MINUTES AND REPORT OF THE CEMETERIES, OPEN SPACES & SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE HELD ON 22 OCTOBER 2026

*	Councillor – PS Rivers - Chair
0	Councillor – Adam – Substitute- Cllr Crowe
*	Councillor – Crooks
0	Councillor – Duce – Vice Chair – Substitute – Cllr Marshall
*	Councillor – Martin
*	Councillor – PMA Rivers

* Present # Absent & No Apology Received 0 Apology for Absence L Late

328.221026

MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 August 2026 were signed by the Chair as a correct record.

329.221026

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and recorded as above.

330.221026

DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER REGISTERABLE INTERESTS

Members made no declarations of interest in relation to any item on the agenda for this meeting, which is required to be disclosed by the Localism Act 2011 and the Godalming Members' Code of Conduct.

331.221026

PETITIONS/STATEMENTS/QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A resident of Godalming, had submitted a statement and questions for consideration of the committee (attached to the record minute). The Chair confirmed that as the statement and questions related to agenda item 10, the response to the statement and questions would come from members consideration of that item.

332.221026

QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

No questions from Councillors were submitted in accordance with Standing Order 6.

333.221026

WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the Committee's Work Programme and noted progress on the items therein (copy attached to record minutes).

334.221026

BUDGET MONITORING

Members noted a report from the Responsible Finance Officer on the financial performance of the committee's cost centres 204 and 301 to 17 September 2026 (report attached for the information of Members) and noted the following points.

Cost Centre 204 – Allotments
Whilst expenditure for the cost centre 204 – Allotments at 19.2% is currently lower than the phased budget forecast of 46.3%, the water costs are exceeding the budget forecast due to a higher-than-expected increase in water rates and water usage over the recent extended dry period. Invoices for allotments are issued in October.

Cost Centre 301 – Cemeteries and Open Spaces
Income is currently at 117% of the annual budget, driven by the rate of burials and interments during the first half of the current financial year.

Overall expenditure, at 49.3% is 3% ahead of the phased budget position. The nominal codes below show an expenditure greater that 5% of expected position.

4015 & 4014 Grave Digging & Saturday Sexton Duty costs are currently at 87.8% and 118.4% respectively; this is driven by the high burial rate over the previous 5 months. This expenditure is directly funded by cemetery fees and are therefore cost neutral.

4102 – Property Maintenance, to date 70.8% (£5150 = 59.6% of current expenditure) is attributable to the refurbishment of the Nightingale Cemetery Railings. Minute 163/24 set these costs against the Land & Property Reserve. If this expenditure was set against the Ear Marked Reserve, then expenditure against nominal code 4102 would be 11.2%. It is likely that the repainting of the Nightingale railings could be completed within available revenue budget, negating the need to call on reserves. The next highest expenditure at a total of £2370 (27.4% of current expenditure) is related to meeting GTC landlord obligations.

4103 – Maintenance Contracts, this nominal code relates to services provided by external contractors, which include emergency Lighting Testing, CCTV, Intruder and Fire Detection and Pest Control maintenance and services. The expenditure above phased budget provision is a timing issue only.

4131 – Rates. This code shows 100% of expenditure, which is as expected as the rates payment was made by a single instalment in Month 1 of the financial year. However, Members will recall that a Business Support Relief Credit of £4,914 was received, therefore the cost of the rates was only 42.7% of the budget. As such, the committee agreed at Minute 120.250626 that the remaining balance within this nominal code to be set against the purchase of GTC service vehicles, hence why expenditure is at 100% of this budget line.

4141 – Water Services costs have increased above the anticipated increase provided for when setting the 2026/27 budget, which coupled with the summer heatwaves have resulted in an expenditure 13.8% higher than predicted for this time of year.

4203 – Other Transport Costs cover the lease costs of the tractor and the electric tipper vehicle. Whilst the tractor is paid monthly, the lease charges for the tipper are paid as a single annual payment. The 2026/27 payment was made on 1 August; therefore, the current overspend against phased budget position is a timing issue only.

4205 - Vehicle Costs are £1,259 overspent, this is in part due to the higher than budgeted repair costs for the Renault Kangoo, the insurance excess following a RTC involving the Maxus Tipper (GTC's insurance company are seeking the reclaim of the excess from the third party) and the additional cost of vehicle excise duty for EV.

4301 – Equipment. £14,225 of the expenditure against this nominal code is as agreed by Minute 120.250626 – purchase of Service Vehicles, which has pushed expenditure ahead of the budget profile. However, currently there is no expectation of any additional major purchases against this budget line, and the expectation remains that this nominal code will be closer to budget profile by the end of Month 7.

4313 – Professional Fees Other nominal code expenditure is ahead of budget profile as the data entry work being undertaken is being done over the summer holiday period. It remains that expectation that this budget line will be within or close to profile by the end of Month 7.

Members noted that whilst expenditure is currently at 3% above profile, this is largely driven by two significant expenses, the Service Vehicles and the Nightingale Railings project. Excluding this expenditure the budget profile would be 2.7% below profile.

335.221026

ALLOTMENT FEES 2026/27

Members consider the allotment fee and charges and RESOLVED to agree that no increase should be applied to the allotment fees and charges for 2027/28, with them remaining at the level set for 2026/27 as shown below.

GTC Direct Managed Allotments
Currently the allotments fee for the Burys and Peperharow Road stands at £6.90 per rod.

Allotment Association Rent
The lease rent payable by the Farncombe & District Allotment Association rent is currently £2,382.16 pa.

336.221026

DRAFT BUDGET 2027-28

Members considered the proposed budgets for Cost Centres 204 and 301 and following discussion RESOLVED to recommendation the proposed budget (attached to the record minutes) to the Management Committee for integration into the GTC 2027/28 budget requirement.

Additionally, Members RESOLVED to recommend to the Management Committee that a separate Ear Marked Reserve (EMR) for future equipment replacement should be created with budgetary provision made from financial year 2028/29 and also an EMR for future playground equipment replacement, with budgetary provision being made from financial year 2028/29.

In making its recommendations the Committee noted the following:

- This committee makes a recommendation for the Cemeteries, Open Spaces & Sustainability budget requirement for the next financial year to the Management Committee.
- The Management Committee is responsible for bringing together the budget requirements of each service area into a single draft budget proposal for consideration by Full Council. While Service Committees make recommendations in respect of their own service areas, the Management Committee may, in consultation with the Service Committees, need to balance competing budget pressures to ensure that the final budget recommendation is affordable and presents a balanced position for Full Council.

Cost Centre 301
Cemeteries, Open Spaces & Sustainability. The proposed budget is predicated on the assumptions set out below:

Cemetery income is currently supported by higher activity at Eashing. The AMA has an allocation of 526 graves, of which 278 have been used in five years. If that rate continues, there is just under five years' supply remaining. This budget contains a year one reduction of a four-year plan to manage the predicted fall in cemetery income.

Staffing budgets are the responsibility of the Staffing Committee and agreed separately based on Service Committee staffing establishment requirements.

Grounds maintenance equipment requirements to meet current and anticipated future requirements have been planned over the past two years. The higher cost items have been procured; therefore, nominal code 4301 (equipment) has been reduced by £12,000, with £5,000 being reallocated to nominal code 4203 (other transport costs), to fund the provision of dash cams and trackers for GTC maintenance vehicles.

Nominal code 4325 (computers) is a new expenditure for Cost Centre 301. This is not new expenditure for the Council as in previous years the cost was allocated against head office expenditure, whereas it should properly lie against where the requirement lies, which in this case is the computer licences and support for the Grounds and Facilities Maintenance team.

Overall, the Grounds and Maintenance Team have worked to reduce expenditure across the cost centre. If the computing costs had not been reallocated to this cost centre, expenditure savings would have come in at £9,177 which is 5.5% of 2026/27 non-staffing expenditure. Allowing for the transfer of computing costs to this cost centre, direct expenditure excluding staffing costs has reduced by £5,389, which is 3.2% of 2026/27 non-staffing expenditure.

However, allowing for the managed reduction in income, the 2027/28 budgetary requirement is an increase of £20,575, of which £14,358 is employment costs.

Cost Centre 204
Cost Centre 204 – Allotments. The proposed budget is unchanged from the 2026/27 budget.

337.221026
CONSIDERATION OF RESIDENT REQUEST REGARDING THE BURYS SKATEBOARD PARK

At the request of Full Council, the Committee considered a written statement and questions submitted to Full Council by a local resident, alongside the supplementary submission to this committee from the same resident and the agenda report regarding the Burys Skateboard Park. Members thanked the resident for bringing the matter forward and noted the request for the Council to consider support for extending and improving the Burys Skate Park, together with the suggestion that usage, future demand, potential development options, costs and funding routes should be explored.

Members recognised the value of the existing Burys facility and the part it plays in providing a local, accessible space for beginners and less experienced users. The Committee also noted the aspiration behind the request, namely, to provide a wider range of opportunities for users of different ages and abilities, and to ensure that Godalming benefits from good quality skate park provision.

In considering the matter, Members also had regard to the separate Aarons Hill Recreation Ground improvement project, which is already identified and funded within Waverley Borough Council's infrastructure plans. Members noted that this scheme includes a new, improved skate park with wider landscaping and accessibility improvements, and that it is intended to offer a more advanced facility for more experienced users than currently provided. Members felt that, taken together, the existing Burys provision and the Aarons Hill proposals provide a better overall spread of provision across the town, with The Burys continuing to serve beginners and less confident users, and Aarons Hill providing a more challenging alternative.

Members discussed whether further work on The Burys should be pursued now, including the potential for consultation, feasibility work and indicative costings. However, Members were mindful that any extension would need to be considered against available funding, the wider use of Burys Field, and the need to avoid duplication where an alternative and

complementary provision is already progressing elsewhere. Members therefore concluded that the balance of benefit, land use and limited funding favoured supporting the existing Aarons Hill project rather than pursuing an expansion of The Burys.

Members further noted that any future bike trail provision at Broadwater Park, if delivered, would add to the overall range of opportunities across the town.

Resolved:
Members RESOLVED that the Committee recommends to Full Council that Godalming Town Council does not seek to expand the Burys Skate Park and continues to support the Aarons Hill Recreation Ground improvement project as the complementary and more advanced facility for the town.

338.221026

PEPERHAROW ALLOTMENTS – COMMUNITY CONSULTATION RESPONSES AND OPTIONS FOR FUTURE USE

The Chair welcomed members of the Peperharow and Dean Road Residents Association (PDRRA) and thanked them for the work they had undertaken at the allotment site and for facilitating the consultation considered by the Committee. Members expressed their appreciation to the PDRRA and to Council staff for the work already undertaken to improve the allotment site and noted that the involvement of local residents had helped give the space greater meaning and value to the community.

Members considered the consultation responses and the three options set out in the report. In discussion, Members noted the strong support for a nature-led, low-impact approach, with the principal themes being biodiversity, quiet community use and small-scale activity.

Members agreed that Option 3, a multi-use natural play and activity area, should not be taken forward at this stage. However, they considered that there was merit in combining Option 1, a wildlife and biodiversity garden, with Option 2, a community wellbeing garden, as these approaches would reflect the clearest themes from the consultation and would best sit alongside the character of the site.

Members discussed the value of a space that could support both nature and community use and were mindful that the allotment area bordered residential properties and should therefore be developed in a way that was sensitive to neighbouring amenity, manageable in cost, and sustainable in the longer term.

Members felt that the consultation had provided a sound basis for moving forward, but that the next step should be for the PDRRA to work up a proposal based on the preferred combination of options for submission to the Council. This would allow officers and Members to assess the scheme properly, consider costs and practicalities, and identify what works would be required and how they could be delivered.

Members welcomed the positive and constructive engagement shown by local residents throughout the process and were pleased that the PDRRA had agreed to prepare a proposal for further consideration. The Committee thanked all those involved and looked forward to receiving a refined scheme based on the consultation outcomes.

The Committee NOTED the consultation responses and RESOLVED to agree that Option 3 should not be taken forward at this stage, and request the PDRRA to develop a proposal based on a combination of Option 1, wildlife and biodiversity garden, and Option 2, community wellbeing garden, for further consideration by the Council.

339.221026

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE ACTION PLAN

Members NOTED that following the successful submission of a Community Resilience Action Plan as part of Stage 1 of the Surrey County Council Community Resilience Grant, Godalming Town Council has been awarded £1,000.

Officers had also applied for Stage 2 funding to fund a parish-wide resident information campaign and improved signage on council-managed land and it was reported that, under Phase 2 of the programme, both of Godalming Town Council's proposals had been reviewed by a subject matter expert and an assessment panel, with Surrey Prepared involved in the process.

Members were advised that Proposal 10.1, relating to a residents' information campaign, had been considered strong and that the programme team remained keen to work with the Council to support delivery of the project's objectives. However, Surrey Prepared had confirmed that a national resilience campaign was due to launch later in the autumn. In light of this, the Council had been asked to meet with the programme team and Surrey Prepared to discuss possible ways forward, including whether elements of the bid could still be supported through funding and where there may be opportunities for collaboration, with a view to avoiding duplication of effort and expenditure, particularly in relation to communications and campaign activity.

Members further noted that Proposal 10.2, relating to improved signage, had been unsuccessful. Whilst the panel recognised the value of the proposal, it did not score as highly as other bids in a very competitive funding round.

It was noted that a follow-up meeting was being arranged and that dates would be confirmed in due course.

340.221026

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Cemeteries, Open Spaces & Sustainability Committee is scheduled to be held in the Oglethorpe Room on Thursday, 11 February 2026 at 6.30pm.

341.221026

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

Sent: 14 September 2026 8:00 AM

Subject: Request for support: extending and improving the Burys Skate/Bike Park

Dear Councillors

I am writing as a local resident to ask Godalming Town Council to support the extension and improvement of the Burys Skate/Bike Park.

The existing concrete skatepark is well made and provides a valuable facility for younger children and beginners. However, it is relatively small and has limited opportunities for more experienced skateboarders, scooter riders, BMX riders and young people who want to progress their skills.

I was particularly encouraged to discover that Waverley Borough Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan already identifies “Burys Fields Skate/Bike Park – extend and improve current provision” as an infrastructure project. The published documents identify an indicative cost of £40,000 and record £7,875 of funding already secured towards the extension, with CIL, Section 106 and external grant funding identified as potential sources for the remainder.

I therefore don't believe this needs to start from scratch. There appears to be an existing council-identified project which could potentially be progressed.

I would be grateful if the Town Council could:

- formally support the extension and improvement of the Burys Skate/Bike Park;
- contact Waverley Borough Council to establish the current status of the project;
- ask what has happened to the £7,875 already identified towards the extension;
- ask what funding is currently available and what funding gap remains; and
- support a feasibility and community consultation exercise involving local young people and skate, scooter and BMX users.

I would be very happy to help with local engagement and to gather views from users of the existing facility about what improvements would be most valuable.

I believe the objective should not be to replace the existing beginner-friendly facility, but to build upon it, creating a larger facility that provides a progression route from beginner through to intermediate and more advanced use.

I would be grateful if this request could be considered by the appropriate committee or councillors, and I would welcome the opportunity to discuss it further.

Best

CEMETERIES, OPEN SPACES & SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE – WORK PROGRAMME

TASK	When	COMMENT
Budget Monitoring	Each Meeting	Action – RFO – ACTIONED
Budget Setting	Annually – Meeting Three (October)	Proposed budget requirements to be considered by Management Committee in November – Action - RFO
Review of staffing capacity	Annually – Meeting Two (August)	Report any proposed amendments to Staffing Committee for September Review – Action CEO/DCEO – ACTIONED
Review of future equipment requirements and replacement plan	Annually – Meeting Four (February 2027)	Operations and Compliance Officer/ Maintenance Supervisor
Playground maintenance and upkeep procedures	Procedures to be established before completion of transfer of 1st playground area from WBC	Target date for consideration by committee September 2026 – DCEO – ACTIONED
Future Playground improvement strategy	On completion of all proposed CAT transfers and review of each play areas needs	Action DCEO
Carbon Audit	Annually – Meeting One (June)	Action CEO
Review of Burial Statistics	Annually – Meeting One (June)	Action CEO
Pesticide and Herbicide Use Policy	Policy & procedures to be presented by Meeting Four – February – 2027	Action DCEO
Future projects plan 2028 - 2031	Draft plan to be considered Meeting One 2027/28	Action CEO/DCEO
Strategic Risk Assessment	Annually – Meeting Four	Chair/CEO assessment against corporate plan objectives

204 Allotments

		2027/28 Budget	2026/27 Budget	2027/28 Variance
Income				
1302	Rents	2,900	2,900	-
	Total Income	*2,900*	*2,900*	-
Expenses				
4102	Property Maintenance	300	300	-
4141	Water Services	432	432	-
4162	Waste Removal	0	-	-
4171	Grounds Maintenance Costs	2,900	3,000	- 100
4342	Subscriptions	100	-	100
	Total Expenses	*3,732*	*3,732*	-
Other				
5001	Transfers from General Reserves	-	-	-
5101	Contribution to Premises Provision	-	-	-
5102	Contribution to Other Provisions	-	-	-
5200	Contribution from EMR			-
6000	Debt Charges - Principal	-	-	-
6001	Debt Charges - Interest	-	-	-
	Total Other	-	-	-
	Net Income / Expenditure	**- 832**	**- 832**	**-**

301 Cemeteries , Open Spaces & Sustainability

		2027/28 Budget	2026/27 Budget	2027/28 Variance	Comments
Income					
1302	Rents	34,244	33,392	852	Eashing Lodge; Nightingale Lodge plus 3%; Skillway as per lease
1303	Other Customer/Client Receipts	13,148	16,400	-3,252	Grave Digging, 2K Floral Godalming Sponsorship
1700	Interment	34,073	38,400	-4,327	minus 12% capacity adjustment
1701	Monument	5,199	2,760	2,439	minus 12% capacity adjustment
1702	Purchase of Grave Space	61,500	69,000	-7,500	minus 12% capacity adjustment
	Total Income	***148,164***	***159,952***	**-11,788**	
Expenses					
4001	Salaries	139,930	127950	11,980	3% inflationary pay award
4002	Employer's NIC	17,989	16192	1,797	3% inflationary pay award
4003	Employer's Superannuation	23,228	22647	581	3% inflationary pay award
4011	Staff Training	4,000	4000	-	maintained at 2026/27 level
4014	Sexton Duties	1,200	1500	-300	Sexton Fees for Saturday Burial
4015	Grave Digging	12,672	14400	-1,728	
4102	Property Maintenance	12,200	12200	-	maintained at 2026/27 level
4103	Maintenance Contracts	3,040	2610	430	plus 16.5% to reflect 2026/27 actuals and contract increases
4111	Energy Costs	6,000	6000	-	maintained at 2026/27 level
4131	Rates	8,854	8597	257	Plus 3%
4141	Water Services	924	924	-	maintained at 2026/27 level
4162	Waste Removal	5,100	6000	-900	reduced by 15% to reflect 2026/27 useage
4163	Domestic Supplies	720	800	-80	reduced by 10% to reflect 2026/27 useage
4164	Workshop Consumables	3,600	4020	-420	reduced by 10% to reflect 2026/27 useage
4171	Grounds Maintenance Costs	50,925	50925	-	retained at 2026/27 levels
4203	Other Transport Costs	31,608	26608	5,000	tractor (£13908) & tipper (£11,700) Lease + £1k specialist vehicle hire, £5K for dash cam and trackers
4204	Fuel Costs	1,008	1008	-	Maintained at 26/27 level due to expected increase in tractor and ride on mower use
4205	Vehicle Maintenance	2,184	1380	804	Increased to reflect actuals 26/27
4301	Equipment	16,892	28892	-12,000	less £12000 , Inc 2,500 Floral G replacement troughs
4304	Catering & Hospitality	408	408	-	maintained at 2026/27 level
4305	Clothes, Uniform & Laundry	1,800	1800	-	maintained at 2026/27 level
4313	Professional Fees - Other	1,000	1000	-	Data entry costs for burial record digitisation
4323	Telephones & Broadband	960	1200	-240	reduced by 20% to reflect 2026/27 useage
4325	Computers	3,788		3,788	Reallocated from 301 to correctly reflect expenditure area - Monthly IT & Cyber Support & Annual Licences
4327	Publicity Advertising	396	396	-	provision for signage &information leaflets
4900	Miscellaneous Expenses	360	360	-	
	Total Expenses	***350,786***	***341817***	**8,969**	
	Net Income / Expenditure	**-202,622**	**-181,865**	**20,757**	