

FINANCE & HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE**14th October 2026 at 6.30pm in the Town Hall, Windmill Lane, Northam.**

Present: Cllrs Edwards, Hodson (Chair), Hames, Himan, Newman-McKie (Mayor), Leather, Tait and Whittaker.

In attendance: Guy Langton (Town Clerk & RFO), Cllr Bach (non-committee member).

2610/348 To receive and approve apologies for absence, in accordance with Local Government Act 1972 s85(1)

All members were present.

2610/349 Chair's announcements

The Chair voiced her concern about the lack of positive news about the North Devon Hospital maternity services and the associated fears over the future of other services at the

2610/350 To receive any dispensations and disclosable pecuniary or other interests

Members were reminded that all interests must be declared prior to the item being discussed.

2610/351 To agree the agenda as published.

It was **resolved** to agree the agenda as published.

Proposed Cllr Hodson, Seconded Cllr Whittaker (all in favour)

2610/352 To consider the minutes of the Finance meeting held on the 9th September 2026 as a true and correct record

It was **resolved** to accept the minutes as a true and correct record, which were signed by the Chair.

Proposed: Cllr Hames, Seconded: Cllr Hodson (majority in favour, three abstention (not present at the meeting))

2610/353 Public Participation

There were no members of the public present.

2610/354 To receive an update on the actions

The updates on the actions were received as follows:

Action	Update
1	<p>Arrange digger training for one member of staff</p> <p>Arrangements had been made at a training centre in north Devon, CTA Centre (Yarnscombe), with the training to be carried out week commencing 26th October 2026 (combined with Chptr 8 for a colleague)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ONGOING</p>
2	<p>Reference the carpark adjacent to the Seagate Hotel - Advise the lease holder (Young & Co Brewery plc) of the Council's decision to extend the end date by three months, in line with paragraph 21.5.</p> <p>Ask the lease holder what sort of events and how many would be held on the car park, should permission be granted.</p> <p>A solicitor has been instructed contacted to review and draft the lease (6 years, starting at £7,000/year, subject to annual indexation, as defined).</p> <p>Should the revised lease be materially different to the current one, the lease may need to return to this committee or Full Council.</p> <p>The council has not granted permission for events on the car park.</p> <p>On the agenda - COMPLETE</p>

Chair's initials

Action		Update
3	Reference the carpark adjacent to the Seagate Hotel - Seek confirmation of the permission given for the existing constructions on the land (the patio and associated works, and the gig shed).	The District Council's Surveyor has advised that she has instructed that Council's legal team to draw up the retrospective permission documents. These had not been received at the time of writing. ONGOING
4	Vehicle tracking	The matter is being researched by the Parks & Buildings Manager, alternatives will be considered as part of research into mobile phones for maintenance staff. COMPLETE
5	Prepare an outline of the process by which the Council issues Northam Burrows Manor Passes on behalf of the Northam Burrows Charity.	The work has been delayed by the absence of staff. ONGOING
6	Respond to the Internal Auditor's observations	Annotated report sent 10 th July 2026. COMPLETE
7	Draft a report detailing the Burrough Farm Allotment Association's account reports for a future meeting.	The accounts would be circulated to members between meetings. ONGOING
8	Apply annual cost of living rise for all staff.	Applied to all staff salaries. COMPLETE

2610/355 To consider the Clerk's report for July 2026, the budget net position and approve, by resolution, the payments as listed

On 30th September 2026 the Council's balances were:

Account	Balance	Interest	Notes
Petty Cash	£56.62	zero	Financial Regulations expect the balance to be maintained at approximately £100
Hinkley & Rugby Building Society	£275,000	1.65%	Holding account for general expenditure and £50,000 of the General Reserve
Mayor's Charitable Fundraising	£2,805.00	1.06%	Mayor's civic dinner and other fundraising
May Fair	£5,250.35	1.06%	Funds for deposits and other spending leading up to the next May Fair
Cambridge & Counties Bank (31-day)	£99,177.72	2.72%	General Reserves
Nationwide (Business 95-day saver)	£98,938.78	3.20%	Earmarked Reserves (as per agreed budget: parks, defibrillators, LCWIP, war memorial cleaning, skate park and pavilion renovation reserve)
Cambridge Building Society	£10,792.20	1.55%	Tennis Reserves
Coop Bank (current account)	£257,674.93	zero	General expenditure

Total cash in hand (SCRIBE) £749,695.60

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Petty Cash: The council spent £45.38 of petty cash in September 2026.

Tennis courts: The gross volume of sales in September 2026 was £238.94 after fees.

1 st April to 30 th September	Received (net)	Change	Payments (net)
2026	£4,116.96	-20.14%	£3,438.48 £798.14 normal spending plus £2,604.34 final payment for 2023/24 refurbishment.
2025	£5,155.34	+14.76%	N/A
2024 (1 st year)	£4,492.36	N/A	N/A

Tennis-related payments in 2024 and 2025 are not available (inconsistent descriptions and cost codes).

Payments:

In September 2026, the council made 129 payments, totalling £45,484.29 (ex VAT)

There were 34 payments of £100 or more totalling £43,726.30 (ex VAT) (appended to these minutes).

It was **resolved** to approve the payments as listed.

Proposed: Cllr Hodson, Seconded: Cllr Whittaker (all in favour)

Receipts: In September 2026, the council had 107 receipts (2026.10.14 Item 8(iv), enclosed), totalling £345,679.21 (ex VAT) including:

- £1,929.89 for the hire of Northam Hall (95 receipts)
- £55.00 for allotment tenancies (3 plots)
- £5,141 for grass cutting (DCC contract)
- £334,352.50 precept (payment 2 of 2)

2610/356 To note the Net Position Q1 & Q2 (1st April to 30th September 2026)

The net position paper was noted.

2610/357 To note the response of the solicitor to questions raised by the committee regarding the detail of the carpark and patio lease

The committee noted the contents of the report.

It was **resolved** to amend clause 15.1 to state that on termination of the lease or the sale of the property known as the Seagate Hotel, the landlord may require the removal of the patio and walls, returning the area to its original use and condition, with the same clause being applied to the Gig Club occupying the remainder of the site on renewal.

Proposed: Cllr Leather, Seconded: Cllr Hames (all in favour)

Action point: the Town Clerk to contact the solicitor to amend the wording to clause 15.1 and note the need to amend the other lease in the future.

2610/358 To consider offering staff the Local Government Pension Scheme

Cllr Hodson introduced the item precisising the report for the committee.

The Town Clerk left the meeting at this point (7:54pm to 7:56pm)

Cllr Leather tabled a paper outlining a report from the Institute for Government into the financial health of the Local Government Pension Scheme, which required a £5.1bn shortfall to be provided by central government from general taxation in 2023/24.

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Cllr Tait reported that the statutory minimum contribution for those auto-enrolled in a pension scheme was 8% (3% from the employer and 5% from the employee) and that this council's contribution rate of 10% exceeded the minimum. Further she noted that other terms and conditions in the private sector were less generous than in the public sector.

Cllr Whittaker left the meeting at this point (8:16pm)

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Cllr Newman-McKie noted that employees in other parts of the public sector were provided with more generous terms and conditions than employees at this council.

Cllr Edwards noted the benefit examples listed were not available to many private sector employees.

It was **resolved** to seek to align the terms and conditions of its employees with other councils by offering the local government pension scheme.

Proposed: Cllr Hodson, Seconded: Cllr Hames (3 in favour, 3 against, one abstention. The Chair used her casting vote in favour; the resolution was carried).

Action point: include the cost of the pension schemes for consideration as part of the budget for 2026/27.

*It was **resolved** to exclude members of the press and public, pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. Proposed: Cllr Hodson, seconded Cllr Edwards (all in favour)*

2610/359 To receive and sign the payroll information sheet for submission, considering overtime claimed

It was **resolved** to approve the payroll submission sheet for October 2026.

Cllr Hodson, Seconded: Cllr Himan (all in favour).

The payroll information sheet was signed by the Chair.

Action points: Submit the information.

2610/360 To receive an update on staffing matters

A confidential verbal update was received from the Town Clerk & RFO.

Cllr Hodson, as Chair of this committee, the Town Clerk and Parks & Buildings Manager would proceed with the actions advised by the Council's HR advisor to resolve the staffing challenges.

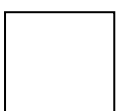
The Community Engagement Officer would proceed with arranging the Remembrance Services, the previous organisers no longer being available.

*It was **resolved** to readmit members of the press and public, pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. Proposed Cllr Hodson, Seconded: Cllr Edwards (all in favour)*

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9:04pm

Signed..... Dated.....

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Voucher	Date	Net	VAT	Total	Description	Cost Centre	Cost Code	Minute
608	02.09.26	£108.12	£21.62	£129.74	PPE & Workwear	Council Machinery & Equipment	PPE & Workwear	
605	01.09.26	£110.30	£22.06	£132.36	Copier Charges	Administration	Photocopier Fees	
600	01.09.26	£119.78	£23.96	£143.74	Stationery	Administration	Stationery	
627	08.09.26	£130.00	£26.00	£156.00	Alarm maintenance	Administration	Town Hall - Alarm	
651	16.09.26	£140.00	£28.00	£168.00	Training	Training	Training	
697	30.09.26	£146.57	£29.31	£175.88	Copier Charges	Administration	Photocopier Fees	
601	01.09.26	£150.00	£30.00	£180.00	DALC conference - 3 attendees	Training	Training	
701	30.09.26	£187.50	£37.50	£225.00	Remembrance teas	Community	Remembrance	
644	15.09.26	£196.50	£0.00	£196.50	Water bill	Northam Hall	Water	
602	01.09.26	£200.00	£40.00	£240.00	The Link	Community	Newsletters & Communication	
662	17.09.26	£200.00	£40.00	£240.00	The Link	Community	Newsletters & Communication	
645	15.09.26	£243.47	£48.70	£292.17	Fuel	Council Machinery & Equipment	Fuel - WF18 PTX	
698	30.09.26	£250.00	£0.00	£250.00	Legal Fee (on account - Seagate)	General Project Budget	Projects	2607/211
673	22.09.26	£251.49	£0.00	£251.49	Staff Costs	Staff Costs	Salaries, HMRC and NEST	
668	18.09.26	£282.03	£56.41	£338.44	Computer and software	ICT	Website	
625	08.09.26	£300.00	£0.00	£300.00	Planning Training	Training	Training	
607	02.09.26	£314.00	£62.80	£376.80	IT contract	ICT	Cloudy IT	
611	02.09.26	£335.00	£67.00	£402.00	Civic.ly Subscription	ICT	Civic.ly Asset Management Software	
649	15.09.26	£360.00	£0.00	£360.00	Vehicle Tax GX23 DHD	Council Machinery & Equipment	VED	
603	01.09.26	£400.00	£0.00	£400.00	Cleaning Northam Hall	Northam Hall	Cleaning	
699	30.09.26	£400.00	£0.00	£400.00	Cleaning Northam Hall	Northam Hall	Cleaning	
672	22.09.26	£422.70	£0.00	£422.70	Staff Costs	Staff Costs	Salaries, HMRC and NEST	
589	01.09.26	£450.73	£0.00	£450.73	Room rental (monthly -Town Hall)	Administration	Room Rental	
626	08.09.26	£455.00	£91.00	£546.00	Cleaning CPT	CPT	Cleaning	
686	25.09.26	£705.60	£141.12	£846.72	Scribe Bookings Renewal	ICT	Scribe - Bookings	
604	01.09.26	£750.00	£150.00	£900.00	Tree Works	Environment & Maintenance	Burrough Farm	2608/245
696	29.09.26	£755.00	£151.00	£906.00	Picnic Table	Parks & Recreation	Anchor Park	2609/305
621	08.09.26	£1,129.46	£0.00	£1,129.46	insurances	Insurances	General	
702	30.09.26	£1,365.00	£273.00	£1,638.00	External audit	Administration	Audit & Data Protection	
687	25.09.26	£1,673.73	£0.00	£1,673.73	Salaries (top up)	Staff Costs	Salaries, HMRC and NEST	2609/290
606	02.09.26	£2,461.05	£0.00	£2,461.05	Pensions	Staff Costs	Salaries, HMRC and NEST	2608/221
681	25.09.26	£2,986.64	£0.00	£2,986.64	Pensions	Staff Costs	Salaries, HMRC and NEST	2609/290
676	24.09.26	£6,546.63	£0.00	£6,546.63	HMRC PAYE	Staff Costs	Salaries, HMRC and NEST	
665	18.09.26	£19,200.00	£0.00	£19,200.00	Salaries	Staff Costs	Salaries, HMRC and NEST	2609/290
34	Totals	£43,726.30	£1,339.48	£45,065.78				

Chair's initials

