



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF AYLSHAM TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN AYLSHAM TOWN HALL, ON TUESDAY 13th JANUARY 2026 at 7pm

PRESENT:

Kay Montandon (Chair)
Gordon Clarke
Michael Goodwin
Patrick Prekopp

David Anderson
Kevin Cunnane
Jon Minns

Trevor Bennett
Catherine Fletcher
Mitchell Philpott

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Faye LeBon (Town Clerk).

1. To Receive Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cheryl Bould and Tim Briscoe.

2. To Receive Declarations of Interest and Grant Requests for Dispensation

None raised.

3. To Adjourn the Meeting to Allow Members of the Public and Councillors with Prejudicial Interests to Speak

No matters raised.

4. To consider application for a 3 bay cantilever bus shelter at Market Surgery under the Bus Shelter Improvement funding

It was **agreed** to apply for funding of £4,168 from Norfolk County Council representing 80% of the cost of a 3 bay reverse cantilever bus shelter to be sited at the Market Surgery. The remaining £1,042 (20%) would be funded from the Street Furniture earmarked reserve.

5. To agree ACE budget of £100 to promote the Live Well for Less event.

Kay Montandon reported that the grant received for this event of £300 did not cover the cost of advertising. She had liaised with the Chairman of ACE and there were no objections to utilising £100 from the ACE budget to support this joint event. Members **agreed** to release £100 from the ACE budget for promotion of this event.

6. Closure of Meeting to the Press and Public

It was **agreed** to close the meeting to the press and public under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 for the duration of item 7 in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

The Meeting was Closed to the Press and Public

7. To Review Draft Budget

Trevor Bennett provided the meeting with information on historic budget setting. The tax base, past and present, was also discussed.

The clerk gave an introduction on the draft budget document and the rationale behind it. Each cost centre was reviewed in detail.

Staffing: The ambitions of the council were discussed in detail and what staffing structure would be required to achieve this. An agreement was made on the staffing budget and associated actions would be taken forward by the staffing committee.

General Purposes: A duplicate item was corrected in the draft budget and the contribution to the Archives for the second edition of A History of Aylsham was removed from the proposed revenue budget, to be taken from reserves. It was also agreed to move money from reserves to facilitate the IT improvements required for Assertion 10, into this financial year.

An additional amount was added for corrections to workstations.

Town Hall: The repairs and maintenance required for the town hall were raised. In addition to the responsibilities of running a Grade 2 listed building, it was noted that government legislation requiring the collection of food waste would also add to the expenditure of the Town Hall.

The Property Committee had proposed an increase in hire fees to help cover costs.

Drill Hall: The requirement to address the heating system in the Drill Hall was raised. £5,000 would be moved from reserves to assist with this.

The Property Committee had proposed an increase in hire fees to help cover costs.

Commercial Properties: The recommendations of the Property Committee were accepted over the Town Council's investment properties.

Public Toilets: The necessity to tender on the cleaning contract was emphasised.

Cemetery: The Property Committee had proposed an increase in fees to help cover costs.

Allotments: The Property Committee had proposed an increase in tenancy fees to help cover costs. However, as a years notice is required, these would only be effective for the 2027 season.

Markets: The Property Committee had put together a more effective pricing structure, which would reward those who had regular market stalls. The clerk and the facilities officer are to review the market application forms and bring recommendations back to the Property Committee.

Open Spaces: The costs of leasing the grounds machinery was discussed and whether consideration should be given in the future to purchasing the equipment. The grant request of £61,000 from the Recreation Ground was considered. This was reduced to £51,000 for the following reasons:

- A previous expenditure allocation of £16,000 for grounds maintenance has been removed, but this reduction was not reflected in the grant request.
- Costs for administration and financial services have increased from £9,000 to £16,360, which the council felt required further review.
- The allocation for National Insurance and pension contributions should be revisited. As a registered charity, the Recreation Ground may be eligible to claim the Government's Employment Allowance, which would negate employer National Insurance contributions. In addition, it was unclear which pension provider has been selected and whether contributions are based on full or qualifying earnings.
- The Recreation Ground currently holds an emergency reserve of £47,675. In light of this, the additional emergency reserve provision shown was not considered necessary.
- It was felt that activities with directly attributable expenditure, such as cricket, bowls and pétanque, should be reviewed to consider whether income could more closely align with expenditure.

Events: All members were in favour of retaining a budget for events, which provided entertainment for the whole town. It was felt that the events were part of the identity of Aylsham.

Churchyard: No further revenue budget will be set aside for the church wall. When prices are received for the repair, if they are in excess of the earmarked reserves, consideration should be given to alternative sources of funding, such as a public works loan. The footpath repairs will no longer be considered in this financial year, although the shingle will be scraped to even it out. The memorial garden project will not be considered for revenue funding this year. Alternative sources of funding should be looked at, or the project can be considered again next year.

Street Scene: Discussions occurred as to the level of street lighting repairs required, particularly on Sir Williams Lane and Penfold Street. £10,000 will be moved from reserves to support these works. It was noted that the Salix loan is now paid off.

The Meeting was Reopened to the Press and Public

8. Formal Budget and Precept Setting

a) To formally agree the Aylsham Town Council budget for 2026/2027.

The Aylsham Town Council budget was **agreed** as follows:

Cost Centre	Budgeted Income	Budgeted Expenditure	Balance
General Purposes	£11,100.00	£152,861.02	£141,761.02
Town Hall	£37,250.00	£121,865.71	£84,615.71
Drill Hall	£39,650.00	£95,584.54	£55,934.54
Commercial Properties	£24,650.00	£25,077.38	£427.38
Public Toilets	£0.00	£25,224.18	£25,224.18
Cemetery	£7,100.00	£27,538.20	£20,438.20
Allotments	£4,000.00	£34,784.29	£30,784.29
Markets	£6,200.00	£19,909.69	£13,709.69
Opens Spaces	£12,100.00	£145,378.83	£133,278.83
Events	£9,550.00	£47,120.52	£37,570.52
Churchyard	£0.00	£16,452.68	£16,452.68
Street Scene	£0.00	£67,517.50	£67,517.50
	£151,600.00	£779,314.54	£627,714.54

b) Agree the Precept Request for Aylsham Town Council for 2026/2027

It was ***agreed*** that the precept request for 2026/2027 should be £627,715

The meeting closed at 10.50pm

_____ Signed _____ Date _____