

## MARHAM PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HR and FINANCE COMMITTEE of the COUNCIL

Wed 26<sup>th</sup> Nov 2025 at the Village Hall, School Lane, Marham, PE33 9JA, at 6:30pm

**Parish Councillors:** Colin Heather (Ctte Chair – left meeting at 7pm during item 26.d.), Inga Barrett (Assumed Chair from item 26.d), Dawn Flatt, Valerie Inder and Heather Pearson

**Clerk and RFO:** Mike Inder.

- 24/25    **Opening address and apologies:** Cllr Heather opened the meeting and welcomed those present.
- 25/25    **Declarations of Interest:** All Cllrs given dispensation for pecuniary interest in precept setting activity.
- 26/25    To carry out the 2026/27 [budget planning](#).
- a. Current net position (refer to Scribe Summary Reports > Net Position) and anticipated I&E to 31 Mar 26 reviewed and agreed.
  - b. I&E for 2026/27 compared to 2025/26 costs with anticipated differences due to known rate changes and/or CPI 3.6% rate of inflation factored for.
    - i. Cllr Barrett queried the Cemetery Bin servicing contract; it was decided to leave as is and review weekly usage to ascertain if a change of contract is required. Review in Oct 2026.
    - ii. Caretaker hourly rate proposed for uplift to £12.75 to comply with the uplift in the national minimum wage in Apr 26 to £12.71.
  - c. Earmarked Reserves (EMR) reviewed and amended for 2026/27 as proposed below:
    - i. Remove the Parish Plan/Neighbourhood Plan (NHP) EMR of £1,000 as the appetite and likelihood of adopting an NHP in the next year or 2 after the withdrawal of grant funding for consultancy by the Government was announced earlier in this FY.
    - ii. Reduce the VH fencing EMR to £500 as condition good currently.
    - iii. Reduce the Village signs from £1000 to £500 as the village sign at Collins Lane has been replaced with a printed option at c£50 rather than traditional hand painted option costing in excess of £1,000 that would justify the larger EMR.
    - iv. The Operating Contingency EMR was increased by £5k to mitigate for the increased operating costs and potential for disruption in payment or unforeseen increases imposed by the Borough and County Councils prior to and during the transition to a Unitary Authority.
    - v. The Allotments Fencing EMR was increased as a proposal is being developed to replace the post and rail fencing as it deteriorates beyond economic repair with concrete post and chain link fencing.
    - vi. Addendum – Cemetery memorial testing is still being researched to ascertain the most efficient and cost effective way to comply and there will be costs to be added before the budget is set.
  - d. To consider new projects and proposals requiring an EMR to be set. A new line of EMR was proposed for the replacement of the Playing Field Sewage system and potential for White Gates (a proposal to be formulated prior to Aug 2026 for implementing in 2027). The Accessible Allotment proposal under development is being progressed, grants and

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donations are to fund it primarily, albeit some aspects may overlap such as fencing where the PC EMR could be allocated.

- e. With all factors considered the Precept requirement was calculated to be £60,899 a decrease of £49 on the FY2025/26 precept.
- f. Recommendations to Council and the draft budget will be refined by the RFO following the Nov and Dec account reconciliations, the drafts budget will then be shared with the HR/Fin Ctte to review and agree ahead of presenting to full Council with the January meeting agenda pack. The Borough Council will also notify the Council of the tax base to enable the tax demand to be presented and compared for a representative Band D property.

27/25 **Future Meeting Schedule:** It was agreed to meet set a date as required once the FCC Grant application outcome is known after the 10<sup>th</sup> Dec as appropriate.

28/25 **Items for the next agenda:** VH Project options if grant not awarded in conjunction with the VHSG members.

29/25 The Chair thanked everyone and closed the meeting at 7.25pm.

**Signed:** ..... **Chair.** **Date:** .....

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