EMR Cemetery Maintenance	0.00	7,725.00	7,725.00
333 EMR Cemetery Extension	10,000.00	2,000.00	12,000.00
334 EMR Public Toilets	690.00		690.00
335 EMR Christmas Festival	1,931.89	100.00	2,031.89
336 EMR Town Improvements	0.00	79.63	79.63
337 EMR Christmas Lights	2,952.41		2,952.41
338 EMR Skate Park	2,900.00	2,000.00	4,900.00
341 EMR Christmas Lights Comp	600.00		600.00
342 EMR Christmas Fest Deposits	100.00	-100.00	0.00
343 EMR WEF	1,597.50		1,597.50
345 EMR Allotment Deposits	250.00	50.00	300.00
347 EMR Jubilee Square Tree	79.63	-79.63	0.00
348 EMR Mayoral Chain	2,325.00		2,325.00
349 EMR Event Infrastructure	1,120.01		1,120.01
350 EMR Staffing Projects	665.00		665.00
351 EMR Website Upgrade	1,000.00		1,000.00
352 EMR Market Infrastructure	1,100.00		1,100.00
353 EMR Pendulum Swing	0.00	5,000.00	5,000.00
	172,756.11	47,176.11	219,932.22

Completed Transfers

The following transfers to Earmarked reserves have been completed.

	Amount	From 2025-26	To EMR
F&CG Dec 2025	7,725	Cemetery Income above £18k	Cemetery Maintenance
	5,000	General Reserve	Pendulum Swing
Budget for EMR	2,000	Cemetery Extension Budget	Cemetery Extension
	2,000	Skate Park Budget	Skate Park
Rationalisation	100	Christmas deposits	Christmas Festival
	79.63	Jubilee Square Tree EMR	Town Improvements
Project costs	29,633	Column Replacement*	Lighting

*Budget only underspent because the electrical connections will be carried out in 2026-27.

Proposed Transfers

25-26 Budget	Amount	To EMR Budget	New EMR Balance
Swimming Pool	3,607	Bulmer Cottage	32,118.36
Toilet Repairs	4,000	Public Toilets	4,690
Town Improvements	2,000	Town Improvements	2,079.63
Office Hire	4,000	Office	4,000
Cemetery Extension	2000	Cemetery Extension	

Decision Required

To approve the transfers as outlined above.

Earmarked Reserves

Account	Opening Balance	Net Transfers	Closing Balance
320 EMR - Bulmer Cott Fund	28,511.36		28,511.36
321 EMR - Wilmot Meadow S106	34,908.61		34,908.61
322 EMR - Digitisation of records	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
323 EMR - Transformation	35,741.26	2,750.00	38,491.26
325 EMR Neighbourhood Fund	31,216.74	-24,606.50	6,610.24
326 EMR Elections	10,024.00	-2,659.31	7,364.69
327 EMR Pensions	7,572.00		7,572.00
328 EMR Play equipment	7,500.00	2,000.00	9,500.00
329 EMR recreation Ground toilets	6,600.51		6,600.51
330 EMR Swimming Pool Liner	0.00	3,000.00	3,000.00
331 EMR Highways Projects	1,886.00		1,886.00
332 EMR Heads Up	1,250.00	-1,250.00	0.00
333 EMR Cemetery Extension	10,000.00		10,000.00
334 EMR Public Toilets	5,000.00	-4,310.00	690.00
335 EMR Christmas Festival	265.00	1,666.89	1,931.89
336 EMR Poppy	180.00	-180.00	0.00
337 EMR Christmas Lights	4,773.05	-1,820.64	2,952.41
338 EMR Skate Park	2,900.00	0.00	2,900.00
339 EMR Office	1,500.00	-1,500.00	0.00
341 EMR Christmas Lights Comp	0.00	600.00	600.00
342 EMR Christmas Fest Deposits	100.00	0.00	100.00
343 EMR WEF	1,597.50		1,597.50
345 EMR Allotment Deposits	100.00	150.00	250.00
347 EMR Jubilee Square Tree	600.00	-520.37	79.63
348 EMR Mayoral Chain	1,320.00	1,005.00	2,325.00
349 EMR Event Infrastructure	0.00	1,120.01	1,120.01
350 EMR Staffing Projects	0.00	665.00	665.00
351 EMR Website Upgrade	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
352 EMR Market Infrastructure	0.00	1,100.00	1,100.00
	193,546.03	-20,789.92	172,756.11

WEM TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Originally adopted 29.9.16.

Reviewed and amended 2026

New section 19 added. No other changes.

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1. General

- 1.1. These Financial Regulations govern the financial management of the council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the council. They are one of the council's governing documents and shall be observed in conjunction with the council's Standing Orders.
- 1.2. Councillors are expected to follow these regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow these regulations brings the office of councillor into disrepute.
- 1.3. Wilful breach of these regulations by an employee may result in disciplinary proceedings.
- 1.4. In these Financial Regulations:
 - 'Accounts and Audit Regulations' means the regulations issued under Sections 32, 43(2) and 46 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and then in force, unless otherwise specified.
 - "Approve" refers to an online action, allowing an electronic transaction to take place.
 - "Authorise" refers to a decision by the council, or a committee or an officer, to allow something to happen.
 - 'Proper practices' means those set out in *The Practitioners' Guide*
 - *Practitioners' Guide* refers to the guide issued by the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) and published by NALC in England or Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in Wales – A Practitioners Guide jointly published by One Voice Wales and the Society of Local Council Clerks in Wales.
 - 'Must' and **bold text** refer to a statutory obligation the council cannot change.
 - 'Shall' refers to a non-statutory instruction by the council to its members and staff.
- 1.5. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office, appointed by the council. The RFO;
 - acts under the policy direction of the council;
 - administers the council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices;
 - determines on behalf of the council its accounting records and control systems;
 - ensures the accounting control systems are observed;
 - ensures the accounting records are kept up to date;
 - seeks economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of council resources; and
 - produces financial management information as required by the council.

1.6. **The council must not delegate any decision regarding:**

- **setting the final budget or the precept (council tax requirement);**
- **the outcome of a review of the effectiveness of its internal controls**
- **approving accounting statements;**
- **approving an annual governance statement;**
- **borrowing;**
- **declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and**
- **addressing recommendations from the internal or external auditors**

1.7. In addition, the council shall:

- determine and regularly review the bank mandate for all council bank accounts;
- authorise any grant or single commitment in excess of £5000; and

2. Risk management and internal control

2.1. **The council must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control, which delivers effective financial, operational and risk management.**

2.2. The Clerk with the RFO shall prepare, for approval by the council, a risk management policy covering all activities of the council. This policy and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.

2.3. When considering any new activity, the Clerk with the RFO shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration by the council.

2.4. **At least once a year, the council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control, before approving the Annual Governance Statement.**

2.5. **The accounting control systems determined by the RFO must include measures to:**

- **ensure that risk is appropriately managed;**
- **ensure the prompt, accurate recording of financial transactions;**
- **prevent and detect inaccuracy or fraud; and**
- **allow the reconstitution of any lost records;**
- **identify the duties of officers dealing with transactions and**
- **ensure division of responsibilities.**

2.6. At least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, the Mayor or other such person shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign and date the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of this. This activity,

including any exceptions, shall be reported to and noted by the council and Finance & Corporate Governance Committee.

- 2.7. Regular back-up copies shall be made of the records on any council computer and stored either online or in a separate location from the computer. The council shall put measures in place to ensure that the ability to access any council computer is not lost if an employee leaves or is incapacitated for any reason.

3. Accounts and audit

- 3.1. All accounting procedures and financial records of the council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.2. **The accounting records determined by the RFO must be sufficient to explain the council's transactions and to disclose its financial position with reasonable accuracy at any time. In particular, they must contain:**
 - **day-to-day entries of all sums of money received and expended by the council and the matters to which they relate;**
 - **a record of the assets and liabilities of the council;**
- 3.3. The accounting records shall be designed to facilitate the efficient preparation of the accounting statements in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.
- 3.4. The RFO shall complete and certify the annual Accounting Statements of the council contained in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with proper practices, as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year. Having certified the Accounting Statements, the RFO shall submit them (with any related documents) to the council, within the timescales required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.5. **The council must ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and internal control system in accordance with proper practices.**
- 3.6. **Any officer or member of the council must make available such documents and records as the internal or external auditor consider necessary for the purpose of the audit** and shall, as directed by the council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the council considers necessary.
- 3.7. The internal auditor shall be appointed by the council and shall carry out their work to evaluate the effectiveness of the council's risk management, control and governance processes in accordance with proper practices specified in the Practitioners' Guide.
- 3.8. The council shall ensure that the internal auditor:
 - is competent and independent of the financial operations of the council;
 - reports to council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one written report during each financial year;

- can demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
 - has no involvement in the management or control of the council
- 3.9. Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:
- perform any operational duties for the council;
 - initiate or approve accounting transactions;
 - provide financial, legal or other advice including in relation to any future transactions; or
 - direct the activities of any council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.
- 3.10. For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as described in The Practitioners Guide.
- 3.11. The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the accounts, including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and documents required by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.12. The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors.

4. Budget and precept

- 4.1. **Before setting a precept, the council must calculate its council tax requirement for each financial year by preparing and approving a budget, in accordance with The Local Government Finance Act 1992 or succeeding legislation.**
- 4.2. Budgets for salaries and wages, including employer contributions shall be reviewed by the council at least annually between November and January for the following financial year and the final version shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Clerk and the Mayor or relevant committee.
- 4.3. No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the amount provided in the revenue budget for that class of expenditure other than by resolution of the council, or duly delegated committee. During the budget year and with the approval of council having considered fully the implications for public services, unspent and available amounts may be moved to other budget headings or to an earmarked reserve as appropriate ('virement').
- 4.4. No later than 14th January each year, the RFO shall prepare a draft budget with detailed estimates of all receipts and payments for the following financial year along

with a forecast for the following three financial years, taking account of the lifespan of assets and cost implications of repair or replacement.

- 4.5. Unspent budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year. Unspent funds for partially completed projects may only be carried forward (by placing them in an earmarked reserve) with the formal approval of the full council.
- 4.6. Each committee (if any) shall review its draft budget and submit any proposed amendments to the council not later than the end of December each year.
- 4.7. The draft budget and three-year forecast, including any recommendations for the use or accumulation of reserves, shall be considered by the finance & corporate governance committee and a recommendation made to the council no later than 24th January each year.
- 4.8. Having considered the proposed budget and three-year forecast, the council shall determine its council tax England requirement by setting a budget. The council shall set a precept for this amount no later than the end of January for the ensuing financial year.
- 4.9. The RFO shall regularly provide the council with a statement of receipts and payments to date under each head of the budgets, comparing actual expenditure to the appropriate date against that planned as shown in the budget. These statements are to be prepared at least at the end of each financial quarter and shall show explanations of material variances. For this purpose "material" shall be in excess of £100 or 15% of the budget.
- 4.10. **Any member with council tax unpaid for more than two months is prohibited from voting on the budget or precept by Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and must and must disclose at the start of the meeting that Section 106 applies to them.**
- 4.11. The RFO shall **issue the precept to the billing authority no later than the end of January** and supply each member with a copy of the agreed annual budget.
- 4.12. The agreed budget provides a basis for monitoring progress during the year by comparing actual spending and income against what was planned.
- 4.13. Any addition to, or withdrawal from, any earmarked reserve shall be agreed by the council or relevant committee.

5. Procurement

- 5.1. **Members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times.** Any officer procuring goods, services or works should ensure, as far as practicable, that the best available terms are obtained, usually by obtaining prices from several suppliers.
- 5.2. The RFO should verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before it is made and in the case of new or infrequent purchases, should ensure that the legal power being used is reported to the meeting at which the order is authorised and also recorded in the minutes.

- 5.3. Every contract shall comply with these the council's Standing Orders and these Financial Regulations and no exceptions shall be made, except in an emergency.
- 5.4. **For a contract for the supply of goods, services or works where the estimated value will exceed the thresholds set by Parliament, the full requirements of The Procurement Act 2023 and The Procurement Regulations 2024 or any superseding legislation (“the Legislation”), must be followed in respect of the tendering, award and notification of that contract.**
- 5.5. Where the estimated value is below the Government threshold, the council shall (with the exception of items listed in paragraph 6.12) obtain prices as follows:
- 5.6. For contracts estimated to exceed £60,000 including VAT, the Clerk shall advertise an open invitation for tenders in compliance with any relevant provisions of the Legislation. Tenders shall be invited in accordance with Appendix 1.
- 5.7. **For contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation regarding the publication of invitations and notices.**
- 5.8. For contracts greater than £3,000 excluding VAT the Clerk or RFO shall seek at least 3 fixed-price quotes;
- 5.9. Where the value is between £500 and £3,000 excluding VAT, the Clerk or RFO shall try to obtain 3 estimates which might include evidence of online prices, or recent prices from regular suppliers.
- 5.10. For smaller purchases, the clerk shall seek to achieve value for money.
- 5.11. **Contracts must not be split to avoid compliance with these rules.**
- 5.12. The requirement to obtain competitive prices in these regulations need not apply to contracts that relate to items (i) to (iv) below:
 - i. specialist services, such as legal professionals acting in disputes;
 - ii. repairs to, or parts for, existing machinery or equipment;
 - iii. works, goods or services that constitute an extension of an existing contract;
 - iv. goods or services that are only available from one supplier or are sold at a fixed price.
- 5.13. When applications are made to waive this financial regulation to enable a price to be negotiated without competition, the reason should be set out in a recommendation to the council or relevant committee. Avoidance of competition is not a valid reason.
- 5.14. The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
- 5.15. Individual purchases within an agreed budget for that type of expenditure may be authorised by:
 - the Clerk, under delegated authority, for any items below ~~£500~~ £1,000 excluding VAT.

- the Clerk, in consultation with the Mayor or Committee Chair, for any items below £3,500 excluding VAT.
- a duly delegated committee of the council for all items of expenditure within their delegated budgets for items under £3,500 excluding VAT
- in respect of grants, a duly authorised committee within any limits set by council and in accordance with any policy statement agreed by the council.
- the council for all items over £3,500.

Such authorisation must be supported by a minute (in the case of council or committee decisions) or other auditable evidence trail.

- 5.16. No individual member, or informal group of members may issue an official order or make any contract on behalf of the council.
- 5.17. No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the budget for that type of expenditure other than by resolution of the council or a duly delegated committee acting within its Terms of Reference except in an emergency.
- 5.18. In cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises, following consultation with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, the clerk may authorise expenditure of up to £5000 excluding VAT on repair, replacement or other work that in their judgement is necessary, whether or not there is any budget for such expenditure. The Clerk shall report such action to the council as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 5.19. No expenditure shall be authorised, no contract entered into or tender accepted in relation to any major project, unless the council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and that where a loan is required, Government borrowing approval has been obtained first.
- 5.20. An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services above £250 excluding VAT unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained, along with evidence of receipt of goods.
- 5.21. Any ordering system can be misused and access to them shall be controlled by the RFO.

6. Banking and payments

- 6.1. The council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and authorised by the council; banking arrangements shall not be delegated to a committee. The council has resolved to bank with Unity Trust Bank, and Nationwide Bank. The arrangements shall be reviewed annually for security and efficiency.
- 6.2. The council must have safe and efficient arrangements for making payments, to safeguard against the possibility of fraud or error. More than one person should be involved in any payment, for example by dual online authorisation or dual cheque signing. Even where a purchase has been authorised, the payment must also be

authorised and only authorised payments shall be approved or signed to allow the funds to leave the council's bank.

- 6.3. All invoices for payment should be examined for arithmetical accuracy, analysed to the appropriate expenditure heading and verified to confirm that the work, goods or services were received, checked and represent expenditure previously authorised by the council before being certified by the RFO. Where the certification of invoices is done as a batch, this shall include a statement by the RFO that all invoices listed have been 'examined, verified and certified' by the RFO.
- 6.4. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of employment) may be summarised to avoid disclosing any personal information.
- 6.5. All payments shall be made by online banking/cheque, in accordance with a resolution of the council or a delegated decision by an officer, unless the council resolves to use a different payment method.
- 6.6. The Clerk shall have delegated authority to authorise payments only in the following circumstances:
 - i. any payments of up to £500 including VAT, within an agreed budget, using the credit card.
 - ii. Fund transfers within the councils banking arrangements up to the sum of £50,000, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council or finance and corporate governance committee.
- 6.7. The RFO shall present a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the agenda for the meeting, together with the relevant invoices, to the council or Finance & Corporate Governance committee. The council or committee shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself, shall authorise payment by resolution. A detailed list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the minutes of that meeting.

7. Electronic payments

- 7.1. Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the RFO shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The bank mandate agreed by the council shall identify at least two councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts and a minimum of two people will be involved in any online approval process.
- 7.2. All authorised signatories shall have access to view the council's bank accounts online.
- 7.3. No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the council or its banking, to anyone not authorised in writing by the council or a duly delegated committee.

- 7.4. The Service Administrator shall set up all items due for payment online. A list of payments for approval, together with copies of the relevant invoices, shall be sent by email to all authorised signatories.
- 7.5. In the prolonged absence of the Service Administrator the clerk shall set up any payments due before the return of the Service Administrator.
- 7.6. Two councillors who are authorised signatories shall check the payment details against the invoices before approving each payment using the online banking system.
- 7.7. Evidence shall be retained showing which members approved the payment online and an electronic printout of the transaction confirming that the payment has been made shall be saved with electronic copies of invoices for audit purposes.
- 7.8. With the approval of the council in each case, regular payments (such as gas, electricity, telephone, broadband, water, National Non-Domestic Rates, refuse collection, pension contributions and HMRC payments) may be made by variable direct debit, provided that the instructions are signed/approved online by two authorised members. The approval of the use of each variable direct debit shall be reviewed by the council annually.
- 7.9. Payment may be made by BACS or CHAPS by resolution of the council provided that each payment is approved online by two authorised bank signatories, evidence is retained, and any payments are reported to the council at the next meeting. The approval of the use of BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.
- 7.10. If thought appropriate by the council, regular payments of fixed sums may be made by banker's standing order, provided that the instructions are signed or approved online by two members, evidence of this is retained and any payments are reported to council when made. The approval of the use of a banker's standing order shall be reviewed by the council at least every two years.
- 7.11. Account details for suppliers may only be changed upon written notification by the supplier verified by the Clerk and the RFO. This is a potential area for fraud and the individuals involved should ensure that any change is genuine. Data held should be checked with suppliers every two years.
- 7.12. Members and officers shall ensure that any computer used for the council's financial business has adequate security, with anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software installed and regularly updated.
- 7.13. Remembered password facilities, other than secure password stores requiring separate identity verification, should not be used on any computer used for council banking.

8. Cheque payments

- 8.1. Cheques or orders for payment in accordance with a resolution or delegated decision shall be signed by two members.

- 8.2. A signatory having a family or business relationship with the beneficiary of a payment shall not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to that payment.
- 8.3. To indicate agreement of the details on the cheque with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall also initial the cheque counterfoil and invoice.
- 8.4. Cheques or orders for payment shall not normally be presented for signature other than at, or immediately before or after a council or committee meeting. Any signatures obtained away from council meetings shall be reported to the council or Finance & Corporate Governance Committee at the next convenient meeting.

9. Payment cards

- 9.1. Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £500 unless authorised by council or Finance & Corporate Governance committee in writing before any order is placed.
- 9.2. A pre-paid debit card may be issued to employees with varying limits. These limits will be set by the council. Transactions and purchases made will be reported to the council and authority for topping-up shall be at the discretion of the council.
- 9.3. Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the council will be specifically restricted to use by the Clerk (credit card and trade card) and Groundskeeper (trade card only) and any balance shall be paid in full each month.
- 9.4. Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used except for expenses of up to £250 including VAT, incurred in accordance with council policy.

10. Petty Cash

- 10.1. The RFO shall maintain a petty cash float of £75 and may provide petty cash to officers for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses.
 - a) Vouchers for payments made from petty cash shall be kept, along with receipts to substantiate every payment.
 - b) Cash income received must not be paid into the petty cash float but must be separately banked, as provided elsewhere in these regulations.
 - c) Payments to maintain the petty cash float shall be shown separately on any schedule of payments presented for approval.

11. Payment of salaries and allowances

- 11.1. **As an employer, the council must make arrangements to comply with the statutory requirements of PAYE legislation.**
- 11.2. **Councillors' allowances (where paid) are also liable to deduction of tax under PAYE rules and must be taxed correctly before payment.**
- 11.3. Salary rates shall be agreed by the council, or a duly delegated committee. No changes shall be made to any employee's gross pay, emoluments, or terms and

conditions of employment without the prior consent of the council or relevant committee.

- 11.4. Payment of salaries shall be made, after deduction of tax, national insurance, pension contributions and any similar statutory or discretionary deductions, on the dates stipulated in employment contracts.
- 11.5. Deductions from salary shall be paid to the relevant bodies within the required timescales, provided that each payment is reported, as set out in these regulations above.
- 11.6. Each payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a payroll control account or other separate confidential record, with the total of such payments each calendar month reported in the cashbook. Payroll reports will be reviewed by the Council to ensure that the correct payments have been made.
- 11.7. Any termination payments shall be supported by a report to the council, setting out a clear business case. Termination payments shall only be authorised by the full council.
- 11.8. Before employing interim staff, the council must consider a full business case.

12. Loans and investments

- 12.1. Any application for Government approval to borrow money and subsequent arrangements for a loan must be authorised by the full council and recorded in the minutes. All borrowing shall be in the name of the council, after obtaining any necessary approval.
- 12.2. Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the Secretary of State (such as Hire Purchase, Leasing of tangible assets or loans to be repaid within the financial year) must be authorised by the full council, following a written report on the value for money of the proposed transaction.
- 12.3. The council shall consider the requirement for an Investment Strategy and Policy in accordance with Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments, which must be written in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.
- 12.4. All investment of money under the control of the council shall be in the name of the council.
- 12.5. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.
- 12.6. Payments in respect of short term or long-term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, shall be made in accordance with these regulations.

13. Income

- 13.1. The collection of all sums due to the council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.
- 13.2. The council will review all fees and charges for work done, services provided, or goods sold at least annually as part of the budget-setting process, following a report of the Clerk. The RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all amounts due to the council.
- 13.3. Any sums found to be irrecoverable, and any bad debts shall be reported to the council by the RFO and shall be written off in the year. The council's approval shall be shown in the accounting records.
- 13.4. All sums received on behalf of the council shall be deposited intact with the council's bankers, with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary. The origin of each receipt shall clearly be recorded on the paying-in slip or other record.
- 13.5. Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the council.
- 13.6. The RFO shall ensure that VAT is correctly recorded in the council's accounting software and that any VAT Return required is submitted from the software by the due date.
- 13.7. Where significant sums of cash are regularly received by the council, the RFO shall ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control record such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken for the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.
- 13.8. Any income that is the property of a charitable trust shall be paid into a charitable bank account. Instructions for the payment of funds due from the charitable trust to the council (to meet expenditure already incurred by the authority) will be given by the Managing Trustees of the charity meeting separately from any council meeting.

14. Payments under contract for building/other construction works

- 14.1. Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments, which shall be made within the time specified in the contract based on signed certificates from the architect or other consultant engaged to supervise the works.
- 14.2. Any variation of, addition to, or omission from a contract must be authorised by the Clerk to the contractor in writing, with the council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the contract sum by 5% or more, or likely to exceed the budget available.

15. Stores and equipment

- 15.1. The officer in charge of each section shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment in that section.

- 15.2. Delivery notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.
- 15.3. Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.
- 15.4. The RFO shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores, at least annually.

16. Assets, properties and estates

- 16.1. The Clerk shall make arrangements for the safe custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the council.
- 16.2. The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date, with a record of all properties held by the council, their location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held, in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 16.3. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.
- 16.4. No interest in land shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law. In each case a written report shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate where required by law).

No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law, except where the estimated value of any one item does not exceed £500. In each case a written report shall be provided to council with a full business case.

17. Insurance

- 17.1. The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the council and the property and risks covered, reviewing these annually before the renewal date in conjunction with the council's review of risk management.
- 17.2. The Clerk shall give prompt notification to the RFO of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.
- 17.3. The RFO shall be notified of any loss, liability, damage or event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to the council at the next available meeting. The RFO shall negotiate all claims on the council's insurers in consultation with the Clerk.

17.4. All appropriate members and employees of the council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined annually by the council, or duly delegated committee.

18. Charities

18.1. Where the council is sole managing trustee of a charitable body the Clerk and RFO shall ensure that separate accounts are kept of the funds held on charitable trusts and separate financial reports made in such form as shall be appropriate, in accordance with Charity Law and legislation, or as determined by the Charity Commission. The Clerk and RFO shall arrange for any audit or independent examination as may be required by Charity Law or any Governing Document.

19. Mayoral Fund Raising

19.1. The Clerk and RFO shall ensure that separate accounts are kept of the funds raised by the Mayor. These funds will be managed through a Unity Trust Bank account set up for that purpose and will be reported to Full Council and made public annually.

20. Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations

20.1. The council shall review these Financial Regulations annually and following any change of clerk or RFO. The Clerk shall monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and advise the council of any need to amend these Financial Regulations.

20.2. The council may, by resolution duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations, provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been presented to all members. Suspension does not disapply any legislation or permit the council to act unlawfully.

20.3. The council may temporarily amend these Financial Regulations by a duly notified resolution, to cope with periods of absence, local government reorganisation, national restrictions or other exceptional circumstances.

Appendix 1 - Tender process

- 1) Any invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases.
- 2) The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post, unless an electronic tendering process has been agreed by the council.
- 3) Where a postal process is used, each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract. All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least one member of council.
- 4) Where an electronic tendering process is used, the council shall use a specific email address that will be monitored to ensure that nobody accesses any tender before the expiry of the deadline for submission.
- 5) Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Order 18c and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
- 6) Where the council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the council requires further pricing, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision-making process was being undertaken.

Process for Managing the Mayor's Fundraising Account

Income

Cheques or cash are passed to the RFO for banking as soon as possible after receipt.

Mayor has account details for direct credits into the account.

Payments Process

1. Mayor emails RFO / Clerk requesting payment to be made and providing the following:
 - Name of payee
 - Sort Code
 - Account Number
 - Brief Reason for payment
 - Invoices or receipts if available.
2. The RFO / Clerk will set up the payment on internet banking and forward the mayor's email to the signatories asking for the payment to be approved.
3. Invoices or receipts will be scanned and stored. Originals will not be retained.

NB The online payment does not need to be approved by full council as this is a stand-alone bank account specifically for the Mayor's Fundraising monies.

Bank Statements

Statements will be downloaded quarterly by the RFO and shared with the Clerk and Mayor.

Transparency

The monies going through the fundraising account are not the Council's and do not form part of the Council's AGAR return. However, they will be recorded on the Rialtas finance system and will show in the year-end report. Additionally, a summary of transactions and the account balance will be reported to Full Council each May and will be recorded in the minutes.