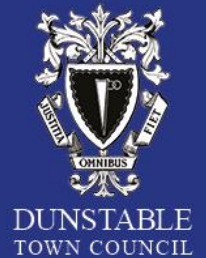


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Paul Hodson, Town Clerk and Chief Executive

Date: **Friday, 05 June 2026**

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **Finance and General Purposes Committee** will be held on **Monday 15 June 2026**, at Grove House in the Council Chamber at **7 pm**. To view the meeting live or afterwards use this link: [livestream](#). Members of the public and press are also welcome to attend in person. Members of the public may ask a question during the public session, either in person or online via MS Teams. If you intend to raise a question, it is helpful to let us know beforehand to give councillors a chance to prepare an informed answer. Please contact the Council via democratic@dunstable.gov.uk or 01582 513000 by 4 pm on Friday **12 June 2026**.

This meeting will be filmed by the Council and broadcast live and will be capable of repeated viewing. If you are seated in the Council Chamber it is likely that the cameras will capture your image. By your presence you are deemed to consent to be filmed, and to the use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting or training purposes.

If you address the committee in person or via Teams, your contribution will be recorded and broadcast, unless this is during a private session, as permitted by the Access to Information provisions.

Please see the below QR code to access the full agenda:



Yours faithfully

Paul Hodson
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

Members are reminded when making decisions that the Public Sector Equality Duty 2010 requires Members to have due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act, advance equality of opportunity between people who share a characteristic and those who don't, and to foster good relations between people who share a characteristic and those who don't.

To: All Members of the **Finance & General Services Committee:**

Cllrs Richard Attwell (Town Mayor), Robert Blennerhassett (Deputy Town Mayor), Johnson Tamara (Chair), Matthew Brennan (Vice-Chair), Gregory Alderman, Philip Crawley, Mark Davis, John Gurney, Kenson Gurney, Michelle Henderson, Peter Hollick, Shaun Moulster, Matthew Neall, Steve Collins and other Members of the Council for information.

AGENDA

186/26 Apologies for Absence

187/26 Declarations of Interest

188/26 Public Question Time

189/26 To approve as an accurate record the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 16 March 2026

190/26 Action Tracker

To receive updates on previous actions

191/26 Finance Report

192/26 Corporate Compliance and Facilities

193/26 Marketing and Communications

194/26 Referral Report from Personnel Sub-Committee

195/26 Dunstable Mayoral Fund

196/26 Review of Flag Flying Policy

197/26 Referral Report from Grounds and Environmental Services

Delegation of ear-marked reserves

198/26 Reports from Outside Organisations:

Citizen's Advice Management Committee – Councillor Attwell

Dunstable International Town Twinning Association
– Town Mayor and Councillors Hollick and Kenson Gurney
Hospice at Home Management Committee – Councillor Wendy Bater
Ashton Almshouses Charity – Councillors Hollick and Alderman
Ashton Schools Foundation – Councillors Hollick and Alderman
Chew’s Foundation – Councillors Brennan and Kenson Gurney
Poor’s Land Charity – Councillors Tamara and Bater
Lockington Charity and Marshe Charity – Councillors Tamara and
Kimondo
Dunstable and District Scout Council Executive – Councillor Kotarski

199/26 Motion to Exclude Public and Press

RECOMMENDED In terms of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, the following items will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters and it is, therefore, RECOMMENDED that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

200/26 Honorarium

201/26 Date of the next meeting

Monday 21 September at 7 pm

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

HELD ON MONDAY 16 MARCH 2026 FROM 7 PM

Present: Councillors Richard Attwell (Deputy Town Mayor), Nicholas Kotarski (Chair), Johnson Tamara (Vice-Chair), Gregory Alderman, Matthew Brennan, John Gurney, Michelle Henderson, Peter Hollick and Matthew Neall

In Attendance: Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), Jackie Carrington (Democratic Services Manager) Corinne Gilmore (Corporate Performance & Compliance Manager) and Rachel Connor (Corporate Marketing and Communications Officer)

In Attendance: None
(Remotely)

Public: None

104/26 - Apologies for Absence

Councillors Sally Kimondo (Town Mayor), Kenson Gurney and Shaun Moulster

105/26 - Declarations of Interest

There were no specific declarations of interest

106/26 - Public Question Time

There were no questions from the public.

107/26 - To approve as an accurate record the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on Monday 26 January 2026.

RESOLVED: The Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 26 January 2026 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

108/26 - Action Tracker

Members received and noted the Action Tracker. It was noted that the action for Dunstable and District Scouts to be repositioned at the Remembrance Parade had been incorporated into the event plan and could be removed from the Action Tracker.

109/26 - Finance Report

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive summarised the report.

- RESOLVED:** 1.1) To note the revenue budgetary position for the financial year 2025/26
1.2) To note the Council's earmarked reserves
1.3) To note the current investments
1.4) To create an ear-marked reserve for play area replacement, and for any underspend of the play area revenue budget in the current financial year to be transferred to that ear-marked reserve
1.5) To note the outcome of the 2nd Interim Internal Audit

It was proposed, seconded and

- RESOLVED:** 1.6) To recommend to Full Council the appointment of Bidder A as the Council's Internal Auditor, for the financial year 2026/27
1.7) To recommend to Full Council the proposed amendments to Financial Regulations

110/26 - Compliance and Facilities Report

The Corporate Compliance and Performance Manager summarised the report and gave details of Grove House weddings, lone working devices and the re-introduction of The Health and Safety Advisory Group. Members noted the ongoing building works at Grove House.

111/26 - Marketing and Communications Report

The Marketing and Communications officer summarised the report.

112/26 - Community Lottery Decision Report

Members received and discussed the report.

It was proposed, seconded and

- RESOLVED:** to approve to spend up to £450 from the Community Lottery Central Fund as an incentive for good causes to sign up and drive ticket sales to be allocated either as recommended or through an amended version, if an alternative approach was agreed with Gatherwell in consultation with the Chair

113/26 - Corporate and Financial Risk Management Report

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive presented the report outlining the revised risk management arrangements and corporate risk assessment.

It was proposed, seconded and

- RESOLVED:** 1.1 to approve the revised risk management policy
1.2 to recommend to Full Council to adopt the Corporate and Financial Risk Assessment, including the updates identified by Members

114/26 - Reference Up Report

The report was summarised by The Town Clerk and Chief Executive

- RESOLVED:** 1.1) To adopt the amended Grievance and Disciplinary policies
1.3) That members of the Personnel Committee be asked to undertake HR Training within three months of taking up the role
1.4) That the Council's staff awards scheme be extended to volunteers

115/26 - Reports from Outside Organisations:

Citizen's Advice Management Committee – Councillor Attwell - no update

Dunstable International Town Twinning Association – Councillor Hollick had met with the Town Clerk and Chief Executive; a visit of four representatives to Portz is planned for June.

Hospice at Home Management Committee – Councillor Bater - no update

Ashton Almshouses Charity – Councillor Alderman stated the charity was progressing well

Ashton Schools Foundation – Councillor Hollick reported that funding to Ashton Middle School and Manshead had now ended, following contributions made to the two schools.

Chew's Foundation – Councillor Brennan - no update

Poor's Land Charity – Councillor Tamara and Councillor Kenson Gurney Councillor Tamara had attended a recent meeting where the charity had agreed to make suitable donations.

Lockington Charity and Marshe Charity – Councillors Kenson Gurney and Tamara – no update

Dunstable and District Scout Council Executive – Councillor Kotarski stated that plans for the St Georges Day parade were in hand

Friends of Priory House and Gardens – Councillor Kotarski – it was noted that the Friends were holding a Coffee Morning at Priory Church Hall and all Councillors were invited

116/26 - Motion to exclude public and press

- RESOLVED:** In terms of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, the following items will be likely to disclose exempt information

relating to establishment and contractual matters and it was therefore **AGREED** that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

117/26 - Support Service

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: To adopt the proposal from Breakthrough Communications to undertake a comprehensive data protection compliance review, and to refresh the Council's data protection policies and procedures.

118/26 - Priory House Structure

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: To adopt the proposed new staffing structure for Priory House.

119/26 – Reference Up Report

RESOLVED: To approve the recommended contractor, Bidder A, to carry out the Council's cemetery development work as per Appendix 1.

120/26 - Date of the next meeting

Monday 15 June 2026 at 7 pm

The meeting closed at 9:22 pm

Committee	Minute	Date	Action	Action Full	Responsible	Update	Status
FGP	048/26	26/01/26	Reports from Outside Organisations	Town Twining - Town Clerk to meet with Councillor Peter Hollick	Town Clerk and Chief Executive		In Progress

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

MONDAY 15 JUNE 2026

FINANCE REPORT

Purpose of report:	To 1.1) provide a revenue budgetary report 1.2) provide detail of the Council's year end Balances and earmarked reserves 1.3) present to Members the Internal Audit Report 1.4) note the Treasury Management Policy as reviewed 1.5) provide detail on current investments 1.6) request approval to spend from allocated earmarked reserve 1.7) update Members on HMRC request for information
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1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1. To note the revenue budget outturn for the financial year 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, at item 3.
- 1.2. To note the Council's year end Balances and earmarked reserves as of 31 March 2026, at items 3 and 5.
- 1.3. To receive and note the conclusion of the final Internal Audit for financial year 2025/2026.
- 1.4. To receive and note the reviewed Treasury Management Policy, with no updates being required.
- 1.5. To note current investments.
- 1.6. To request approval to spend from allocated earmark reserve for the by-election on 14 May 2026.
- 1.7. To note the update on a request for information from HMRC, as noted at item 10.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. It is required under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 that the Council must, no later than 30 June, consider the end of year accounting statements at Full Council.
- 2.2. The meeting of the Council to be held on 22 June 2026 will receive the Annual Return and supporting documentation for consideration and approval.

- 2.3. In advance of that meeting, this report summarises the net expenditure against the budget for each service area as of 31 March 2026. This forms the actual outturn at the end of the financial year and the actual variances to budget.

3. REVENUE BUDGETARY REPORT AND YEAR END BALANCES

- 3.1. The summary at Appendix 1 shows the net expenditure at 31 March 2026 per service area and the actual outturn against budget, taking account of approved allocation of forecasted underspends.
- 3.2. The summary shows an overall net revenue underspend at the end of the financial year of £93,186, prior to the allocations approved at the meeting of this committee on 26 January 2026 for the then forecast underspend of £89,723, together with the unrequired earmarked reserve (Neighbourhood Development) of £12,668.
- 3.3. The projected underspend was predominantly due to the National Pay Award for 2025/26, agreed in August 2025, being less than budgeted.
- 3.4. Approval was given to allocate the projected underspend, along with the unrequired Neighbourhood Development Reserve, to required expenditure items- Detached Activities (£31,000), Ranger store roof (£30,000), Performance Area door (£5,000) and any balance to future known professional fees.
- 3.5. The performance area door works were completed in March 2026, and therefore included within the year end underspend. The balance was therefore allocated as follows;

Underspend at 31.03.26	£93,186
Unrequired reserve	£12,668
Total underspend	£105,854
Detached Youth Service	£31,000
Ranger store roof works	£30,000
Professional fees	£44,854
Total new reserves	£105,854

- 3.6. The general reserve requires a minimum balance of 25% of the annual salary bill. For financial year 2026/27 this is in the sum of £544,587. The previous financial year's requirement was £565,701, creating a surplus of £21,114 in the general reserve. Members will recall that the reduced salary bill is as a result of Bedfordshire Pension Fund reducing the employer's contribution from April 2026, which was also reflected in savings included in the budget setting for the year.
- 3.7. The balance of the Council's cash accounts for the year ending 31 March 2026 is summarised at Appendix 2.

4. TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY

- 4.1. As mentioned at item 3.6, it is the Council’s policy to work towards maintaining a minimum general reserve balance of 25% of the salary budget. Based on the budget set for 2026/27, the general reserve requires a balance of £544,587.
- 4.2. The Policy was amended at Finance and General Purposes Committee on 16 June 2025, where the actual figure required was removed, therefore the policy has no requirement for amendment, having been reviewed, Officers are satisfied the policy remains reflective of the Council’s process, a copy can be found at Appendix 2 of this report.

5. RESERVES

- 5.1. The schedule enclosed at Appendix 3 provides detail of actual contributions to, and expenditure from, reserve funds as at the end of the financial year 31 March 2026.

6. INTERNAL AUDIT

- 6.1. The final Internal Audit for financial year 2025/26 took place on 29 May 2026 and Members are asked to note the report appended to this report at Appendix 4.
- 6.2. Members will be pleased to note that the report concludes that *‘On the basis of the programme of audit work we have undertaken, we (Auditing Solutions) are satisfied that the Council has continued to maintain an adequate and effective system of internal control. The records held in support of the accounting transactions were of a high standard and provided an effective audit trail, with clear cross-referencing of all relevant documentation.’*

7. INVESTMENTS UPDATE

- 7.1. Dunstable Town Council’s current bank and investment account balances as 31 March 2026 were as follows:

Account	Balance	Interest earned in month
Current Account	£10,000.00	-
Business Reserve Account	£77,750.91	£426.15
CCLA Deposit Account	£1,892,270.52	£6,834.30

- 7.2. Investment opportunities are researched regularly, and although reduced over the past 12 months, CCLA offer of on average around 4% on their instant access deposit account, giving the Council maximum return on their investment.

8. RESERVE EXPENDITURE APPROVAL

- 8.1. Members approved a contribution to the Elections earmarked reserve, as part of the 2026/27 budget, of £20,000. The reserve balance prior to this contribution was at nil balance, due to the December by-election costs.
- 8.2. As Members are aware, there was an additional by-election on 14 May 2026, costing the Council an estimated £21,000 (based on the previous cost in December 2025).
- 8.3. Members are therefore requested to approve the costs for the recent by-election, to be allocated from the Elections earmarked reserve, meeting the surplus as an overspend on the Democratic Services revenue budget within the current financial year.

9. FINANCIAL GOVERNANCE

- 9.1. Councillors should, as a minimum, view and audit the Council's accounts on a quarterly basis.
- 9.2. The last quarterly Councillor audit for financial year 2025/26 was completed on 2 June 2026, with the then Chair, Councillor Kotarski and Vice Chair Councillor Tamara taking part.
- 9.3. As the previous chair of this Committee, Councillor Kotarski, and the Head of Corporate Services and Responsible Financial Officer, signed the bank reconciliations for the fourth quarter 2025/26, verifying the amounts to the bank statements provided.
- 9.4. Further quarterly meetings will be arranged, and all Councillors on Finance and General Purposes Committee are invited to be part of any future Financial Governance Audits they are available for.

10. VAT

- 10.1. The Council received a letter from HM Revenue and Customs on 13 May 2026, to notify the Council that they have been selected to provide verification on the VAT Return submitted for the 4th quarter for financial year 2025/26, due to the large amount requested for repayment, totalling £171,004.81.
- 10.2. The high value of the return claim is mainly due to large value vatable invoices being paid for the ongoing Priory House works, as well as the repair works completed on Downside Community Centre in the last period of 2025/26.
- 10.3. The Head of Corporate Services and RFO submitted a detailed response to the request on 22 May 2026, and has received a request for some further information, which Officers are in progress with working with HMRC to provide.
- 10.4. A verbal update will be provided at the Committee meeting if available.

11. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS- none

12. FINANCIAL IMPACT

12.1. This is inherent in this report.

13. ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIODIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS – none

14. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS- none

15. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS- none

16. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS- none

17. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS- none

18. APPENDICES

18.1. Appendix 1 – Summary of Net Revenue Expenditure at 31 March 2026

Appendix 2 – Treasury Management Policy

Appendix 3 – Summary of Earmarked Reserves at 31 March 2026

Appendix 4 – Year End 2025/2026 Internal Audit Report

19. AUTHOR

Lisa Scheder – Head of Corporate Services and Responsible Financial Officer
lisa.scheder@dunstable.gov.uk

Corporate Services

	Service Area	Budget 2025/26	Year-end Balance	Year-end Variance	
100	Staff Costs	(544,549)	(534,672)	9,877	Maternity / National pay award less than budgeted
101	Central Services	(131,414)	(164,495)	(33,081)	Professional Fees unbudgeted/urgent plus IT contract 14 months costings
102	Grove House	(35,742)	(33,343)	2,399	Saving on reduced utility charges forecast, offset by equipment purchase (ceremony room furniture)
106	Corporate Management	(45,885)	(53,136)	(7,251)	Additional H&S requirements (alarms/security systems) plus insurance actuals over budget, offset by increased interest earned forecast
107	Democratic Management & Representation	(24,740)	(23,128)	1,612	Mayoral transport, together with printing and training underspends, offset by by-election costs
110	Capital & Projects (inc loan charges)	(104,399)	(104,004)	395	
	Grand Total	(886,729)	(912,778)	(26,049)	

Grounds and Environmental Services

	Service Area	Budget 2025/26	Year-end Balance	Year-end Variance	
200	Staff Costs, Vehicle Costs	(987,404)	(918,148)	69,256	In year vacancies, pay award less than budgeted, vehicle fuel saving
201	Allotments	3,418	4,623	1,205	Underspend on electricity and repairs and maintenance, offset by an overspend on equipment
202	Cemetery	68,458	76,574	8,116	Memorials income exceeded budget
205	Recreation Grounds	(84,527)	(84,874)	(347)	
403	Town Centre and Gardens	(32,114)	(21,160)	10,954	Underspend on electricity, repairs and maintenance and skatepark, offset by an overspend CCTV costs
206	Town Ranger Service	(14,038)	(6,146)	7,892	Overachieved on income generation through maintenance contracts, as well as savings on fuel costs
210	Capital & Projects	(141,815)	(141,495)	320	
	Grand Total	(1,188,022)	(1,090,626)	97,396	

Community Services

	Service Area	Budget 2025/26	Year-end Balance	Year-end Variance	
300	Staff Costs	(351,165)	(349,547)	1,618	pay award less than budgeted
209	Older People's Support Service	(31,493)	(26,429)	5,064	transport and hall hire less than budgeted, overachievement on income/CBC contribution higher than budgeted
303	Community Engagement (inc Grants)	(32,207)	(25,059)	7,148	Underspend on Service Level Agreements and activities
304	Grove Corner	(20,795)	(18,867)	1,928	pay award less than budgeted
115	Bennett Memorial RG Splash Park	(69,353)	(96,153)	(26,800)	Water leak, increased maintenance requirements together with lower than budgeted income generation, slightly offset by reduced purchases
401	Events Programme	(192,557)	(191,818)	739	
402	Priory House	(134,707)	(105,907)	28,800	partial secondment plus various savings due to shop closure for part of year
405	Town Centre Services (inc Special Markets)	(125,750)	(113,588)	12,162	pay award less than budgeted, increased stall hire income
407	Public Conveniences (Ashton Square)	(7,575)	(6,634)	941	
310	Capital & Projects	(241,815)	(251,563)	(9,748)	Underbudgeted for loan repayments and interest due
	Grand Total	(1,207,417)	(1,185,565)	21,852	

DTC Grand Total **(3,282,168)** **(3,188,969)** **93,199**

C/C 309- funding bal **(13)**

93,186

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL
TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY AND PRACTICES

1. Dunstable Town Council defines its treasury management activities as “the management of the Council’s cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions, the effective control of the risks associated with those activities, and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks”.
2. The Town Council regards the successful identification, monitoring and control of risk to be prime criteria by which the effectiveness of its treasury management activities will be measured. Accordingly, the analysis and reporting of treasury management activities will focus on their risk implications for Dunstable Town Council.
3. The Town Council acknowledges that effective treasury management will provide support towards the achievement of its business and service objectives. It is therefore committed to the principles of achieving best value in treasury management, and to employing suitable performance measurement techniques within the context of effective risk management.
4. The borrowing of monies purely to invest or on-lend and make a return is unlawful and this Council will not engage in such activity.
5. The Council will only enter into further long-term borrowing through the Public Works Loan Board when absolutely necessary for essential major works or capital purchases.
6. A general balance is maintained to protect the Council from unforeseen events and to give time to respond to such events. The Council will work towards maintaining a general balance of 25% of the salary budget.
7. The general policy for the Council is the prudent investment of its treasury balances. The Council’s investment priorities are:
 - The security of capital and
 - The liquidity of its investments
8. The Council will aim to achieve the optimum return on its investments commensurate with the proper levels of security and liquidity.
9. The Council maintains investments with CCLA, providing instant access to funds, with no penalties for withdrawals.
10. **Investment Objectives:**
 - 10.1. In accordance with Section 15 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003, the Council will have regard to
 - such guidance as the Secretary of State may issue, and
 - such other guidance as the Secretary of State may by regulations specify.
 - 10.2. Both the CIPFA Code and the CLG Guidance require the Council to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security (protecting the capital sum from loss) and liquidity (ensuring funds are easily available/available when required) of its investments before seeking the highest rate of return/yield.

10.3. The Council's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income. The Council will therefore aim to achieve the optimum return on its investments commensurate with appropriate levels of security and liquidity.

10.4 The Council's investment priorities therefore are, in order of importance:

- the **security** of its reserves
- the adequate **liquidity** of its investments
- the **return** (yield) on investments

10.5 All investments will be made in sterling.

10.6. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government maintains the borrowing of money purely to invest or to lend and make a return is unlawful and the Council will not engage in such activity.

Approved at Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting on Monday 16 June 2025

Dunstable Town Council - Reserves Summary 2025/26

APPENDIX 3

	Description	Officer	Balance as at 01.04.25	Contributions Revenue/ Other	Expenditure in year	Bal as at 31.03.26	Commitments/Programme of works, etc	Committed Amount	Bal after committed
310	General Reserve	TC&CE / HofCorp	£593,193	£13	£-27,492	£565,714	Minimun requiremnt c/fwd to 2026/27 = 25% of annual salaries = £544,587	£-544,587	£21,127
312	Vehicles Reserve	HofGES	£74,169	£20,000		£94,169	FGP 17.06.24- Minute 141/24- bal of £28,347 for 2 replacement vehicles & 1 additional ride on mower (of £92,337 approved) GES 19.01.26- Minute 032/26- £50,000 for Ranger vehicle and refurbishment of cemetery digger	£-78,347	£15,822
314	Christmas Lights Reserve	HofCS	£12,651	£7,115		£19,766	5 year replacement lighting plan 21/22-25/26 ; Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= release of £8,731 for replacement and repairs of lights	£-9,095	£10,671
315	Street Dressing Reserve	HofCS	£1,047		£-1,047	£0			£0
316	Downside Building Maintenance Res	HofCS	£52,769	£27,000	£-63,929	£15,840	FGP 12.06.23- Minute 141/23= £36,679 & £8,792.55- for 2nd phase roof repairs FGP 26.01.26- Minute 041/26= £34,297- for 2nd phase roof repairs totalling £79,769 approved less exp to date	£-15,840	£0
317	Grove Corner Building Maint Reserve	HofCS	£38,565	£4,000		£42,565	Chairs Approval 17.04.23= bal of £2,000 roof survey & development plans (of £5,000 approved)	£-2,000	£40,565
318	Building Security Systems	HofCorp	£5,357			£5,357	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £5,357 for improved security for Grove House	£-5,357	£0
319	Cemetery Memorial Safety	HofGES	£3,075	£1,655		£4,730	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £3,075 for periodic inspections and subsequent works	£-3,075	£1,655
320	Priory House Tearooms Equipment	HofCS	£9,000	£3,000		£12,000	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £9,000 for replacement of kitchen/catering equipment	£-9,000	£3,000
321	IT/Equipment Reserve	TC&CE / HofCorp	£1,213	£20,000		£21,213			£21,213
322	Older People's Day Care Service	HofCS	£12,325			£12,325			£12,325
323	Election Reserve	TC&CE / HofCorp	£20,000		£-20,000	£0			£0
324	Grove House Building Reserve	HofCorp	£190,521	£49,000	£-£79,327	£160,194	Council 24.06.24- Minute 165/24= £213,276 for essential repair and maintenance works (of £226,550 approved)	£-91,194	£69,000
325	Priory House Works Contingency	HofCS	£29,864			£29,864	Council 07.04.25- Minute 115/25= £29,864 for PH Exhibition (in £161,013 total with £11,149 on 327 & £120,000 on 333)	£-29,864	£0
326	Mayoral Reserve	HofCorp	£3,000			£3,000	FGP 19.01.15-Minute 24 - to be retained for transport/allowance as required	£-3,000	£0
327	Priory House Exhibition	HofCS	£11,149			£11,149	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £11,149 for programme of future exhibitions	£-11,149	£0
328	Priory Churchyard	HofGES	£0			£0			£0
330	Town Twinning Reserve	TC&CE / HofCorp	£8,389		£-115	£8,274	Retained for twinning activities to be determined		£8,274

Dunstable Town Council - Reserves Summary 2025/26

APPENDIX 3

	Description	Officer	Balance as at 01.04.25	Contributions Revenue/ Other	Expenditure in year	Bal as at 31.03.26	Commitments/Programme of works, etc	Committed Amount	Bal after committed
331	Tree Reserve	HofGES	£14,481	£15,000	-£18,220	£11,261	Chairs Approval 02.02.26= £1,400 additional 2026 survey works/specialist visit (from £5,139 approved)	-£1,400	£9,861
332	Open Spaces Improvement Plan	HofGES	£51,759	£30,000	-£7,810	£73,949	FGP 20.01.20- Minute 8- Bal of £4,723 for recreation grounds improvement works (from £26,668 agreed); Council 29.06.20- Minute 85- bal of £12,982 for Priory Gardens Pergola Repairs (from £15,000 agreed);	-£17,705	£56,244
333	Priory House Building Reserve	HofCS	£262,023	£149,357	-£187,954	£223,426	FGP Minute 41/23 23.01.23- bal of £3,700- Roof works (amended requirement 12.01.26); Council 07.04.25 - Minute 115/25= bal of £74,200 - Priory House Exhibition (of £120,000 agreed) Community Services 12.01.26- Minute 012/26= bal of £195,526, for required maintenance/improvement works (of £220,282.49 approved; £170,522.59 + £50,000 26/27 res contrib)	-£223,426	£0
334	Pavilion Buildings Maintenance Res	HofGES	£27,632	£23,000		£50,632			£50,632
335	Church Street Phone Box Maintenance	HofGES	£3,002		-£3,002	£0			£0
NEW	Health and Safety Reserve	TC&CE / HofCorp	£0			£0			£0
NEW	Community Lottery Reserve	HofCS	£0			£0			£0
338	Allotments Reserve	HofGES	£22,827	£5,000	-£1,345	£26,482	FGP Minute 107 20.06.22= bal for 5 year infrastructure improvement programme (upto £42,800 approved) (includes £5,000 pa contributions to 26/27)	-£15,112	£11,370
341	Outdoor Leisure (non play) Reserve	HofCS /	£15,052	£12,000		£27,052			£27,052
342	Memorial Kerbs Reserve	HofGES	£461			£461	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £300 for purchase of memorial kerbs	-£300	£161
343	Cemetery Building Maintenance Res	HofGES	£17,281	£37,492		£54,773	GES Minute 150/25= £27,281 for cemetery building works, information board and footpath repairs FGP Minute 167/25 = £27,492 (trfd from general reserve) for cem building works, with above	-£54,773	£0
344	Fencing Maintenance Reserve	HofGES	£7,000	£7,000	-£6,912	£7,088			£7,088
346	HSHAZ/Priory House HAR	HofCS	£153,282	£1,343,210	-£1,433,150	£63,343	HSHAZ scheme programme / HAR 1 Priory House works programme- to future claim / claims due	-£63,343	£0
347	NEW Play Equipment Improvement Res	HofGES		£2,616		£2,616			£2,616
349	Website Development	HofCorp	£0	£1,612		£1,612			£1,612
353	Neighbourhood Development	TC&CE / HofCorp	£12,668			£12,668	FGP 26.01.26, Minuted 043/26 - Approval of balance of reserve, together with 25/26 forecast underspends, for essential required works	-£12,668	£0
354	NEW Detached Youth Service Reserve	HofCS		£31,000		£31,000	FGP 26.01.26, Minute 043/26 - £31,000 Approved of 25/26 year end underspends to ringfence and release of funds for future detached youth service	-£31,000	£0

Dunstable Town Council - Reserves Summary 2025/26

APPENDIX 3

	Description	Officer	Balance as at 01.04.25	Contributions Revenue/ Other	Expenditure in year	Bal as at 31.03.26	Commitments/Programme of works, etc	Committed Amount	Bal after committed
355	NEW Ranger Stores Maintenance Res	HofGES		£30,000		£30,000	FGP 26.01.26, Minute 043/26 - £30,000 approved from 25/26 year end underspends to ringfence and release of funds for roof repairs to ranger stores	-£30,000	£0
356	NEW Professional Fees Reserve	TC&CE / HofCorp		£32,186		£32,186	FGP 26.01.26, Minute 043/26 - bal of y/end underspends to ringfence and release of funds for professional fees as required	-£32,186	£0
Earmarked Reserves Total			£1,653,755	£1,851,256	-£1,850,303	£1,654,708		-£1,284,421	£370,288

Capital Receipt - Sale of Land at Meadway

	Description	Officer	Balance as at 01.04.25	Contributions Revenue/ Other	Expenditure in year	Bal as at 31.03.26	Commitments/Programme of works, etc	Committed Amount	Bal after committed
371	White Lion Land Landscaping	HofGES	£10,000			£10,000	Council 05.12.22 Minute 210- creation of new reserve from capital receipt received July 2022		£10,000
372	New Cemetery Development	HofGES	£147,361			£147,361	FGP 18.09.23- Minute 187/23= balance of £32,135.50 for development of the new cemetery (of £76,775 approved) Council 09.02.26- Minute 062/26- for the purchase of Cottage Bottom Field to develop the new cemetery	-£134,636	£12,725
373	Grounds Depot Extension	HofGES	£100,000		-£4,315	£95,685	FGP 17.06.24- Minute 141/24= bal of £95,685 - Depot Extension (of £100,000 approved)	-£95,685	£0
374	Luton Road MUGA	HofGES	£42			£42			£42
375	Priory House Furniture	HofCS	£26,000			£26,000	Council 17.04.23 Minute 93/23- release from capital receipt received July 2022 for Priory House furniture	-£26,000	£0
376	Kingsbury Pavilion Refurbishment	HofGES	£169,000		-£2,750	£166,250	Chairs Approval 11.04.25- bal of £1,830 (from £2,830 approved) - Professional Fees	-£166,250	£0
377	Splash Canopies	TC&CE	£57			£57		-£57	£0
Capital Receipts Total			£452,460	£0	-£7,065	£445,395		-£445,395	£0

S106/External Funding/Ringfenced Expenditure specified by funding body

352	Development Contributions- REV	HofGES	£34,316		-£16,000	£18,316	Bal of £14,129 for Willoughby to rev budget 26/27 & 27/28 (from S106 £47,645) Bal of £4,038 for Court Drive Landscaping (from CBC £15,000) - FGP approval 26.01.26 for town centre & Court Drive planting for 2026 programme	-£18,167	£149
570	Joint Committee Fund	HofCS	£50,021		-£877	£49,144	Bal in holding code as committed Joint Committees fund only = not DTC	-£49,144	£0
S106/External Funding Total			£84,337	£0	-£16,877	£67,460		-£67,311	£149
			£2,190,552	£1,851,256	-£1,874,245	£2,167,563		-£1,797,126	£370,437

Key:

= Finance and General Purposes Committee

= Grounds and Environmental Services Committee

= Community Services Committee

Dunstable Town Council

Internal Audit Report (Final Update) 2025-26

2nd June 2026

Stephen Christopher

***For and on behalf of
Auditing Solutions Ltd***

Background

All town and parish councils are required by statute to arrange for an independent internal audit examination of their accounting records and system of internal control, and for the conclusions to be reported each year in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). Auditing Solutions Ltd was appointed to undertake this function on behalf of Dunstable Town Council for the 2025-26 financial year.

This report sets out the results of our final audit visit, which was undertaken on 29th May 2026. It updates the reports we issued in November 2025 and March 2026, following our interim audits. We wish to thank the Head of Corporate Services (RFO) and her colleagues for providing the documentation and explanations required to enable us to complete our audit work.

Internal Audit Approach

In carrying out our internal audit work, we have had regard to the materiality of transactions and their susceptibility to potential mis-recording or misrepresentation in the year-end Accounting Statements/AGAR. We employ a combination of selective sampling techniques (where appropriate) and 100% detailed checks in key areas, in order to gain sufficient assurance that the Council's financial and regulatory systems and controls are appropriate and are fit for the purposes intended.

Our audit programme is designed to afford assurance that the Council's financial systems remain robust and operate in a manner which ensures effective probity of transactions and a reasonable probability of identifying any material errors, or possible abuse of the Council's own and the national statutory regulatory framework. The programme is also designed to facilitate our completion of the 'Annual Internal Audit Report' in the AGAR, which requires independent assurance over a number of internal control objectives.

Overall Conclusion

On the basis of the programme of audit work we have undertaken, we are satisfied that the Council has continued to maintain an adequate and effective system of internal control. The records held in support of the accounting transactions were of a high standard and provided an effective audit trail, with clear cross-referencing of all relevant documentation. We have completed and signed the 'Annual Internal Audit Report' on Page 3 of the 2025-26 AGAR, in which we have concluded that, in all significant respects, the control objectives set out in that report were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of the Council.

In the sections below, we explain the objectives of each area of our audit, summarising the work undertaken and our findings. We are pleased to report that there are no matters arising that require a formal recommendation. We ask that Members consider the content of this report.

This report has been prepared for the sole use of Dunstable Town Council. To the fullest extent permitted by law, no responsibility or liability is accepted by Auditing Solutions Ltd to any third party who purports to use or rely, for any reason whatsoever, on this report, its contents or conclusions.

Detailed Report

Accounting records and Banking arrangements

Our objective is to confirm that the accounting records are accurate and up to date, with no anomalous entries in the cashbooks or financial ledgers, and that appropriate banking arrangements are in place.

The Council maintains its accounting records using the RBS Omega software, which is generally acknowledged as one of the market leaders for this tier of local government.

Day-to-day business banking services continue to be provided by NatWest Bank. Two accounts are held, a Current Account and an instant access Business Reserve Account, with an automatic daily transfer between them to retain a balance of £10,000 in the Current Account. In addition to the Business Reserve Account, other funds that are not required for immediate use are held in a Public Sector Deposit Fund instant access account with CCLA Investment Management Ltd.

In the course of our audit work, we confirmed the following:

- Checked and agreed the opening trial balance on Omega for 2025-26 to the closing balances on the 2024-25 AGAR and the detailed accounts;
- Verified that the financial ledgers remained “in balance” throughout the year;
- Confirmed that the accounting code structure remains appropriate for the Council’s budget reporting and control requirements;
- Checked and agreed transactions in the Omega cashbooks for the Current and Business Reserve accounts to the relevant NatWest bank statements for three sample months - September 2025, plus January and March 2026;
- Checked the bank reconciliations for all active bank account reconciliations, including the CCLA deposit, as at 31st October 2025, 31st January 2026 and 31st March 2026, confirming that there were no anomalous entries;
- Confirmed that the bank reconciliations continue to be subject to regular independent review by councillors, as part of the quarterly financial Councillor audit, and that the latest investment position is reported at each Finance & General Purposes Committee (F&GP), as part of the RFO’s ‘Finance Report’;
- Noted that the External Auditors finally issued their ‘report and certificate’ on the Council’s 2024-25 AGAR on 9th December 2025 and that there were no matters arising;
- Confirmed that the overall cash balance has been reported correctly in the draft AGAR (Section 2, Box 8), and
- Confirmed that all IT systems are now regularly backed up to the Cloud by the Council’s IT Support provider.

Conclusion

There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.

Corporate Governance

Our objective is to confirm that the Council has robust corporate governance arrangements in place and that, as far as we may reasonably be expected to ascertain (as we do not attend Council or Committee meetings), all meetings are conducted in accordance with the adopted Standing Orders and no actions of a potentially unlawful nature have been, or are being, considered for implementation.

During the course of our audit work, we confirmed the following:

- Our review of the minutes of the meetings of the Full Council and its standing committees held during 2025-26 did not identify any issues that we consider might have an adverse effect, through litigation or other causes, on the Council's future financial stability.
- The Council has continued to keep its governance arrangements under regular review. We confirmed that amended Financial Regulations were considered by the F&GP Committee on 16th March 2026 and, together with updated Standing Orders, were formally reported to the subsequent Council meeting, on 30th March 2026, for review and adoption.
- A range of other policies and procedures remain in place and are reviewed on a regular basis. We have noted previously that a formal timetable for the review of all key policies and procedures is being developed and confirmed that this was still in progress at the year-end.
- The Council is aware of its responsibilities in relation to digital and data compliance and has taken appropriate steps to ensure that it can provide a positive response to the new 'Assertion 10' in the Annual Governance Statement of the 2025-26 AGAR. This has included the approval of updated Information Security and Data Protection policies by the F&GP Committee at its meeting on 22nd September 2025. The Head of Corporate Services (RFO) informed the F&GP Committee on 26th January 2026 that the Council already satisfies all relevant requirements and provided further detail in her Finance Report to the F&GP meeting on 16th March 2026.
- The Council continues to exercise the General Power of Competence. This was re-adopted at the first Annual meeting of the new Council on 15th May 2023 and will apply for the 4-year term to May 2027.

Conclusion

There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.

Expenditure

Our objective is to confirm that:

- Council resources are released in accordance with approved procedures and budgets;
- Payments are supported by appropriate documentation, either in the form of an original trade invoice or other appropriate form of document confirming the payment as due and/or an acknowledgement of receipt, where no other form of invoice is available;
- Official orders have been raised for purchases, where appropriate;

- Any discounts due on goods and services supplied are identified and appropriate action taken to secure the discount;
- The correct expense codes have been applied to invoices when processed; and
- VAT has been appropriately identified and coded to the control account for periodic recovery.

To check compliance with the above criteria, we examined a sample of non-pay related payments across the year. Our test sample included all individual payments of more than £7,500, plus a random selection of every 80th payment as recorded in the Omega cashbook. The overall gross value of expenditure items covered in our sample amounted to £1,381,995. There were no matters arising.

The Council makes use of a NatWest Commercial Credit Card, which is used mainly for items such as internet purchases and subscriptions. During 2025-26, there were four users, each with a monthly expenditure limit of £2,000. (This has recently been reduced to three users). The Credit Card is settled monthly by direct debit. We reviewed the settlements made in September and December 2025, confirming that all purchases recorded on the statements were adequately supported by receipts and were appropriate to the Council's business, and that, where appropriate, VAT was accounted for correctly.

As part of our testing of expenditure, we also check, on a sample basis, to confirm that the Council is following appropriate national requirements and its own Standing Orders and Financial Regulations when entering into contracts that require formal tendering. During our first interim audit, we considered the approach followed in relation to the tender for the Priory House Exhibition & Interpretation Design Team. We confirmed that the national regulatory requirements had been followed, with the tender opportunity advertised on the Government's 'Find a Tender' website. Following an evaluation process, the award of the contract was formally approved at the Council meeting on 7th April 2025 and subsequently minuted. At our subsequent audit visits, we confirmed that appropriate arrangements had also been followed for three further tenders - Christmas lighting, re-covering of the Downside Community Centre roof and appointment of a contractor for the new cemetery development.

We confirmed that VAT Returns for the year were submitted quarterly in electronic format, as required by extant legislation, with the detail being reconciled to the Omega accounts. We have been advised by the Head of Corporate Services that HMRC has raised a query regarding the most recent quarterly return, due to the high value of VAT which is being reclaimed, and that she is currently in correspondence with them on this matter.

Conclusion

There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.

Assessment and Management of Risk

Our objective is to confirm that the Council has put in place appropriate arrangements to identify all potential areas of risk of both a financial and health and safety nature, whilst also ensuring that appropriate arrangements exist to monitor and manage those risks in order to minimise the opportunity for their coming to fruition.

There is a requirement for the Council to formally review and approve its risk management

arrangements during each financial year. We confirmed that this was done in 2025-26, with the Corporate Risk Management Report including the detailed 'Risk Log' being reapproved by the Council on 6th October 2025. Further amendments to the risk management arrangements were agreed by the F&GP Committee in March 2026 and these were approved by the Council at its meeting on 30th March 2026.

During 2025-26, the Council's primary insurance cover was provided by Zurich Municipal. The policy included Employer's Liability and Public Liability of £10 million, and Fidelity Guarantee cover of £2 million, which appeared adequate for the current needs of the Council.

As part of the wider health and safety arrangements, a regular programme of reviews of the Council's play areas and play equipment is undertaken. This includes daily and weekly inspections by the Council's own staff, with quarterly external inspections by the Play Inspection Company to check compliance with national regulatory standards.

The most recent external inspections were completed at the beginning of March 2026. From our review of the summary inspection report and discussion with the newly appointed Head of Grounds & Environmental Services, we confirmed that none of the issues identified were categorised as 'High Risk' and that the Grounds Maintenance team have been addressing the 'Medium Risk' and most significant 'Low Risk' issues, in order of priority.

In our first interim audit for 2025-26, we had noted that the detailed quarterly external inspection reports for each play area are available for Members to review, should they wish to do so, but that the results of the inspections were not routinely reported to Committee. The outgoing Head of Grounds & Environmental Services agreed that, going forward, the 'Information Report' presented to each Grounds & Environmental Services (G&ES) Committee meeting would include a reference to the more significant issues arising from the latest play inspections and the actions being taken to address them.

The results of the final quarterly inspections for 2025-26 were not received in time for the G&ES Committee meeting on 9th March 2026, but the 'Information Report' noted that they had taken place. We have confirmed that a report on the next round of quarterly inspections will be on the agenda for the G&ES Committee meeting in June 2026.

Conclusion

There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.

Budget Setting, Budgetary Control and Reserves

Our objective is to confirm that the Council has robust procedures in place for identifying and approving its future budgetary requirements and the level of Precept to be drawn down from Central Bedfordshire Council, and that an effective reporting and budget monitoring process is in place. We also consider whether the Council retains appropriate funds in earmarked and general reserves to finance its ongoing spending plans, whilst retaining appropriate sums to cover any unplanned expenditure that might arise.

We reviewed the approach taken by the Council to setting its budget and Precept for 2026-27. We confirmed that, as in previous years, the budget process involved detailed consideration by the various committees, in particular F&GP, before the Precept was formally approved by

the Full Council at its meeting on 9th February 2026. The Precept has been set at £3,622,546 (£3,282,168 for 2025-26), which represents a Council Tax charge of £265.63 per annum for a Band D property, an increase of 7.92% on the previous year.

We are satisfied that Members were provided with an appropriate level of information on which to base the budget decision, with comprehensive supporting documentation within the budget pack produced by the Head of Corporate Services (RFO) and the Town Clerk & Chief Executive. This included detailed consideration of future reserve requirements and the level of fees and charges that will apply in 2026-27.

During our audit visits, we also considered the information being provided to Members on progress against the 2025-26 budget. We confirmed that the F&GP Committee has continued to receive financial monitoring reports at each meeting, with over/under-spends and the level of earmarked reserves the subject of regular review.

At 31st March 2026, the Council's overall reserves stood at £2,118,420, which was slightly less than at the previous year end (£2,140,531). Of the total, Earmarked Reserves amounted to £1,552,704.95, compared to £1,547,338 at 31st March 2025. The most significant movement in the year was a reduction of £90,000 in the reserve held for the High Street Heritage Action Zone project, which has now ended. The remaining funds in that reserve are now being used towards the costs of ongoing works at Priory House. The existing reserve for Priory House and the Grove House reserve also reduced in the year, by £39,000 and £30,000 respectively, due to expenditure on those projects. New reserves have been established for essential roof repairs to the Grove House Gardens "Ranger Store" (£30,000) and support for the Detached Youth Service initiative (£31,000), with a further £44,000 set aside for Professional Fees.

The Council's remaining funds are held in the General Reserve. At 31st March 2026, the General Reserve balance stood at £565,715, compared to £593,193 at the previous year-end. This amount is in line with the Council's stated aim, set out in the Treasury Management Policy, of maintaining a minimum contingency balance equivalent to 25% of the annual salaries expenditure.

Conclusion

There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.

Income

The Council receives income from a variety of sources, including Dunstable Cemetery, the Allotments, Specialist Markets, Events, Bennett's Café & Community Hub, and from bank and deposit interest.

Our objective is to confirm that robust procedures are in place to ensure that all income due to the Council is identified and invoiced (where appropriate), with recovery effected within a reasonable time span, and also that it is banked promptly in accordance with the Financial Regulations. In the course of our 2025-26 audit, we undertook the following work in relation to income:

Fees and charges: We confirmed that the fees and charges for 2025-26 were approved by the

Council as part of the annual budget setting process, following detailed consideration by the F&GP Committee. We noted that a similar approach has been taken for 2026-27.

Banking of income: As noted earlier in this report, we checked and agreed three sample months' receipts transactions from the cashbook to the relevant bank statements, confirming the timeliness and accuracy of transactions.

Cemetery-related fees and charges: We reviewed the interment applications and other cemetery-related activities for a sample month (July 2025). We confirmed that, in all cases, the correct amounts were charged and income due was received and banked on a timely basis.

Allotments: We reviewed the records for the current allotment year (which commenced on 1st January 2026), confirming that requests for rental payment were sent to all allotment holders on a timely basis. By the time of our final visit, all payments due had been received. We also reviewed a sample of tenancy agreements for new tenants who have taken over allotments since the start of the current financial year. We confirmed that, in all cases, signed copies of the agreements are held by the Council.

Markets: We reviewed the spreadsheet records maintained for one sample market (held on 20th September 2025) to supporting information, to confirm that the correct amounts had been charged to stallholders, that payments were received on a timely basis, and that the details of insurance cover required by the Council had been provided. There were no matters arising.

Outstanding debts: We reviewed the Sales Ledger as at 31st March 2026 and were pleased to note that the overall value of long-standing debts remained very low. We confirmed that effective control arrangements remain in place, with appropriate action being taken in relation to outstanding payments.

Conclusion

There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.

Petty Cash

As part of the internal audit certification process on the Council's AGAR, we are required to consider the controls in place over the operation of petty cash accounts. Our objective in this area is, therefore, to ensure that appropriate controls are in place; that expenditure incurred is adequately supported by trade invoices or till receipts; that the expenditure is appropriate for the Council's requirements; that VAT has been separately identified for periodic recovery and that cheque reimbursements from the main cashbooks are properly recorded.

The Council maintains petty cash floats at a number of locations. At our first interim audit, we undertook a sample review to confirm that robust processes and procedures are in place for the use and recording of petty cash - checking the petty cash held at Grove House and agreeing this to the petty cash ledger. We confirmed the balance held and that there was appropriate supporting information for all payments made since the last reconciliation.

At our final audit, we confirmed that the petty cash balances as at 31st March 2026 had been included correctly in the 'cash and bank' figure in Section 2, Box 8 of the draft AGAR.

Conclusion

There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.

Staff Salaries

In examining the Council's payroll function, our objective is to confirm that extant employment legislation is being adhered to, that the requirements of HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) legislation are satisfied regarding the deduction and payment over of income tax and NI contributions and that the requirements of the local government pension scheme are met.

To meet this objective, we examined the payroll procedures in place and the computations undertaken for the payments to staff in 2025-26, by reference to the September 2025 payroll documentation produced by the Council's external payroll bureau (Payroll Options Ltd, Milton Keynes).

Our audit work involved the following:

- We confirmed that the Council has applied the approved employee pay rates for the financial year.
- From review of the contracts of employment for full and part-time staff whose employment commenced in 2025-26, we confirmed that appropriate signed contracts of employment are held.
- We checked and agreed the detail of the salary payments made to a sample of staff in September 2025 to the latest schedule of salaries and pay scales.
- We confirmed that tax and NI deductions have been made applying the appropriate tax code and NI Table, also ensuring that appropriate amounts are paid to HMRC.
- We confirmed that the appropriate employee and employer contributions to the pension scheme have been applied in accordance with the current arrangements and confirmed that these have been paid over to the Pension Fund Administrators on a timely basis.
- We confirmed that the monthly net salary payments to staff agreed to the underlying records.

* Note: The annual pay settlement applying from 1st April 2025 was agreed in August 2025, with the back-pay included in that month's payroll. We reviewed the calculation of the back pay due and confirmed, on a sample basis, that correct payments had been made.

Conclusion

There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.

Asset Register

The reporting arrangements for assets in the AGAR require councils to include all assets at purchase cost, or at a suitable proxy where that value is not known, and for community assets to be valued at a nominal £1. The value of individual assets should not normally change from one year to another, with the only amendments being for acquisitions and disposals.

The Council has recently moved to the RBS ‘Asset Inventory’ software to record all assets held. This has replaced a spreadsheet maintained by the Council’s former external accountant. From our discussions with the Head of Corporate Services (RFO), we are aware that a review the accuracy of some of the historic information held on the asset register is being undertaken. We confirmed that this had not been completed in time for the year end closedown and any adjustments required will be made during 2026-27.

At our final audit visit, we confirmed that the total value of assets held at the previous year-end had been updated for acquisitions during 2025-26 (there were no disposals in the year) and the revised total asset value has been reported correctly in the AGAR (Section 2, Box 9).

Investments and Loans

Our objective is to confirm that an appropriate investment/treasury management policy is in place, that any funds not required for immediate use, whether temporarily or on a longer-term basis are invested in line with that strategy and that interest earned is brought to account correctly and appropriately in the accounting records. We also confirm that any loan repayments due to or payable by the Council are transacted in accordance with the relevant loan agreements.

During the course of our audits, we confirmed the following:

- As required by the ‘Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments’, the Council has a Treasury Management Policy in place. This was updated and approved at the F&GP meeting on 16th June 2025.
- At present, the Council does not hold any long-term investments. As noted above, surplus funds are held in either the NatWest (instant access) Business Reserve Account or the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund account.
- We have checked and agreed the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) loan instalment repayments made in the year to date to the third party “demand” notices from the UK Debt Management Office.
- The repayments of principal and interest (the latter reported on an accrual basis) and the overall loan balances outstanding at the year-end have been reported correctly in the draft AGAR (Section 2, Boxes 5 and 10, respectively).

Conclusion

There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.

Statement of Accounts and AGAR

We have examined the detailed accounts produced by the RBS Omega system and also the draft of the statutory “Accounting Statements 2025-26” that the Council is required to complete and approve (Section 2 of the AGAR). We have agreed the detail to the supporting accounting records and other related documentation.

Conclusions

There are no matters arising from this area of our review that require any formal comment or recommendation. We look forward to receiving a copy of the finalised AGAR (Sections 1 and 2), once the document has been approved by the Council.

On the basis of the internal audit work undertaken during the year, we have completed and signed the 'Annual Internal Audit Report' on page 3 of the AGAR, assigning positive assurances in all areas of internal control.

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

MONDAY 15 JUNE 2026

CORPORATE COMPLIANCE AND FACILITIES

Purpose of report:

- 1.1) To Provide details of the updated Health and Safety Policy
- 1.2) To update members regarding the Council's Corporate Compliance and Facilities

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1. To recommend to Full Council to approve the updated Health and Safety Policy
- 1.2. For Members to note the report

2. POLICY UPDATES

- 2.1. The Health and Safety policy has undergone its annual review, Members are asked to review and recommend to Full Council approval of the policy. Some minor changes have been made. The first is the inclusion of the Health and Safety Action Group (HASAG) in the policy. Secondly, a previous paragraph suggested heads of services would be responsible to remove all risks. It was noted that removing all risks is not possible and should be re-worded to include 'control measures and risk reduction'. Lastly, the previous version omitted the Head of Corporate Services as a competent designated person, this has now been updated. A copy is available in appendix 1 to this report.

3. GROVE HOUSE

Building Works

- 3.1. No further physical works have as yet taken place at Grove House. Progress has been delayed while the Council and its professional advisors resolve planning and listed building compliance matters. Central Bedfordshire Council now requires a formal pre-application advice statement before providing any advice. This step is necessary to avoid enforcement action and to ensure that any works are properly authorised before they begin.
- 3.2. The agreed next step is to prepare and submit a pre-application advice statement, including details of the emergency structural repair works. This will allow formal engagement with the Council's conservation officers and provide clear guidance on how the works should proceed. Once feedback is received, the Council will be in a

position to finalise the scope of works, complete any required surveys, and move forward on site. Officers continue to press for progress so that works can begin as soon as possible and the scaffolding can be removed at the earliest practical opportunity.

Weddings

- 3.3. Grove House has hosted three weddings since re-launching ceremonies, with seven more confirmed to date for 2026.

Tenants

- 3.4. **Hope Church's** current licence to occupy a room at Grove House to store baby equipment will expire on 23 June 2026. A new agreement has been drafted and agreed to take effect for twelve months. The Licence will be available at the meeting for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to sign.
- 3.5. The **History Society** have indicated that they no longer require funding from a Service Level Agreement. Their SLA expired in March 2026 so a simple. licence to occupy agreement has been drafted. The Licence will be available at the meeting for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to sign.

4. HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 4.1. The Corporate Team has reviewed the Grove House building and job risk assessments. The amended versions have been sent to Grove House tenants.
- 4.2. Annual PAT testing is now complete for all sites
- 4.3. The Council's approved contractor Acorn has completed the biannual legionella risk assessments for all sites. Officers are currently working through advised remedials.
- 4.4. The Council's approved contractor ACE is scheduled to attend all sites for annual fire and intruder alarm servicing in June 2026
- 4.5. The Council's approved contractor Challenge Fire, will undertake annual emergency lighting and fire extinguisher inspections for all sites in July 2026.
- 4.6. Officers using the splash park plant room have been issued with new PPE and carried out further training as advised by The Council's Health and Safety partner.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIODIVERSITY

- 5.1. The Council remains committed to reducing carbon emissions. As previously reported, listed building constraints limit improvements at Priory House and Grove House. To help offset these restrictions, halogen bulbs have been, or are being,

replaced with LEDs across all sites. Food waste bins were introduced at Grove House, Bennetts Splash Café and Priory House. Recycling units have replaced wastepaper bins and energy-efficient equipment is chosen whenever products are added or replaced across the Council.

- 5.2. The Grounds Team continue to work in line with The Council's Biodiversity action plan. One example is monitoring weather conditions to facilitate, planting, watering, weeding and general maintenance of green spaces.

6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS - none

7. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 7.1. These are inherent in this report.

8. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. These are inherent in this report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. The review and revised Health and Safety Policy will ensure legal compliance.

10. APPENDICES

- 10.1. Appendix 1 – Health and Safety Policy 2026

11. AUTHOR

Corinne Gilmore – Corporate Performance & Compliance Manager
compliance@dunstable.gov.uk

Dunstable Town Council

Health and Safety Policy

Dunstable Town Council is fully committed to meeting its responsibilities under the **Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974**, the **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999** (as amended), and associated protective legislation, both as an employer and as an organisation. To assist achieve those objectives it has retained the services of a specialist health and safety advisory company (Worknest as of April 2022) to advise on the Council's approach to health and safety across all functions of the Council; to keep workplace health, safety and welfare procedures under constant review; to liaise with the Health and Safety Executive wherever necessary; and to keep the Council and its Councillors abreast of new legislation, Regulations and British Standards, in order to ensure ongoing compliance with the law.

This advisory role is supported through the Council's monthly Management Team meetings and monthly HASAG meetings (Health and Safety Advisory Group) which are chaired by the Town Clerk and Chief Executive and attended by all Council Managers.

The main responsibility for health and safety lies with the Council who is in turn advised by the Town Clerk and Chief Executive. The Council is bound by any acts and/or omissions of the Town Clerk and Chief Executive and his staff, giving rise to legal liability, provided only that such acts and/or omissions arise out of and in the course of Council business.

To comply with its statutory and common law duties, the Council has arranged insurance against liability for death, injury and/or disease suffered by any of its employees arising out of and in the course of employment, if caused by negligence and/or breach of statutory duty on the part of the Council.

Council employees agree, as part of their contract of employment, to comply with their individual duties under the **Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974** and other associated health and safety regulations and will co-operate with their Employer to enable him to carry out his health and safety duties under the Act. Failure to comply with health and safety duties, regulations, work rules and procedures regarding health and safety, on the part of any employee, may lead to dismissal in the case of serious breaches or repeated breaches; such dismissal may be instant and without prior warning.

In accordance with the **Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013**, the Council has instituted a system for reporting accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences to the Health and Safety Executive, in addition to its statutory duty to provide methods of reporting

accidents at all work place locations. The Council will comply with its duties towards employees under the **Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974** and other associated health and safety regulations as far as are reasonably practicable, in order to:

- Provide and maintain plant and systems of work that are safe and without risks to health, a safe place of work, a safe system of work.
- Ensure the safety and absence of risks to health in connection with the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances.
- Provide such information, instruction, training and supervision as may be necessary to ensure the health and safety at work of its employees.
- Make regular risk assessments available to employees.
- Take appropriate preventive/protective measures.
- Provide employees with health surveillance where necessary.
- Appoint competent personnel to secure compliance with statutory duties and to undertake reviews of the policy as necessary.

In order to meet its obligations towards the general public and all lawful visitors to the Council's premises and activities, the Council will pay strict attention to its duties under the **Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974** and the **Occupiers' Liability Acts 1957 and 1984**.

This policy has been prepared in compliance with Section 2(3) of the **Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974** and binds all Councillors, the Town Clerk and Chief Executive, Heads of Service and employees, in the interests of employees and customers. We request that our customers and visitors respect this policy, a copy of which can be obtained on demand.

Signed:

Dated:

Town Clerk and Chief Executive

Signed:

Dated:

Chairman of the Council

Please speak to the Corporate Performance & Compliance Manager to view the latest signed copy.

Organisation - Duties, Roles and Responsibilities

Individual responsibilities for health and safety are allocated by management position and by designated posts within the organisation.

Councillors

The Councillors have the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the Council fulfils its legal responsibilities, and that effective structures are in place for the achievement of the policies concerned with health, safety, welfare and environmental protection.

Town Clerk and Chief Executive

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive has the responsibility for ensuring that policy objectives are achieved and that the Council is kept fully informed of changes and developments with regard to health and safety legislation and regulations. He will also ensure that Council policies are reviewed as appropriate in order to secure continuing compliance with existing policies, current legislation and any changes in the law. To these ends, he will ensure that the Council is informed of the allocation of resources necessary to maintain sound and efficient health and safety arrangements.

Heads of Service

Heads of Service are accountable to the Town Clerk and Chief Executive for implementing the Council's Health and Safety Policy, encouraging and assisting in developing safety procedures and ensuring that established rules and safe working practices are adhered to.

With regard to the departmental activities under their general control, all such Heads of Service will ensure that necessary consideration is given at all times to the requirements of the Council's Health and Safety Policy and, in particular, to the following:

- Safe methods of working.
- Induction training including health and safety matters.
- Welfare facilities.
- Fire precautions.
- Hazards arising from the storage and use of noxious substances, or exposure to noise, dust or fumes.
- Carry out workplace inspections and advise as and where necessary to improve methods of working.
- Investigate accidents and dangerous occurrences and recommend means of preventing recurrence.
- Advise and assist with safety training of personnel.

All Heads of Service will be specifically responsible for the following within their own areas of responsibility:

- Ensuring control measures are in place to reduce risk to customers, their property, and/or their employees. where activities are carried out by Council employees.
- Ensuring, likewise, that operations carried out by contractors will not place employees, nor members of the public, at undue risk.
- Ensuring that all employees are adequately trained and competent to carry out the work allotted to them to reduce risk.

- Ensuring that where health and safety training needs are identified, arrangements for training will be made as appropriate.
- Ensuring that all Council procedures are adhered to at all times.
- Ensuring that close liaison with any contractors working within the department is maintained in all matters regarding health and safety.
- Ensuring that supervisors and line reports are properly trained and receive the support they need to perform their duties.

In fulfilling these responsibilities, all Heads of Service will ensure that:

- This policy is reviewed in the light of their operational responsibilities.
- They know their own, and other persons' responsibility for implementing the Health and Safety Policy.
- All accidents and dangerous occurrences are fully investigated, and preventive actions are recommended in close liaison with the Council's health and safety adviser.
- Safe systems of work are implemented and are adhered to, with such safe systems of work being documented.
- They are aware of, and implement, all safe working practices and procedures.
- All necessary arrangements are made and maintained in respect of accident reporting, first aid, fire precautions, etc.
- All relevant statutory records are regularly maintained and inspected.
- Heads of Service are also responsible for the health and safety of all employees for whom they have an operational responsibility.

Managers / Supervisors

Managers / Supervisors are accountable to their Heads of Service for the day-to-day implementation of the Council's general health and safety policies, the established schedules, and safe working practices and to provide employees with information about hazardous substances and precautions in general. They are additionally responsible for the introduction of remedial measures to reduce or eliminate unsafe acts or conditions. Their responsibilities also include informing, instructing, training and supervising employees in safer methods of work and for investigating accidents that occur in their area or to an employee who reports to them.

They will also liaise with the departmental Heads of Service concerning any queries raised by visitors or subcontractors on health and safety matters.

Employees' Responsibilities

All employees will ensure that:

- They are fully conversant with this Health and Safety Policy.
- They will co-operate with the Council in meeting its statutory duties.
- They will take reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their acts or omissions.
- No one intentionally or recklessly interferes with or misuses anything provided in the interest of health and safety.
- All accidents, dangerous occurrences and near misses are immediately reported to their line manager.
- They are fully conversant with all Fire Procedures applicable to the area in which they are working.
- All equipment provided for personal safety shall be used and maintained in a condition fit for that use, and any defects reported immediately to management.

- Where an employee identifies any condition which in his or her opinion is hazardous, the situation will be immediately reported to their immediate line manager.
- When local management cannot resolve a hazardous situation they must raise it with a relevant Service Head who will then address the issue through the Council's Management Team Meetings.
- During the course of their normal duties, employees will use all equipment and facilities for the intended purpose in a safe, correct manner.

Competent Persons

The Council will appoint competent persons to assist in undertaking the necessary measures to comply with the requirements and prohibitions imposed by or under the relevant statutory provisions.

A person shall be regarded as competent when they have been sufficiently trained and/or have experience or knowledge and other qualities to enable them to properly assist in undertaking such measures.

Worknest and the following members of staff have been designated competent persons for the responsibilities shown:

<p>Council health and safety:</p>	<p>Worknest Consultant and Senior Management Team</p> <p>Worknest Consultant Town Clerk and Chief Executive Head of Community Services Head of Grounds and Environmental Services Head of Corporate Services</p>
<p>Manual handling assessment:</p>	<p>Worknest Consultant and Senior Management Team</p> <p>Worknest Consultant Town Clerk and Chief Executive Head of Community Services Head of Grounds and Environmental Services Head of Corporate Services</p>
<p>COSHH assessments:</p>	<p>Worknest Consultant and Senior Management Team</p> <p>Worknest Consultant Town Clerk and Chief Executive Head of Community Services Head of Grounds and Environmental Services Head of Corporate Services</p>
<p>Administration of all other risk assessments:</p>	<p>Worknest Consultant and Senior Management Team</p> <p>Worknest Consultant Town Clerk and Chief Executive Head of Community Services Head of Grounds and Environmental Services Head of Corporate Services</p>
<p>Vetting of subcontractors' health and safety policies:</p>	<p>Worknest Consultant and Senior Management Team</p>

	Worknest Consultant Town Clerk and Chief Executive Head of Community Services Head of Grounds and Environmental Services Head of Corporate Services
Auditing of health and safety compliance at all work sites:	Retained health and safety advisers – Worknest Consulting

In addition, the Town Clerk and Chief Executive and Heads of Service will assume the following responsibilities

- Through line management and supervision, advising where improvements in health and safety standards or practices are appropriate.
- Ensuring that regular health, safety and housekeeping inspections are carried out, covering buildings, plant, equipment, services, and fire arrangements, to ensure conformity with regulations and Council policies.
- Advising on possible hazards when considering the introduction of new machinery, new materials, new processes, or changes in existing ones.
- Arranging for the provision of written safe systems of work, including where necessary, arranging for the development and use of permit-to-work procedures.
- Ensuring that any raw materials used by the Council conform to statutory health and safety requirements.
- Arranging for the provision of appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) based on risk assessment.
- Arranging for the provision of written procedures for contractors.
- Ensuring the appointment of competent persons in accordance with legislative requirements.
- Maintaining statutory safety records and making statutory safety returns, in addition to maintaining health and safety records required by the Council.
- Ensuring that all employees of the Council receive a copy of this policy statement, including new entrants receiving it as part of their induction programme.

Council's Health and Safety Adviser

The Council's Health and Safety Adviser has been retained in order to provide and disseminate advice and information to the Town Clerk and Chief Executive, and staff and to act as a 'Competent Person'. He/she will maintain close contact with the HSE, and any health and safety consultants appointed and other organisations from which information may be obtained regarding health and safety matters.

He/She will be retained to ensure the effectiveness of the safety policy, safety procedures and practices in relation to Council premises, carrying out regular audits and monitoring activities as necessary. The results of such monitoring will be recorded and corrective action, if required, will be undertaken.

In fulfilling these general responsibilities, the Health and Safety Adviser is retained to assist the Senior Management Team with specific responsibilities for:

- Ensuring the Council is aware of statutory obligations and recommended Codes of Practice by interpreting and keeping management and employees informed of new and developing legislation and other standards.
- Advising management of their responsibilities for accident prevention and avoidance of health hazards.
- Ensuring that all necessary risk assessments required by legislation are carried out.
- Ensuring the provision of first aid, fire safety and emergency procedures.
- Overseeing and reviewing all accident investigations and preparing statistics to assist in monitoring health and safety performance.
- Identifying health and safety training needs and advising on suitable training programmes.

First-Aiders

There is a nominated first aider for all Council premises in accordance with the **Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981, as amended**. The nominated first aider is responsible for the taking of prompt and appropriate action following any accident, whether to an employee or not.

The nominated first aider is responsible for the maintenance of the contents of all first aid kits and will ensure that only items specified will be retained in the kits.

A number of key staff across all departments have been given first aid training to assist with any unforeseen accidents to Council staff or users of Council services. All large-scale Council events are attended by a fully qualified first aid organisation such as St John's Ambulance.

Arrangements and Procedures

The following arrangements and procedures shall be put in place to ensure the health and safety of all employees, and others, whilst at work and as affected by working activities.

Risk Assessments

All premises and activities are subject to risk assessments and must be assessed in accordance with the relevant legislation using the Council documentation provided.

Such assessments will be repeated whenever any of the following factors occur:

- Change in legislation.
- Change in control measures.
- Significant change in work carried out.
- Transfer to new technology.
- Original assessment is no longer valid.

Assessments will be recorded and records maintained by the relevant Service Head. The results of all such assessments will be communicated to and be available for inspection by all employees.

All assessments will identify necessary protective and preventive measures. The Council shall make, and give effect to, any appropriate arrangements for the effective planning, implementation, monitoring and review of any preventive or protective measures identified as a result of risk assessments.

Specific Operational Policies and Procedures

- All Council policies and procedures issued in the interests of health and safety will be regarded as supplementary to this Policy. These will be included within all Council Health and Safety Manuals and will be available to all members of staff.

Specific procedures will be maintained for ensuring that the following requirements are met:

- That all buildings, plant and equipment meet statutory requirements
- That any remedial action required is carried out without delay and that any unsafe equipment is safely immobilised.
- That all new equipment introduced into any location conforms to statutory requirements.
- That all subcontractors who are to work on or in any of the Council's premises are made aware of all safety procedures and any hazards applicable to the areas in which they are to work.
- That all fire fighting appliances, detection systems and alarms are regularly inspected and tested, and a log retained of the same.
- That the fire procedure is displayed and reviewed at frequent intervals with regular tests of the procedure.
- That no new chemicals/substances will be purchased or brought into the premises until their hazards have been assessed in accordance with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002.
- That inspections are made under the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 of all work activities which use electricity and that, so far as is reasonably practicable, any risk to those who may be affected is removed or reduced.
- Any other specific policy required under relevant regulations and Approved Codes of Practice.

Reporting and Investigating of Accidents and Dangerous Occurrences

- All accidents, no matter how minor, will be reported on the work nest Incident report form with notification being sent to the relevant Head of Service.
- All accidents, dangerous occurrences and near misses will be reported immediately to the Heads of Service responsible for the site as soon as possible after the event.
- All accidents, dangerous occurrences and near misses will be investigated within 24 hours by the relevant Heads of Service.
- Where an employee of another Council or organisation is involved in an accident, a copy of the Accident Report Form will be sent to his/her employer.

Training

To comply with the general duty to provide such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of staff, health and safety training will be provided as follows:

- At inductions.
- Repeat training at regular intervals.
- On transfer or promotion to new duties.
- On introduction of new technology.
- On changes in systems of work.
- When training needs are identified during risk assessments.

Heads of Service at all levels will be included in the health and safety training programme.

Records of all health and safety training will be maintained by the HR and payroll Manager.

Consultation

Consultation will take place via the monthly Management Team to discuss matters of health and safety.

Any employee with a health and safety concern must inform his/her supervisor initially. If, after investigation, the problem is not corrected in a reasonable time, or the supervisor decides that no action is required and the employee is not satisfied with the explanation, the employee may then refer the matter to a member of the Council's Management Team who may make representations to the supervisor concerned. This must be in writing.

The advice of the Health and Safety Adviser should be sought if agreement cannot be reached with the supervisor.

If still dissatisfied, the employee may seek an early meeting with the appropriate Heads of Service. Failing resolution at this stage, the matter may be entered on to the agenda of the next meeting of the Council's Management Team at the Chairman's discretion.

Review

Notwithstanding the above, this Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE****MONDAY 15 JUNE 2026****MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS**

Purpose of report: For information

1. SOCIAL MEDIA

- 1.1. The Marketing and Communications Officer, along with other officers, continue to use social media as the primary channel of communication to engage with the public and provide timely updates on Town Council news and events.
- 1.2. The use of posts and stories on social media continues to prove effective, generating positive engagement and interaction from the public. Analytics indicate that this approach helps to increase visibility, broaden audience reach, and encourage participation in Town Council initiatives.
- 1.3. Social media channels have continued to show steady growth since the previous reporting period. Dunstable Town Council's Facebook account has reached another milestone: over 16,000 followers.
- 1.4. Bennett's Café & Splash Park Facebook account has seen a significant growth in followers with (+319). This should increase with the use the of splash park over the summer.
- 1.5. Bennett's Café & Splash Park has been the first to trial community broadcast WhatsApp Group. So far it has 37 followers. There are no visible numbers of other members and only admins can directly post onto the group.
- 1.6. The following figures are accurate as of 29 May and show how many followers have been gained since the previous report:

Platform	Entity	Followers	Change
Facebook	Dunstable Town Council	16,052	+434
	Bennett's Café & Splash Park	5,704	+ 319
	Town Ranger Services	1,547	+42
	Grove Corner	1,581	+18
	Priory House	1,641	+60
Instagram	Dunstable Town Council	1,143	+93
	Bennett's Café & Splash Park	74	+5
	Grove Corner	517	-1
LinkedIn	Dunstable Town Council	387	+15
TikTok	Dunstable Town Council	428	+85

1.7. **Dunstable Town Council Facebook insights.**
Top three social media Facebook posts from 1 March to 29 May 2026 by interactions:

1. Refurb of the horse at Bennett's
2. Floral displays across the town
3. Temporary banking hub

 **Top posts by interactions**



We're happy to share that the horse is back...

18 March 11:40

 905  809
 67  24



Spring has sprung in Dunstable! 🌸 Our...

10 March 12:31

 302  275
 16  10



A Temporary Banking Hub will open at The...

13 March 13:19

 281  127
 49  85

1.8. **Top three social media Facebook stories from 1 March to 29 May 2026 by views:**


1. Town Mayor Cllr Sally Kimondo cheering on Olly Murs picture
2. T Town Mayor Cllr Sally Kimondo cheering on Olly Murs video
3. Love your local market video


 Top stories by views

 <p>Your story</p> <p>14 May 16:28</p> <p>👁 3.1K ❤️ 36</p> <p>🗨 0 ➡️ 1</p>	 <p>Your story</p> <p>14 May 16:29</p> <p>👁 3.0K ❤️ 55</p> <p>🗨 0 ➡️ 18</p>	 <p>Your story</p> <p>16 May 09:41</p> <p>👁 2.1K ❤️ 23</p> <p>🗨 0 ➡️ 0</p>
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1.9. **Top three social media Instagram posts from 1 March to 29 May 2026 by interactions:**

1. Town Mayor Cllr Sally Kimondo raising the flag for St George's Day
2. Around the World
3. Performing at party in the park

 Top posts by interactions

 <p>Today (23 April), we join the nation in...</p> <p>23 April 09:35</p> <p>👁 250 ❤️ 227</p> <p>🗨 13 ➡️ 8</p>	 <p>FREE FAMILY EVENT: Around the...</p> <p>30 April 16:03</p> <p>👁 169 ❤️ 102</p> <p>🗨 16 ➡️ 32</p>	 <p>Take Centre Stage at Party in the Park...</p> <p>14 April 13:00</p> <p>👁 22 ❤️ 13</p> <p>🗨 4 ➡️ 3</p>
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1.10. **Top three social media Instagram stories from 1 March to 29 May 2026 by reach:**

1. Mother's day market video
2. Bites on The Square half term special jerk chicken man
3. Town Mayor Cllr Sally Kimondo cheering on Olly Murs video

 **Top stories by reach**



2. EMAIL MARKETING

- 2.1. The staff and councillor newsletter continues to be produced by the Marketing and Communications Officer, providing regular updates to support effective internal communication across the organisation.

3. WEBSITE

- 3.1. Since the last report, the council's website continues to operate effectively, with no reported issues or negative feedback. All functions appear to be running as expected.
- 3.2. Officers have put a new accessibility statement on the website which will be reviewed quarterly. You can view the online version here: <https://www.dunstable.gov.uk/accessibility-statement/>

Recite Me

- 3.3. Recite Me is an accessibility toolbar added to the council's website to help users access information in a way that suits their individual needs. The Town Council arranged for the Recite Me tool to be provided as part of the new website. It allows users to customise how content is presented without changing the underlying web pages.
- 3.4. The tool enables users to:
 - Listen to website content through text to speech
 - Translate pages into a wide range of languages

- Adjust text size, fonts, colours, and contrast
- Use reading aids such as a ruler, screen mask, and simplified text
- Access definitions and summaries to improve understanding

3.5. The tool helps remove barriers for residents with visual impairments, learning difficulties, or language needs, and supports the council in providing a more accessible and inclusive digital service. Recite Me have provided a report on use for the first year. The toolbar was launched 540 times, with activity peaking in late summer and autumn and remaining steady thereafter. Usage is predominantly mobile, with 370 users accessing the tool via mobile devices compared to 74 on desktop. Text to Speech is the most utilised feature with 268 uses, significantly exceeding all other functions, followed by colour adjustments and translation tools. The toolbar has supported access across a range of key service pages, including the homepage, events, cemetery, and payment services. Engagement is primarily UK-based but includes limited international use across 12 countries. Overall, the data indicates that the tool is actively improving accessibility for residents, particularly through mobile access and audio support

The figures below show how users have visited the Town Council website from 1 January to 1 May 2026:

Organic search (google, Bing etc.)	18,207
Direct:	36,396
Organic social (Facebook, Instagram)	4,836
Mobile:	27.5%
Desktop:	71.4%
Tablet:	1.1%

3.6. It is interesting to note that desktop usage has increased, with a higher percentage of users now accessing the website via desktop compared to mobile devices.

4. EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

4.1. The VMS screen, Community Ward noticeboards, and the What's on screen continue to be used regularly by the Town Council and other community groups.

5. TALK OF THE TOWN

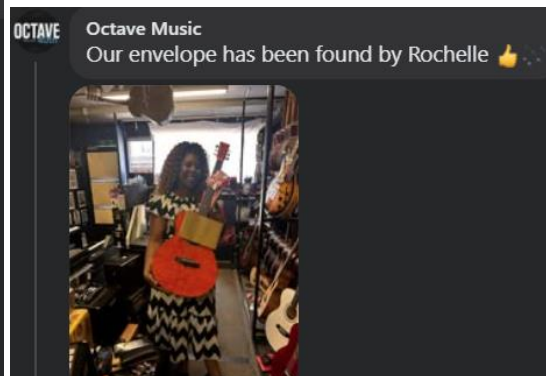
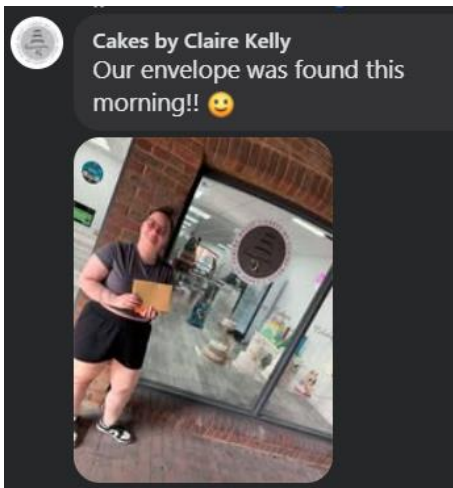
5.1. At the time of writing this report, the summer edition (July) is currently in content review. The delivery will be from 4 July. Copies will be distributed to households as well as being available at Priory House, Bennett's Café, the cemetery, Grove House, and Ashton Square toilets for residents to collect.

5.2. Hospice at Home Volunteers are advertising in the July edition.

6. COMMUNITY LOTTERY

6.1. The Marketing and Communications Officer continues to drip feed on social media about the community lottery to encourage players and new causes to sign up.

- 6.2. To mark the first anniversary of the Dunstable Community Lottery, the Town Council launched a social media-driven scavenger hunt. Golden envelopes were hidden across the town, with clues posted online to guide participants. Residents who successfully located an envelope were awarded a free lottery play. This initiative served as a goodwill gesture aimed at boosting new player registration. The campaign was successful, generating strong engagement from both residents and local businesses.



7. AUTHOR

- 7.1 Rachel Connor – Corporate Marketing & Communications Officer
communications@dunstable.gov.uk

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

MONDAY 15 JUNE 2026

REFERRAL REPORT FROM PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE

Purpose of Report: For Members to approve the following recommendations made by the meeting of the Personnel Sub-Committee held on 2 June 2026.

1. POLICY UPDATE

Members considered a detailed report that recommended the adoption of a Uniform Policy.

Members noted that establishing a clear Uniform Policy would help ensure that clothing standards were applied consistently and reasonably, while taking account of operational requirements, health and safety considerations, and the need to maintain a professional image.

RESOLVED: that the approval of the Uniform Policy be recommended to the Finance and General Purposes Committee

Minute Number (168/26)

2. APPENDICES

2.1 Appendix 1 – Draft Uniform Policy

3. AUTHOR

Kelley Hallam
HR& Payroll Manager
kelly.hallam@dunstable.gov.uk



DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

UNIFORM, DRESS AND APPEARANCE, PPE

Purpose and Scope

This policy applies to all employees, casual workers and temporary staff.

Dunstable Town Council is committed to maintaining a professional, safe and positive public image. The professional image presented by our staff is integral to how Dunstable Town Council is regarded by internal and external stakeholders and the public. Where uniforms or PPE are provided, they are an essential part of how we deliver safe, high-quality services and must be worn and managed appropriately. This policy sets out expectations for dress code, appearance and the issue, wearing, care, replacement and return of council-issued uniform and PPE.

Definitions

Uniform refers to Dunstable Town Council issued PPE and branded clothing, provided for professional appearance, safety and identification.

Wearing Requirements

- All staff should present themselves for work in a neat, clean, tidy and well-groomed manner.
- Jewellery and visible piercings must be kept to a minimum, with only small, discreet items permitted to ensure safety, professionalism, and compliance with the uniform standard.
- No items should be worn of a political nature or offensive to others, be it directly or indirectly.
- Employees must wear Council issued uniform when undertaking duties where a uniform is required. PPE must be worn, used and maintained as instructed.
- Employees must not modify, remove or misuse PPE.

Regardless of work location, it is unacceptable to wear the following:

- Any item of clothing that could present a Health and Safety risk. Consideration must be given to ensuring that an employee is in keeping with a professional appearance.
- Any item of clothing that could cause offence. For example, inappropriate words or images, see-through material, crop tops, cut-off shorts.
- Ripped, frayed or dirty clothing.

Support

Staff who are unable to clean their uniform will be offered practical support to ensure they can maintain the expected standards of hygiene and presentation. This may include access to onsite or contracted laundry services, provision of spare or emergency uniform items. Employees are encouraged to speak confidentially with their line manager as soon as they experience difficulties, so that suitable assistance can be arranged promptly. The aim is to ensure staff feel supported, valued, and able to meet their role requirements without additional stress or disadvantage.

Dunstable Town Council recognises its duties under the Equality Act, should any individual feel they need to discuss their uniform requirements they should do so with their line manager.

Related Standards

Staff must be identifiable when dealing with the public; where issued, ID badges must be worn appropriately.

Use Outside of Working Hours

Employees should avoid wearing uniform outside working hours. Where travelling directly to/from work in uniform is necessary, employees must conduct themselves so as not to bring the council into disrepute and must follow the social media policy (e.g. avoid posting content in uniform that could imply Council endorsement or harm reputation)

Issue, Records and Replacements

Heads of Service or line managers will authorise issue and replacement of PPE and uniform. HR & Payroll Manager maintains the asset record for uniform and PPE. Uniforms and PPE will be recorded at item level and acknowledged by the employee.

Employees must promptly report items that are worn, damaged, ill-fitting or unsuitable: replacements will be arranged where appropriate.

Casual Workers – Issue and Return

Casual staff will normally return items at the end of each shift unless their line manager authorises retention between shifts (e.g. for continuous assignments). In all cases, all items must be returned at the end of engagement.

End of Employment or Role Change

All uniform and PPE must be returned promptly, clean and complete on termination or where the role no longer requires use.

Non-Compliance

Failure to follow this policy, including refusal to wear required PPE, may be addressed under the Council's disciplinary procedure.

Values

Dunstable Town Council values its staff and their individual dress sense, style and recognises that officers should be allowed to demonstrate their religious faith through their dress. Dunstable Town Council will work with employees to allow them to manifest their faith in a way that does not conflict with the image the Council wishes to convey or health and safety requirements.

Relevant Legislation

An employer's dress code must not be discriminatory in respect of the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 for age, disability, gender reassignment, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

Claiming Tax Relief

You may be able to claim tax relief for the costs of cleaning your uniform. Please see the Gov.uk website for more details:

<https://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/uniforms-work-clothing-and-tools>

Policy Ownership, Training and Review

Owner: Head of Corporate Services. (HR and Payroll Manager operational lead)

Training: Uniform and PPE expectations are covered at induction and during probation reviews. This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if legislation, risk assessments or best practice change, aligned to the policy review schedule.

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

MONDAY 18 JUNE 2026

DUNSTABLE MAYORAL FUND

Purpose of report: For Members to agree to establish the Dunstable Mayoral Fund Charity and for the Council to be the sole trustee for the charity. For Members to agree to the fund giving policy and the purpose of the charity.

1. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 1.1. To establish the Dunstable Mayoral Fund (Charity)
- 1.2. To agree that Dunstable Town Council become the sole trustee of the charity.
- 1.3. To approve the fund giving policy for the charity (see appendix 1.)
- 1.4. To approve the purpose of the charity as:

To provide and distribute funds raised by the Mayor of Dunstable on an annual basis in the form of funds to groups that benefit the inhabitants of Dunstable without distinction of political, religious or other opinions, to improve the quality of life in the town. And any other charitable purposes for the public benefit as the trustees may from time to time decide.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Dunstable Town Council agreed as part of its corporate planning process to establish a mayoral charity which would oversee and be responsible for managing the funds raised annually by the mayor, including its distribution.
- 2.2. Officers have engaged Community Action Norfolk (CAN) who are experienced in establishing sole trustee charities (due to local umbrella groups not having the appropriate skill set). CAN have been commissioned to support the Council in this process from planning, application and training.
- 2.3. The timescale for this piece of work is to have it concluded by the end of the year so that from the mayoral year 27/28 the new charity will be in place.

3. MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1. Setting up a charity to oversee the Mayoral fundraising will create a robust and clear mechanism for managing and accessing these funds creating an equality of access and opportunity for the local voluntary and community sector.
- 3.2. Establishing a charity will also mean that the charity can benefit from things such as gift aid when donations are made thus increasing the amount of funds that can be raised and passed to charities each year.
- 3.3. Setting up a charity where the Town Council is a sole trustee will mean that much of the charity's operations are similar to those of the Council and whilst meetings of the charity and the Council will need to be separate they can be administered in very similar ways, utilising town council officers to support the charity where required and using council premises to host the meetings etc.
- 3.4. Establishing the Town Council as the sole trustee will mean that all councillors are trustees of the charity and would need to agree to this when they are voted in and agree to take up the position of a Dunstable Town Councillor.

4. FUND GIVING POLICY

- 4.1. It is important to agree a policy that manages how mayoral funds are distributed, including agreeing how good causes are chosen and how the annual funds are split between good causes. This will ensure a fair and transparent process and will be something the charity commission would require.
- 4.2. The draft policy is provided at Appendix 1. Members are asked to agree the policy as provided to enable this to form part of the charity application. Once adopted this policy would be regularly reviewed by the charity to ensure that it is still fit for purpose.

5. PURPOSE OF DUNSTABLE MAYORAL FUND (CHARITY)

- 5.1. When applying for charitable status, a charity needs to confirm what its purposes are. Therefore agreement is sought from Members for the following recommended purpose:.
- 5.2. The purpose of the charity is; *to provide and distribute funds raised by the Mayor of Dunstable on an annual basis in the form of funds to groups that benefit the inhabitants of Dunstable without distinction of political, religious or other opinions, to improve the quality of life in the town. And any other charitable proposes for the public benefit as the trustees may from time to time decide.*
- 5.3. When distributing funds they must meet the purpose of the charity which is to benefit the Dunstable Community and its residents, to develop the community and capacity of the voluntary and community sector, to enable new projects to emerge which meet new and diversifying needs, to celebrate the town's heritage and culture, to create a town that cares about its natural environment and enhances its environmental assets in a sustainable way.

6. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 6.1. There is no financial impact, although it should be noted that a separate bank account will need to be opened and that financial charity returns will be required annually. It is recommended that the RFO supports the charity in these tasks.

7. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS-

This recommendation will support the objectives to *Continue to improve the organisational management, efficiency and environmental sustainability of the Town Council* and to *increase the sense of pride in Dunstable*.

8. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. Currently there are no checks on charities/good causes who are beneficiaries of the mayoral fund raising which leaves some exposure to funding causes that are not being run well, which includes being inclusive, but could also mean not meeting charity commission requirements. The new fund giving policy shows actions which will prevent this from being possible. It also will ensure that unconscious bias or favouritism has the opportunity to be challenged through the chosen good causes being collectively agreed upon and also not allowing the same good causes to be chosen year after year.

9. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS – none

10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. There will be a requirement for minimal officer support in running the charity which will be provided by existing staff

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1. The recommended approach has been developed following professional advice, and will enable the Council to meet the requirements of UK charity law.

12. ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIODIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS – none

13. APPENDICES

- 13.1. [Appendix 1. Fund giving policy for the Dunstable Mayoral Fund](#)

14. BACKGROUND PAPERS – none

15. AUTHOR

- 15.1 Becky Wisbey – Head of Community Services
becky.wisbey@dunstable.gov.uk

Dunstable Mayoral Fund – Grant Giving Policy

1. Purpose of the Policy

This Grant Giving Policy sets out the principles, eligibility criteria, governance arrangements, and application procedures for the distribution of grants from the Dunstable Mayoral Fund – Charity (“the Fund”).

The purpose of the Fund is to support charitable, voluntary, community, educational, cultural, environmental, and wellbeing initiatives that benefit residents of Dunstable and contribute positively to community life.

The Fund aims to ensure that grants are awarded:

- Fairly and transparently;
 - In accordance with the Fund’s charitable objectives;
 - In a manner that demonstrates community benefit;
 - Consistently and without discrimination.
-

2. Objectives of the Fund

The Fund exists to:

- Support projects and activities that improve the quality of life for residents of Dunstable;
 - Encourage community participation, volunteering, and civic pride;
 - Assist organisations working with vulnerable or disadvantaged groups;
 - Promote inclusion, equality, wellbeing, education, culture, heritage, and environmental sustainability;
 - Support local initiatives that align with the Mayor’s civic priorities.
-

3. Scope of Funding

The Fund may provide grants for:

- Community projects;
- One-off events or activities;
- Equipment purchases;
- Small capital improvements;
- Training and development activities;

- Initiatives promoting health and wellbeing;
- Youth, elderly, disability, or inclusion-focused activities;
- Environmental or heritage projects;

Funding can cover any of the following:

Revenue expenditure – the on-going running costs of the organisation, a project or activity.

Capital expenditure – the one-off costs of buying fixed assets such as premises, equipment, van, furniture or repair to buildings.

Core costs (often referred to as overhead costs) – are those central costs of an organisation that enable it to function but cannot be attributed to a particular project of activity; for example, a salary.

4. Eligible Applicants

Applications may be submitted by:

- Registered charities;
- Community interest companies (CICs);
- Constituted voluntary and community groups;
- Not-for-profit organisations;
- Sports, arts, and cultural organisations operating on a not-for-profit basis.

Applicants must:

- Operate primarily within Dunstable or provide clear benefit to Dunstable residents;
 - Have an appropriate governing document e.g. articles of association or constitution;
 - Maintain a bank account in the organisation's name with at least two unrelated signatories;
 - Demonstrate appropriate financial management arrangements;
 - Not have been a recipient of funding from the Fund in the last two years;
 - Have the relevant policies and insurance cover to run an organisation of its size and purpose.
-

5. Ineligible Applications

The Fund will not normally support:

- Political parties or political activities;
- Activities promoting religious doctrine;
- Private businesses or activities undertaken for profit;
- Statutory responsibilities of public bodies;
- Applications from individuals;
- Projects taking place wholly outside Dunstable unless a substantial local benefit can be demonstrated;
- Activities that discriminate unlawfully;
- Organisations with significant unrestricted reserves without clear justification;
- Repeat funding for the same activity without evidence of impact.

The Fund reserves the right to decline applications that may bring the Fund or the Town Council into disrepute.

6. Funding Levels

The Fund will determine annual grant budgets subject to available fundraising income, therefore grant amounts will vary year on year. Usually there will be an equal split of funds raised through the Fund. However, the trustees may choose specific amounts if they are aware that chosen causes only require a specific amount.

Applicant Good Causes will not specify how much funding is required, as the level of funding is determined by the level of fund-raising income during the Mayoral year. This will be publicly announced by the outgoing Mayor at the end of each Mayoral year.

7. Application Process

Applicants must complete the approved grant application form and provide supporting information as requested.

Applications should normally include:

- Description of the project or activity;
- Details of how the project benefits Dunstable residents;

- Most recent accounts or financial statement;
- Copy of their governing document;
- Safeguarding policies where applicable;
- Equality and inclusion considerations;
- Evidence of appropriate insurance where relevant.

Applications may be submitted at any time, however to be considered for the following Mayoral year applications must be received by 1 January each year e.g. to be considered for the 28/29 Mayoral year applications must be in by 1 January 2028.

The Fund may request additional information before making a decision.

8. Assessment Criteria

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Community benefit;
- Alignment with the Fund's objectives;
- Evidence of need;
- Organisational capacity and governance;
- Sustainability and longer-term impact;
- Inclusivity and accessibility;
- Whether the good cause has received funding through the Fund in the last two years.

Priority may be given to:

- Projects and organisations benefiting vulnerable or disadvantaged residents;
 - Activities and organisations encouraging participation and volunteering;
 - Organisations with limited access to other funding.
 - Projects that promote inclusion, equality, wellbeing, education, culture, heritage, and environmental sustainability;
 - Local initiatives that align with the Mayor's civic priorities.
-

9. Decision-Making

The decision on beneficiary organisations shall normally be made annually by:

- The Dunstable's Mayoral Community Fund committee at their trustee meeting held in March each year,
- In the event that there is a hung decision the incoming Mayor will make the casting vote.

Up to four good causes can be chosen each year with a minimum of one.

All decisions will be recorded, including reasons for approval or refusal.

The Fund reserves the right to:

- Impose conditions on grant awards;
- Refuse applications without obligation to provide detailed feedback.

There shall be no automatic right of appeal, although applicants may request feedback and may reapply in future years.

10. Conditions of Grant

Successful applicants must:

- Use the funding solely for the benefit of Dunstable and it's residents and cannot use this money to fund work outside of the Parish boundary;
- Notify the Fund of any material changes to the organisation and/or funded activity;
- Acknowledge support from the Dunstable Mayoral Fund in publicity materials where appropriate;
- Complete any monitoring or reporting;
- Comply with all relevant legal and safeguarding obligations.

The Fund may withhold or reclaim funding where:

- False or misleading information has been provided;
- Grant conditions are breached;
- The project does not proceed or the organisation folds;
- Funds are used for unauthorised purposes.

11. Monitoring and Reporting

Recipients may be required to provide:

- A short end-of-project report;

- Financial evidence of expenditure;
- Photographs, testimonials, or case studies;
- Evidence of outcomes and community impact.

Failure to provide satisfactory reporting may affect future applications.

The Fund may publish details of grants awarded in the interests of transparency.

12. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Fund is committed to equality of opportunity and will not discriminate unlawfully on the grounds of:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Gender reassignment;
- Marriage or civil partnership;
- Pregnancy or maternity;
- Race;
- Religion or belief;
- Sex;
- Sexual orientation.

Applicants are expected to demonstrate inclusive practices and accessibility where appropriate.

13. Safeguarding

Organisations working with children, young people, or vulnerable adults must:

- Have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures;
- Ensure relevant checks and training are in place;
- Comply with all legal safeguarding responsibilities.

The Fund may request copies of safeguarding documentation before any award is made.

14. Fraud, Misuse and Conflicts of Interest

Any actual or perceived conflicts of interest must be declared by applicants and decision-makers.

Council members, officers, or panel members involved in assessing applications must withdraw from discussions where a conflict exists.

The Fund takes fraud and misuse of funds seriously and reserves the right to investigate concerns and recover funds where appropriate.

15. Data Protection

The Fund will process personal data in accordance with applicable data protection legislation, including the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Information submitted as part of the application process may be used for:

- Assessing applications;
- Administering grants;
- Monitoring and audit purposes;
- Publication of successful grant awards.

Personal information will be handled securely and retained only for as long as necessary.

16. Publicity and Transparency

The Dunstable Mayoral Fund may publish:

- Names of successful applicants;
- Amounts awarded;
- Brief summaries of funded projects.

Recipients may be invited to participate in publicity, civic events, or promotional activities relating to the Fund and the Mayoral fund raising activities.

17. Review of the Policy

This policy shall be reviewed periodically by Dunstable Town Council or the appropriate governing body to ensure it remains effective, lawful, and aligned with the objectives of the Dunstable Mayoral Fund.

Minor administrative amendments may be made by the Town Clerk where necessary.

18. Adoption

This Grant Giving Policy was adopted by Dunstable's Mayoral Fund on:

Date: _____

Minute Reference: _____

Signed:

Mayor of Dunstable

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

MONDAY 15 JUNE 2026

REVIEW OF FLAG FLYING POLICY

Purpose of Report:	To review the current flag flying policy and consider whether any changes are required.
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1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1. Members are asked to decide which of options 1-3 to adopt, and then to identify any other required changes to the current flag flying policy:

Option 1: Keep the current arrangements with no change.

Option 2. Continue the current arrangements on the main flagpole and install the *town crest* permanently on the second flagpole at the front of Grove House.

Option 3: Continue the current arrangements on the main flagpole and install the *Union Flag* permanently on the second flagpole at the front of Grove House.

Option 4: Any other changes Members wish to make to the policy

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. Councillor Brennan has requested the Council review its flag flying policy.

2.2. The Council adopted its current flag flying arrangements in 2024. Since then, the main flagpole beside Grove House has generally flown the town crest flag, with other suitable flags raised on specific days or for special occasions.

2.3. The current arrangements are working well. The Council now also places a notice next to the flagpole whenever a different flag is raised, so residents and visitors can see why that flag is being flown. This has helped explain occasions such as the King's Birthday and Bedfordshire Day.

2.4. The Council has a second flagpole at the front of Grove House. This has not been used for some years because the flag can only be attached by leaning precariously out of a window or by using a cherry picker. As the second pole was previously used several times each year, this was no longer considered a safe way of working.

- 2.5. There is a second vertical flagpole outside Grove House, however this was funded and permission granted specifically to fly the Green Flag awarded to Grove House Gardens and cannot be used for any other purpose.
- 2.6. The government provides guidance on the flags that are allowed to be flown and in what circumstances. This is included at Appendix 2.
- 2.7. The government also provides guidance on flying the Union Flag from government buildings; this is included at Appendix 2. This specifies that,
- 2.8. *“There are designated days when the Union Flag must be flown on UK government buildings by command of His Majesty The King. However, UK government buildings are encouraged to fly the Union Flag all year around. This guidance is aimed at UK government buildings. However, we would encourage local authorities and other local organisations to follow suit where they wish to fly flags.”*
- 2.9. The Town Council is therefore encouraged but not obliged to follow this guidance. The Council’s current approach of raising the Union Flag on designated days meets this guidance.
- 2.10. Were the Council to fly the Union Flag from the main flagpole every day, either alone or above the Town Crest, then the Council would have no way of acknowledging designated days such as the King’s birthday. The current system allows for designated days to be marked in a clear, visual manner.
- 2.11. The Council would be allowed to fly either the Union Flag or the Town Crest permanently from the flagpole on the front of Grove House within the government’s guidance.

3. MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1. Members are asked to consider whether the current approach should remain unchanged or whether the Council should also fly a flag, permanently, from the pole on the front of Grove House.
- 3.2. single flag could be installed on the front of Grove House using a cherry picker and then left in place permanently. This would avoid repeated working at height while allowing the front of Grove House to display a permanent flag. It may be possible to arrange the installation as part of other works to Grove House or on the High Street to save costs.
- 3.3. If members support use of the second flagpole, they may wish to choose whether it should fly the Union Flag or the Town Crest throughout the year. Either option could sit alongside the current practice on the main flagpole, which would continue to fly the town crest most of the time and other appropriate flags on special days and occasions. Either option would comply with legislation. The Town Council is the only organisation that flies the Town Crest, so not doing so would mean the town’s flag would not be flown.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. The purchase of an additional flag required can be covered within the revenue budget for civic regalia.

5. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. Flags are emotive symbols, and this contributes to the Council's corporate priorities to preserve and enhance the history and identity of the town, creating a sense of pride in Dunstable.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. The current policy enables the Council to celebrate key events in the year.

7. HEALTH AND SAFETY, LEGAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIODIVERSITY POLICY IMPLICATIONS None.

- 7.1. The recommended changes comply with planning law and government guidance regarding flag flying. The recommended approach would ensure all flags are installed safely.

8. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. The flying of flags is undertaken by the Town Ranger service within its existing resources.

9. APPENDICES

- 9.1. Appendix 1. Current Flag Flying Policy.
- 9.2. Appendix 2. Government guidance on flag flying
- 9.3. Appendix 3. Government guidance on flying the Union Flag from government buildings

10. AUTHOR

Paul Hodson. Town Clerk and Chief Executive
paul.hodson@dunstable.gov.uk



FLAG FLYING POLICY

The Town Flag will be flown from the Town Council's main flagpole next to Grove House all year round unless another flag is being flown.

Other Flags will be flown on recognised days and will be flown for one day unless agreed otherwise. The Town Rangers will raise the appropriate flag at 8 am on a recognised flag flying day. When a flag flying day falls on a Sunday the flag will be raised at 4 pm on a Friday and lowered at 8 am on a Monday.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive in consultation with the Mayor has discretion to fly the union flag at other times:

- To celebrate and support sporting events of significance.
- In recognition of a royal visit in consultation with the Lord Lieutenant.
- In respect of a formal visit by another significant dignitary.
- A special event of success in the town.
- Formal Town Council Civic occasions.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive in consultation with the Mayor has discretion to fly the union flag at half-mast on national occasions such as the announcement of the death of the sovereign and other occasions commanded by the sovereign. The Town Council is permitted to fly the Union Flag at half-mast to mark local as well as national commemorations or losses, including the death of present councillors or past Mayors, on the death/funeral of a serving officer in the Armed Forces from the town, or on the death/funeral of a serving Town Councillor, local Unitary Councillor, or local Member of Parliament.

The Designated Flag Flying dates are as follows:

Second Monday in March	Commonwealth Day	Flag of Commonwealth of Nations
23 April	St George's Day	St George's Flag

1 June	LGBTQAI+ and Pride month start	New Pride Progressive flag
Second Sat in June	HM King's Official Birthday	Union flag
Last Saturday in June	Armed Forces Day	Armed Forces flag
30 June	LGBTQ+ and Pride month end	New Pride Progressive flag
17 July	Birthday of HM the Queen Consort	Union flag
8 September	His Majesty's accession	Union flag
11 November	Armistice Day	Union flag
Second Sunday in November	Remembrance Day	Union flag
14 November	Birthday of HM King Charles III	Union flag
28 November	Bedfordshire Day	Bedfordshire flag



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government (2018 to 2021)



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Guidance

Flying flags: a plain English guide

Updated 20 July 2021

Applies to England

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Introduction

All flag flying is subject to some standard conditions

(a) Flags which do not need consent

(b) Flags which do not require consent provided they comply with certain restrictions

(c) Flags which require consent

Further information



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Introduction

Flags are a very British way of expressing joy and pride – they are emotive symbols which can boost local and national identities, strengthen community cohesion and mark civic pride.

The government wants to see more flags flown, particularly the Union Flag, the flag of the United Kingdom. It is a symbol of national unity and pride. The government has recently issued guidance encouraging the flying of the Union Flag on all UK government buildings throughout the year, alongside other national and local flags.

We are keen for local authorities and other local organisations to follow suit. We have made it easier for the Union Flag to be flown alongside other flags, so organisations can highlight their local identities, as well as their national identities, and celebrate special days or events which champion civic pride.

In England, the flying of flags is treated as advertisements for the purposes of the planning regime to ensure the flags do not impact on safety or amenity. Some flags require formal consent (permission) from the local planning authority, whereas others like the Union Flag do not. The detailed controls over flag flying are set out in detailed regulations (see links below).

This plain English guide provides a brief summary of the regulations so that individuals and organisations can easily understand when they can fly a flag in England without the need for consent. It incorporates the latest changes to the regulations introduced in June 2021. These regulations now allow for the Union Flag to be flown with another flag from the same flagpole, provided certain conditions are met.

If you are unclear about whether consent is required for flying a flag, you should contact your local planning authority who can provide detailed advice.

All flag flying is subject to some standard conditions

All flags must be:

- be maintained in a condition that does not impair the overall visual appearance of the site
- be kept in a safe condition
- have the permission of the owner of the site on which they are displayed (this includes the Highway Authority if the sign is to be placed on highway)

land)

- not obscure, or hinder the interpretation of official road, rail, waterway or aircraft signs, or otherwise make hazardous the use of these types of transport
- be removed carefully where so required by the planning authority

Subject to compliance with the standard conditions, there are 3 categories of flag:

(a) flags which can be flown without consent of the local planning authority

(b) flags which do not need consent provided they comply with further restrictions (referred to as “deemed consent” in the Regulations)

(c) flags which require consent (“express consent”)

(a) Flags which do not need consent

The full list of flags that do not require consent are:

1. Any country’s national flag, civil ensign or civil air ensign
2. The flag of the Commonwealth, the United Nations or any other international organisation of which the United Kingdom is a member
3. A flag of any island, county, district, borough, burgh, parish, city, town or village within the United Kingdom
4. The flag of the Black Country, East Anglia, Wessex, any Part of Lincolnshire, any Riding of Yorkshire or any historic county within the United Kingdom
5. The flag of Saint David
6. The flag of Saint Patrick
7. The flag of any administrative area within any country outside the United Kingdom
8. Any flag of His Majesty’s forces
9. The Armed Forces Day flag

The above flags or their flagpoles must not display any advertisement or subject matter additional to the design of the flag, but the Regulations now highlight that you can attach a black mourning ribbon to either the flag or flagpole where the flag cannot be flown at half mast, for example, when flying a flag on a flagpole projecting at an angle from the side of a building.

The use of the word “country” in (1) and (7) of the list above, includes any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and any British Overseas Territory. The

flags of St George and St Andrew are recognised as the national flags of England and Scotland, but the flags of St David and St Patrick are listed separately as they do not necessarily fall into the category of a country's national flag.

Two flags can also be flown from the same flagpole without the need for consent if:

- both flags are within the list above; or
- one flag is within the list above and the other is within the categories of flag set out under (b) below.

In either case, if one of the flags is the Union Flag, it must be flown in the superior position.

Following the UK's departure from the European Union, the flag of the European Union is no longer included in the list of flags that do not require consent.

(b) Flags which do not require consent provided they comply with certain restrictions

A number of categories of flag may be flown without consent, subject to certain restrictions regarding the size of the flag, the size of characters on the flag, and the number and location of the flags.

Categories of flag that can now be flown:

- house flag – flag is allowed to display the name, emblem, device or trademark of the company (or person) occupying the building, or can refer to a specific event of limited duration that is taking place in the building from which the flag is flown
- any sports club (but cannot include sponsorship logos)
- the Rainbow flag (6 horizontal equal stripes of red, orange, yellow, green, blue and violet).
- specified award schemes – Eco-Schools, Queen's Awards for Enterprise and Investors in People
- the NHS flag
- certain environmental awards (see below)

The restrictions on flying this second category of flag relate to where the flagpole is located on a building or within the grounds of a building.

Flying a flag on a vertical flagpole from the roof of a building

Two flags on the same vertical flagpole on the roof of a building are permitted provided one of the flags is from category (a) (flags which do not need consent such as a national flag) and that flag is flown in the superior position.

Otherwise only one flag on a vertical flagpole on the roof of a building is permitted.

There are no restrictions on the size of flag.

No restrictions on the size of any character or symbol displayed on the flag, except where a flag is flown within an area of outstanding natural beauty, area of special control, the Broads, conservation area or a National Park (referred to elsewhere as “controlled areas”) where the characters may be no more than 0.75 metre in height (0.3 metre in height in an area of special control).

It is permitted to fly one flag (or two if one is from category (a) (flags which do not need consent) on a vertical flagpole on the roof of a building and one flag (or two if one is from category (a) (flags which do not need consent) on a flagpole within the grounds of the building without consent (subject to restrictions below). However, it is not permitted to fly a flag on a projecting flagpole and on a vertical roof top flagpole without consent.

Flying a flag on a flagpole projecting from any part of a building other than the roof (eg projecting from the side of the building)

Two flags on the same flagpole projecting from any part of a building are permitted provided one of the flags is from category (a) (flags which do not need consent) such as a national flag and that flag is flown in the superior position.

Otherwise, only one flag on a projecting flagpole on a building is permitted.

The flag may not exceed 2 square metres in size.

No restrictions on the size of characters.

Consent is required if the flagpole is in a controlled area.

It is permitted to fly one flag (or two if one is from category (a) (flags which do not need consent) on a vertical flagpole on the roof of a building and one flag (or two if one is from category (a) (flags which do not need consent) on a flagpole within the grounds of the building without consent (subject to restrictions below). However, it is not permitted to fly a flag on a vertical flagpole on the roof and a projecting flagpole without consent.

Flying one or two flags within the grounds of a building

You can fly two flags on the same flagpole within the grounds of a building (the regulations refer to 'curtilage') provided one of the flags is from category (a) (flags which do not need consent) and that flag is flown in the superior position.

You can fly flags on two separate flagpoles within the grounds (the regulations refer to "curtilage") of a building at the same time subject to the conditions listed below:

- there are no restrictions on the size of the flag, but any flagpole may not exceed 4.6 metres above ground level.
- consent is required if the flag is to be flown in a controlled area.
- only one flag (or two if one is from category (a) (flags which do not need consent) can be flown on a flagpole within the grounds of a building if one flag (or two if one is from category (a) (flags which do not need consent) is either being flown from the roof, or is projecting from the building.

The table below summarises the various options for flying flags from, or within the grounds, of buildings.

Summary of location options

If I fly one flag (or two if one is from category (a) Flags which do not need consent)

What other flags do not require consent

On a vertical flagpole on the roof

One additional flagpole in the grounds of the building displaying one flag (or two if one is from category (a) (flags which do not need consent))

If I fly one flag (or two if one is from category (a) Flags which do not need consent)

What other flags do not require consent

On a projecting flagpole from the building

One additional flagpole in the grounds of the building displaying one flag (or two if one is from category (a) (flags which do not need consent))

On a flagpole in the grounds of a building

One additional flagpole – either a vertical flagpole on the roof of a building or a projecting flagpole attached to the building or a flagpole in the grounds of a building displaying one flag (or two if one is from category (a) (flags which do not need consent))

Green and blue environmental award scheme flags

The regulations allow a flag of the Blue Flag Award scheme to be flown from a flagpole on part of a beach or marina and a flag of the Green Flag Award scheme or Green Flag Community Award scheme to be flown on part of a park, garden or other green space, without the need for consent.

(c) Flags which require consent

Any flag not identified above requires express consent from the local planning authority before it can be flown.

Further information

The regulations governing the flying of flags in England are set out in the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 (as amended in 2012 and in 2021).

These regulations, including relevant amendments to flying of flags, can be viewed on the government legislation website:

- [Town and Country Planning \(Control of Advertisements\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2007/783/contents/made) (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2007/783/contents/made>)
- [The Town and Country Planning \(Control of Advertisements\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2012](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/2372/contents/made) (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/2372/contents/made>)
- [The Town and Country Planning \(Control of Advertisements\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2021](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2021/617/contents/made) (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2021/617/contents/made>)

See [planning practice guidance for local planning authorities on the control of advertisements](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/advertisements) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/advertisements>).

See further information on flags on the [Flag Institute's website](https://www.flaginstitute.org/wp/) (<https://www.flaginstitute.org/wp/>).

See Union Flag flying guidance for UK government buildings at [Designated days for Union flag flying](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/designated-days-for-union-flag-flying) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/designated-days-for-union-flag-flying>).

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Guidance

Union Flag flying guidance for UK government buildings

Designated days when the Union Flag must be flown on UK government buildings. UK government buildings are also encouraged to fly the Union Flag all year round.

From: **[Department for Culture, Media and Sport \(/government/organisations/department-for-culture-media-and-sport\)](#)**

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- Designated days for flying the Union Flag on UK government buildings 2026
- Useful resources

The Union Flag is the national flag of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Crown Dependencies and the Overseas Territories. It is a symbol of national unity and pride. The first Union Flag was created in 1606 and combined the flags of England and Scotland; the present Union Flag dates from 1801.

There are designated days when the Union Flag must be flown on UK government buildings by command of His Majesty The King. However, UK government buildings are encouraged to fly the Union Flag all year around.

This guidance is aimed at UK government buildings. However, we would encourage local authorities and other local organisations to follow suit where they wish to fly flags.

Flying the Union Flag

Where UK government buildings only have one flagpole, the Union Flag should be flown every day except on certain occasions when you may wish to fly other flags, including but not limited to, the national flags of the constituent nations of the United Kingdom, the Armed Forces Day flag, the Commonwealth flag, county and other local flags, and other flags which may promote civic pride.

DCMS may issue ad-hoc guidance encouraging UK government buildings to fly such flags throughout the year, alongside the Union Flag

Where UK government buildings have more than one flagpole, and two flags are being flown, the Union Flag must always be flown in the superior position which is either:

- the highest flagpole
- the centre flagpole where there is an odd number of poles of the same height, or
- the left centre flagpole viewed from the front of the building, where there is an even number of poles of the same height

In England, it is now possible to fly more than one flag on the same flagpole if there is enough space. If so, the Union Flag should always fly on top ('in the superior position').

UK government building flagpoles should not remain empty – the default should be flying the Union Flag if no other flag is being flown.

In Northern Ireland, designated flag flying for Northern Ireland government buildings is governed by legislation rather than this guidance.

Designated days for flying the Union Flag on UK government buildings 2026

1 March: St David's Day (in Wales)
9 March: Commonwealth Day (second Monday in March)
17 March: St Patrick's Day (in Northern Ireland)
9 April: His Majesty The King's Wedding Anniversary
23 April: St George's Day (in England)
6 May: Coronation Day
13 June: Official Birthday of His Majesty The King
21 June: Birthday of HRH The Prince of Wales
17 July: Birthday of Her Majesty The Queen
8 September: His Majesty The King's Accession
8 November: Remembrance Day (second Sunday in November)
14 November: Birthday of His Majesty The King
30 November: St Andrew's Day (in Scotland)

Also:

The day of the opening of a Session of the Houses of Parliament by His Majesty and the day of the prorogation of a Session of the Houses of Parliament by His Majesty. Flags should be flown on these days even if His Majesty does not perform the ceremony in person. Flags need to be flown in the Greater London area.

Useful resources

The College of Arms, the Crown body with responsibility for heraldic matters for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, has published [frequently asked questions relating to the Union Flag \(https://www.college-of-arms.gov.uk/resources/union-flag-faqs\)](https://www.college-of-arms.gov.uk/resources/union-flag-faqs) including how the Union flag should be flown, along with information on the College's [approved designs of the Union Flag \(https://www.college-of-arms.gov.uk/resources/union-flag-approved-designs\)](https://www.college-of-arms.gov.uk/resources/union-flag-approved-designs).

In England and Wales, flags are treated as advertisements for the purposes of the planning regime, but express advertisement consent is not required to fly the Union flag from a flagpole. The government has published [a guide on the planning rules in England on flying types of flag \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flying-flags-a-plain-english-guide\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flying-flags-a-plain-english-guide).

In Scotland, flag flying is outside the scope of the advertisement control regime.

*Note: The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021, which came into force on 24 June 2021, allows for two flags, including at least one national flag, to be flown from the same flagpole.

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DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE****MONDAY 22 JUNE 2026****REFERRAL REPORT FROM GROUNDS & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Purpose of Report: For Members to consider the best approach to enabling use of ear-marked reserves

1. EARMARKED RESERVES

- 1.1. The committee received a recommendation to approve the release of Grounds and Environmental Services specific ear-marked reserves for expenditure due to be incurred specifically for their purpose, i.e. from the following reserves:

Reserve	Balance at 30.04.2026 (excluding commitments)	Detail
331 – Tree Reserve	£24,861	For ongoing annual surveys / inspections and subsequent essential works
344 – Fencing Reserve	£14,088	For essential replacement and repair works

- 1.2. Members discussed the recommendation and the role of ear-marked reserves. It was noted that the Community Services Committee had approved a similar recommendation, but Members of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee had reservations in providing a blanket spending approval.
- 1.3. It was proposed, seconded and:

RESOLVED: that the matter be referred to the Finance and General Purposes Committee for further consideration.

Minute Number (178/26)

2. CONSIDERATIONS**Tree Reserve**

- 2.1. Historically, the Tree Reserve has only been used for tree surveys, inspections, re inspections and the subsequent works arising from those professional findings on Council owned land. This includes tree removal, disposal, pruning and other essential remedial works.

- 2.2. It has been standard practice in recent years for committee to approve the reserve, in its entirety, for surveys or inspections and any consequent works. Members then retain oversight through the regular Grounds information report, which provides updates on inspections undertaken, works identified and expenditure incurred.
- 2.3. The revenue budget for trees is split across four cost centres; Allotments, Recreation Grounds, Cemetery and Town Centre, and for 2026/27 totals £5,567. These budgets are available for routine maintenance during the year and will also contribute towards annual inspections, expected to cost approximately £4,000 this financial year. Those inspections will then determine what further works are required.
- 2.4. Expenditure from this reserve varies significantly from year to year because the extent of work depends on inspection findings and the condition of individual trees. Expenditure was £18,220 in 2025/26, £4,967 in 2024/25, £13,130 in 2023/24 and £8,966 in 2022/23.
- 2.5. A blanket approval does not create any new purpose for the reserve. It simply allows officers to use the reserve for the purpose for which it was established, without needing to return to committee for separate approvals once inspection outcomes are known.
- 2.6. This approach is more efficient because tree related works are often identified in batches following inspections and can then be programmed promptly, procured in a coordinated way and completed at the most suitable time. Requiring separate committee approval after inspections have identified necessary works can introduce avoidable delay, increase administrative handling and reduce the Council's ability to respond quickly to safety and asset management issues.

Fencing Reserve

- 2.7. The Fencing Reserve has seen limited expenditure in the past five years, with urgent works being met where possible from revenue repairs and maintenance budgets.
- 2.8. Historical expenditure from the reserve has been for replacement and improvement works to fencing on Council assets and land.
- 2.9. A blanket approval would not widen the approved use of the reserve. It would simply allow officers to draw on the earmarked funding for essential fencing replacement or repair works as needs arise during the year.
- 2.10. This is a practical and efficient approach, particularly because there is no specific fencing revenue budget available. Where fencing fails or deteriorates, delay can lead to greater repair costs, operational difficulties, health and safety concerns or risks to the security and condition of Council sites.

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