

Locum Clerk/RFO's report

Full Council meeting 9th September 2026

Public Conveniences

There has been issues with the public conveniences which are being addressed. Complaints have also been received which have been responded to.

- Door lock mechanism - The mechanism is intact but it has been pulled off from the door, subsequently damaging the door where the mechanism screws into it. Quotes are being obtained to repair this - either a replacement mechanism or possibly it may need a new door. The Handyman has repaired this previously using bigger screws and glue to carry out a temporary repair but as it has been pulled off again that kind of repair will not be possible again.
- Blocked urinal in the men's WC which will be dealt with.
- Tyre marks on floor (suspect a bicycle maybe) – to be cleaned.



Benches

Sadly, there has been a spate of vandalism to benches.

There are two benches with two rotten slats. One has been repaired and the Handyman is obtaining items to repair the other.

One of the new picnic benches has had its securing metal spears pulled out the ground and the bench subjected to being moved by persons apparently using the bench to sleep on. The Handyman is dealing with this repair.

Bins

A lot of the bins are in a bad state of repair and we are receiving reports for such. Cllr Harris is looking into a bin replacement programme so these issues will be addressed shortly.

External Audit

The external auditor has sent a considerable request for further information / clarification. This will take an awful lot of time to complete as it is difficult when I did not do last year's accounts so I need to source a lot of information.

Accounts / Accounting Software / Budget

The accounting software has not been set up properly in terms of sales/purchase ledgers, cost centres, nominal codes etc. Due to Council's income, we need to operate on an Income & Expenditure basis as opposed to a Receipts & Income basis. The current software only allows for cashbook entries so even though it is an Income & Expenditure system, I haven't been able to set it up properly with the ledgers. I have added a motion to this agenda for Council to consider the purchase of the ledgers to add to the software.

The accounts are up-to-date but need a lot more work. Once I have the ledgers I will review all the cost centres and nominal codes and ensure the accounts are on a full I&E basis.

Invoices are currently raised manually and not entered into the accounting software, apart from the receipt of the payment. Once I have the sales ledger, I can start raising sales invoices on the software which will give us a complete audit trail and more accountability. This also allows us to easily see outstanding debtors.

I have spent a lot of time reviewing / re-writing the 2026/27 budget as it was not sufficient. I am very pleased that the Finance Committee approved the revision and I hope that Full Council will also approve it. Once approved, I can then adjust everything on the accounting software – budget, nominals, cost centres etc. This will give us a more accurate picture of the financial position. The reviewed budget does show the finances as being very tight so I will closely monitor all expenditure.

The financials to date – balance sheet, trial balance, income & expenditure, budget to date – were presented to the Finance Committee held on 19.08.26. I will continue to ensure these reports are presented to every Finance Committee meeting going forwards.

The banks have been reconciled to date and the bank statements along with each bank reconciliation were presented to the Finance Committee meeting held on 19.08.26 and signed by the Chairman as a non-bank signatory. The documents will also be signed off by another non-bank signatory Member.

I am liaising with Cambridge Building Society and Unity Trust Bank to update the bank signatories. I am afraid this is not a quick process, understandably due to security. If Council approve opening a new current account with Unity, they will be able to do a

switch which will speed up the process of accessing accounts as it will no longer be necessary to access one account as Unity would close it and transfer all funds over.

Planning

I am pleased that Council approved the reconvening of the Planning Committee to consider planning applications/issues. Some Members have asked for training so they know how to respond to applications. Council approved this training but I am afraid I have had so many other priorities and not yet arranged it. I am concerned and will make this a priority and commence the meetings shortly.

Annual Salary Increase

The government have finally announced the 2026/27 annual salary increase which is 3.3%. Staff will receive the increase in their September salaries and it has to be backdated to April. I did allow for this in the reviewed budget.

Staffing / Office Opening

I have carried out the interviews for the two temporary part-time Administration Assistants. We had a high calibre of candidates and I am pleased to report that two lovely ladies will be starting on 15th September. They will each work 12.5 hours per week. Their main duties will be to have a presence in the office, answer calls, emails, assist with agendas and minutes, work on the communications – social media, website, residents meeting, booking training, Christmas event etc.

One of my next main priorities is to start the recruitment process for the Clerk.

Barleythorpe Sign

The Handyman is reinstalling the sign. The old concrete has been removed and in order to secure the sign better, 80kg of postcrete has been placed into the 2ft hole. Deeper footings have also been dug but this has proved difficult with the ground being so hard recently in the extreme dry spell, subsequently more postcrete will be needed when this has been dug out fully.

GDPR / Website

There is a lot of information on the website that should not be in the public domain. I have removed a lot of it but there is more work to be done. This is an awfully time consuming task.

A company complained that their quote had been published online. That has been removed, along with many others.

Grampian Way Play Area

As resident has written concerning Grampian Way play park as they feel the floor is very uneven around the climbing frame/slide area and some of the floor has sunk. Also, around the netting some flooring has come out of the fishes.

The Handyman has been asked to inspect the play area and we will arrange any remedial works needed.

I am checking as to when the ROSPA play inspections are due to ensure they are carried out.

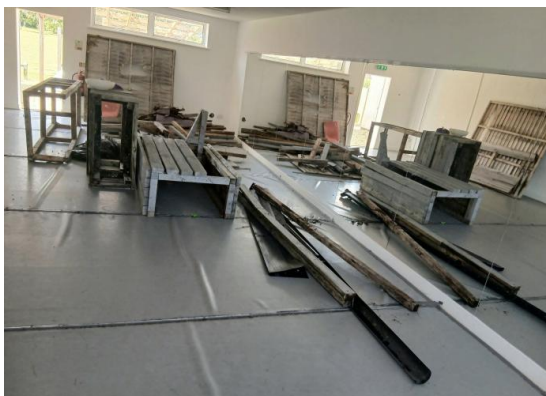
Princess Avenue

The Chairman and the Handyman have cleared up the mess at the back of the building.

Whilst working in the area, they noticed screws had been removed from one of the steel sheets protecting the back door. The Handyman has replaced the screws with security screws. They also noticed two screws were missing from the steel sheet on the door leading from the kitchen. It appears they had fallen out because the door is rotten and will need replacing. The door has been secured by screwing two large screws into the frame.

The damaged litter bin housing from the far side of the field has been removed. The metal insert has been left in place so people still have a bin. All the litter has been cleared from the back area of Princess Avenue.

I will arrange for a skip to remove the rubbish.



Workload

I still have an extremely extensive and growing workload and To Do List which I will continue to work through in priority order. Most of my time is taken up with meetings, agendas, compiling meeting supporting information, minutes, HR matters, general administration and emails at the moment. Hopefully, the temporary Admin Assistants

will help clear a lot of the backlog and free me up to do more Clerk work as opposed to general admin.