Full Council meeting 10th November 2026

Clerk's Report

HOPPER BUS

RCC still haven't sent a contract. RCC have advised that it is with their solicitor. They are chasing their invoice for which I have informed them it will not be considered for payment until the contract has been received and considered.

GOVERNANCE DOCUMENT REVIEW

Three quotes have now been obtained for the non-HR governance document review which has been added to this agenda for Council consideration.

I have had a long meeting with Peninsula, Council's HR provider, to go through all our requirements. They are drafting a Staff Handbook which will contain all the HR governance documents required by Council. There is no additional charge to Council for this service. Once received, the document will be presented to the Staffing Committee for approval and then to Full Council for approval.

MAINTENANCE WORKS

Cutts Close play area – a resident reported that the cargo net on the smaller children's play area had a screw exposed. The Handyman immediately visited the site and made it safe.

Royce's Recreation Ground – a resident reported that there was an old fence panel with lots of nails sticking up near the children's play equipment. The Handyman visited the site immediately and made the fence safe.

Skate Park – there was a spate at the end of October of obscene graffiti in several places which the Handyman cleaned off straight away except for one on the hut which will need to be painted over. Police office, Hugh Crouch, has been informed. I have not included the photos due to the obscene nature of them. Another incident has also now been reported.

Centenary Field – a tree came down during the strong winds. Quotes are being obtained for its removal.



There is also a tree that came down a while ago that has not been removed. Quotes are also being obtained for the removal of this tree too.



VALUATION OFFICE ASSESSMENT (VOA)

A final reminder had been received to submit a VOA for the Council offices at ROL House that had not been actioned. This has now been submitted so Council will not incur a fine.

PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

Sadly, vandalism continues with all locks now broken and more black marks on the floor which look like tyre marks. The Handyman tried to clean off the marks but they would not shift. The cleaners have been asked if they have any chemical cleaner which is able to remove them.

The Handyman has unblocked the urinal again in the men's block.

Electricians have been asked to quote for the light but quotes are not forthcoming. I have asked the Handyman to try electricians further afield.

CUTTS CLOSE ELECTRICS

As agreed by Council from the UKSPF Fund, the electrical works to improve the electrics at Cutts Close has been completed.

TPO TREE WORKS PERMISSION

As requested by RCC, a resident has made Council aware of the following planning permission for works to a tree for your information:

ACCEPTANCE OF FIVE DAY TREE NOTIFICATION
Part 3 - Section 14 (1) (a) (i) and/or (1) (c) of The Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012

Date: 12 October 2026

REFERENCE: 2026/1254/TREE5
APPLICANT: Felicity Francis
PROPOSAL: Removal of dead branch from 1 no. Oak tree.
LOCATION: 17 Cricket Lawns Oakham Rutland LE15 6HT

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for the 5 day notice. Given the condition of the tree / evidence supplied I can confirm that under the provision of Part 3 Section 14 (1)(a)(i) [dead] or (1)(c) [dangerous/diseased] of The Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation)(England) Regulations 2012 the Local Planning Authority have no objection to the tree works described above.

I would advise that the Parish Council and any immediate neighbours are notified of the proposed works prior to them taking place so that they are aware that they are being carried out under this exemption, and with the consent of the Local Planning Authority

Yours faithfully

Harry Ashman
Tree Officer

STAFFING / RECRUITMENT

Due to the resignation of one of the part-time temporary Administrators, I am pleased to confirm that the other Administrator, Dalia Gadir, has increased her hours to 21 hours per week to help cover the hours. I used the Urgent Protocol for this and obtained the appropriate written permission from Members. This has been added to this agenda for Council ratification.

We have received a lot of applications for the Administration Officer and Communications & Events Officer vacancies which is great news. Unfortunately, not so many applications have been received for the Town Clerk and RFO role. All Applicants will be scored. And interviews arranged accordingly. Due to time constraints due to the workload, priority has been given to the Town Clerk role with the first interviews being carried out 10th November.

HR

A further tranche of the Employment Rights Act 2025 comes into force on 30 October 2026. Of particular importance to town councils, employers must now take “all reasonable steps” to prevent sexual harassment at work, and new protections apply where employees are harassed by third parties, such as members of the public, contractors, or service users. New trade union provisions also take effect, including rights for independent trade unions to request access to workplaces and strengthened rights and protections for trade union representatives. Council should therefore review their harassment policies and risk assessments, particularly where staff work alone or have regular contact with the public. This will be incorporated in to the HR documents Peninsula are drafting

GROUNDS / BIN CONTRACT

The contract is due for renewal in March 2027. Cllr Harris and Cllr Perry have kindly offered to work on the new quote or tender process (depending on predicted contract value) alongside the Handyman who has good knowledge of the works that are carried out. It has been suggested

that a working group is formed for this purpose. This has been added to the agenda for Council consideration.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS (FOIs)

I have received three FOIs recently which I will respond to. One is concerning information on Council's UK Town of Culture application, one is concerning staffing, and one is concerning details of the FOIs we have received.

These are extremely time consuming and time sensitive so responding to these is a priority but it does mean that less of my time will be spent on other priorities.

MICROSOFT 365 / EMAILS

The two newly co-opted councillors OTC emails are now live.

I was informed that Council resolved to have a councillor Sharepoint. I can confirm that this is live but it has never been used. I will start to upload files to these folders shortly so that councillors can easily access relevant documents.

I have also asked I.T. to set up dual authority workflow folders on the councillor Sharepoint to ensure efficiency and a full audit trail of approved documentation. I plan to upload invoices for approval, bank reconciliations, bank statements etc which two councillors can view and then either approve or reject them.

I have spent a lot of time cleaning up the email system in liaison with the I.T. contractor. Old email addresses have been archived and licenses have been freed up.

Unfortunately, I have had a lot of problems with the I.T. contractor. I have sent them a lot of requests and a lot of chase emails, but they just weren't coming back to me. I therefore submitted a complaint and finally someone rang me and sorted out most of the issues and responses to my queries. However, the dual authority query is still outstanding and is going to need further chasing. This has taken up an awful lot of my time.

STRIPE

Stripe is the organisation who deal with the payments for the Podpoint. I received notification from them recently that they had suspended our account because we hadn't updated the director's details. Obviously as a council we do not have directors so this has been very difficult to proceed with. I've had to have a lot of liaison with Stripe regarding this which has taken up quite a bit of time. I have now managed to enter details which they've accepted, so the account is now active again.

ACCOUNTING SOFTWARE

Council recently agreed to purchase the sales and purchase ledger elements of Rialtas, the Council's accounting software. Since council approved the cost, it was ascertained that £578 of it was for ledger training. Please note that the invoice will come in minus this amount as I do not need training on Rialtas as I have used it for many years, and it is not appropriate for council to pay for training for a contractor.

PHOTOCOPIER CONTRACT

The contract is due for renewal January 2027. Two quotes have been obtained to date and a third is awaited. Once received, these will be presented to Council for consideration.

RESOLUTIONS LIST

We are working further on the resolutions list and are looking to go back at least three years to make sure that all council resolutions have been actioned.

WEBSITE

More improvements have been made to the website which include updation of the councillor profiles, bios and photos. Members have also been contacted for permission to publish their phone numbers. More documents have been uploaded to other pages and some older documents removed.

ROL HOUSE FIRE EXIT

The landlord has been written to concerning changing the emergency exit door to a push bar opening mechanism. No response has been received to date.