Andover Town Council

P&R Committee Minutes

Time and date 6.30pm on Wednesday **7 October 2026**

Place The Lights, Andover

Councillors Present: Arrival time noted if after meeting start

Cllr S Hardstaff (Chairman)	**P**		Cllr R Hughes (Vice Chairman)	**P**	
Cllr A Horsnell	**P**	6:31pm	Cllr L Gregori	**P**	
Cllr J Hughes	**P**		Cllr E Reynolds	**P**	
Cllr J Goodwin	**X**		Cllr K Bird	P	

Officers Present: Tor Warburton (Town Clerk/RFO)
Started at 6.30pm

Members of the Public: 0
County/Borough Councillors: 0
Members of the Press: 0

PUBLIC SESSION

PR 024/10/26 There were no members of the public present.

APOLOGIES

PR 025/10/26 There were no apologies received.

INTERESTS

PR 026/10/26 Non-pecuniary declarations were received from:
Councillor E Reynolds, as a member of the Drove Association and as an allotment plot holder.

MINUTES

PR 027/10/26 It was proposed by Councillor E Reynolds and seconded by Councillor K Bird and **RESOLVED: Unanimously,** that the Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 1 July 2026 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting

Mayor / Chairman: ..... Date: .....

CONTRACTUAL & DELEGATED PAYMENTS

Members received and noted the payments that had already been made for the period of 1 September 2026 to 25 September 2026.

PR 028/10/26

Councillor L Gregori asked whether parking fees reimbursed to members of staff were subject to tax. The Town Clerk advised that these were reimbursed as direct expenses and were not ordinarily taxable. Members noted that the tax treatment could depend on whether the parking was a contractual provision and on the location of the employee's permanent place of work.

The Town Clerk agreed to check the position and report back to Members. It was noted that this would not be available in time for the Full Council meeting on 8 October 2026.

PAYMENTS FOR APPROVAL

Members noted the two payments above the RFO's delegated authority. It was noted that the contractual payment formed part of a four-year agreement already approved by the Council, and that the by-election costs were a statutory requirement.

PR 029/10/26

Members commented that the by-election had cost nearly £11,000, significantly more than the approximately £8,000 budgeted, with the cost of issuing polling cards and the associated postage making up most of the expenditure. It was noted that turnout in Downlands had traditionally been low.

It was requested that, once the turnout figures are known, a note be brought back to the Committee comparing the cost of issuing polling cards with the turnout achieved, to inform future decisions on whether polling cards should be issued.

It was proposed by Councillor A Horsnell and seconded by Councillor K Bird and **RESOLVED: Unanimously,** that the payments above the RFO's delegated authority be recommended to Full Council for approval.

CREDIT CARD

Members noted the credit card statement up to 2 September 2026.

PR 030/10/26

Councillor L Gregori questioned the need for a number of paid software subscriptions. The Town Clerk advised that:

- Claude (AI software) was being trialled on a paid plan, as the free version was too restricted for the Council's needs. It was being assessed against Microsoft Copilot, which is included in the Council's Microsoft 365 licence, and ChatGPT, and appeared to be the most reliable of the three for collating information and working with spreadsheets. The trial was ongoing.
- The digital ID subscription related to the Council's server.
- The I love PDF software was used to create agendas and PDF documents, and was considerably cheaper than Adobe.

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• Canva was used for all of the Council's publicity and event material. The free version had been trialled for six months but did not provide the functionality required.

FINANCES

Councillor L Gregori asked whether the Council's savings were earning interest. The Town Clerk confirmed that the Unity Trust Bank current account did not earn interest, but the Unity Trust Bank instant access account and the Redwood Bank account did.

Councillor L Gregori raised concern that the balances held in the savings accounts may exceed the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) protection limit, and suggested that accounts designed for local councils, such as those offered by Hinckley and Rugby Building Society and Cambridge Building Society, be considered. It was noted that the protection limit had increased to £120,000 and that the balances were close to this level, largely as a result of accrued interest.

PR 031/10/26

The Town Clerk advised that she would check the position with the Council's auditor. It was noted that a Treasury Management and Investment Policy had previously been drafted but never adopted, and the Town Clerk confirmed that its review was on her work programme.

It was proposed by Councillor L Gregori and seconded by Councillor K Bird and **RESOLVED: Unanimously,** that the following reports be approved:

• Bank Statements & Bank Reconciliation
• Cashbook
• Earmarked Reserves
• Financial Comparison to date

EXTERNAL AUDIT 2025/26

Members received the Notice of Conclusion of Audit 2025/26 and the External Auditor Report and Certificate 2025/26. The Committee requested that its thanks to the officers be minuted, particularly to Micha for her work in achieving a clear audit.

PR 032/10/26

It was proposed by Councillor L Gregori and seconded by Councillor K Bird and **RESOLVED: Unanimously,** that the Notice of Conclusion of Audit and the External Auditor Report and Certificate 2025/26 be recommended to Full Council for approval.

POLICIES

Members reviewed the following policies for recommendation to Full Council. The Town Clerk advised that, if the amendments agreed were minor, the policies could still

PR 033/10/26

be presented to Full Council on 8 October 2026, accompanied by a short table of the changes made.

Co-option Policy

PR 034/10/26

The following amendments were agreed:

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- Paragraph 4, bullet point 2: the Town Clerk will confirm that each applicant has completed the application form confirming their eligibility.
- Paragraph 5, bullet point 4: the successful candidate "will be encouraged to" undertake induction training.

It was proposed by Councillor K Bird and seconded by Councillor R Hughes and **RESOLVED: Unanimously,** that the Co-option Policy, as amended, be recommended to Full Council for adoption.

Environmental and Biodiversity Policy (new)

Members welcomed the new policy, noting that it would support the Council's aim of achieving the Local Council Award Scheme Gold award. A question was raised about encouraging walking and cycling while reimbursing staff parking. It was noted that the
PR 035/10/26 policy encouraged, rather than required, sustainable travel.

It was proposed by Councillor S Hardstaff and seconded by Councillor E Reynolds and **RESOLVED: Unanimously,** that the Environmental and Biodiversity Policy be recommended to Full Council for adoption.

Pay Policy

Councillor L Gregori noted that some references in the policy were to the Staffing Committee, which no longer exists, and should refer to the HR Sub-Committee. The Town Clerk agreed to make this amendment. Members commented that the
PR 036/10/26 accompanying update report had been very useful.

It was proposed by Councillor E Reynolds and seconded by Councillor K Bird and **RESOLVED: Unanimously,** that the Pay Policy, as amended, be recommended to Full Council for adoption.

Safeguarding Policy

Councillor L Gregori queried whether the training frequency set out in the policy met the legal requirements. The Town Clerk believed it to be correct, as the Council does not work with children or vulnerable adults on a daily basis, but agreed to check the current legislation and guidance.

PR 037/10/26 It was noted that safer recruitment applies to staff through the Council's recruitment provider, and that the same approach would apply to volunteers under the Volunteer Policy.

It was proposed by Councillor A Horsnell and seconded by Councillor K Bird and **RESOLVED: Unanimously,** that the Safeguarding Policy be recommended to Full Council for adoption.

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Sexual Harassment Policy

The following amendments were agreed:
- Paragraph 7: "Reports may be made to **one of** the following".
- Paragraph 8: "The Council will arrange an independent investigation of the complaint promptly, sensitively and impartially."

PR 038/10/26

It was proposed by Councillor E Reynolds and seconded by Councillor K Bird and **RESOLVED: Unanimously,** that the Sexual Harassment Policy, as amended, be recommended to Full Council for adoption.

Sickness and Absence Policy

Members noted that the policy largely mirrored existing practice but introduced trigger points, together with new sections on managing frequent short-term absence and long-term absence, closing gaps in the previous policy.

PR 039/10/26

It was proposed by Councillor E Reynolds and seconded by Councillor A Horsnell and **RESOLVED: Unanimously,** that the Sickness and Absence Policy be recommended to Full Council for adoption.

Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour Policy

It was agreed to amend paragraph 4 to read: "If the behaviour continues, the Town Clerk will prepare a short report for the appropriate committee recommending proportionate restrictions or, where the matter is urgent, will act in consultation with the Chair of that committee under delegation."

PR 040/10/26

It was proposed by Councillor E Reynolds and seconded by Councillor R Hughes and **RESOLVED: Unanimously,** that the Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour Policy, as amended, be recommended to Full Council for adoption.

Volunteer Policy

Councillor L Gregori asked whether councillors helping at events would be treated as volunteers. It was noted that councillors without a formal role at an event would be treated as volunteers, and that all volunteers, including councillors, already receive a briefing and information pack before events such as Pride.

PR 041/10/26

It was proposed by Councillor K Bird and seconded by Councillor S Hardstaff and **RESOLVED: Unanimously,** that the Volunteer Policy be recommended to Full Council for adoption.

NEXT MEETING

Members noted that the date of the next meeting would be Wednesday 18 November 2026 at The Lights, Andover, at 6.30pm.

PR 042/10/26

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Mayor / Chairman: ..... Date: .....

MEETING CLOSURE

PR 043/10/26 The Chairman closed the meeting at 7:45pm

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Mayor / Chairman: ..... Date: .....