MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RECREATION, LEISURE & OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

Held on Wednesday 4th November 2026 at 7.00pm at Ringwood Gateway, The Furlong, Ringwood.

PRESENT: Cllr Andy Briers (Chairman)
Cllr James Swyer (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr Luke Dadford
Cllr Mary DeBoos
Cllr Rae Frederick
Cllr Janet Georgiou
Cllr Glenys Turner

IN ATTENDANCE: Charmaine Bennett, Town Clerk
Nicola Vodden, Office Manager

ABSENT: Cllr Philip Day
Cllr John Haywood
Cllr Peter Kelleher
Cllr Becci Windsor

OS/6592
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

OS/6593
APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Day, Haywood and Kelleher.

OS/6594
DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

OS/6595
MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 7th October 2026, having been circulated, be approved and signed as a correct record.

OS/6596
EVENTS MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the notes of the Events Management sub-committee meeting on 21st October 2026 (*Annex A*) be received.

OS/6597
CEMETERY DEVELOPMENT

The committee received the notes of the Cemetery Working Party meeting held on 16 October and an update from the Town Clerk on progress with the cemetery extension.

Chairman's initials

The former allotment area has now been fully levelled and seeded, creating an attractive new cemetery space. A new pathway has been installed linking the existing cemetery path network to the Hightown Road gate, providing access to the new area. A permanent tarmac surface will be added when funding allows. The project is moving from the development stage into implementation, with the site now ready to begin accepting new burials and ashes interments. A decision has been made to sell traditional double grave plots with headstones, similar to those in Row T, rather than flat memorial tablets, which can look untidy. This reflects customer preferences and will be easier to maintain.

A memorial structure, potentially tree-themed, is being explored for installation beneath the large tree opposite the Muslim burial area. This location is unsuitable for burials due to tree roots but offers a peaceful reflective space. Costings are being investigated and will be brought back to the Working Party and Committee for consideration.

In terms of future improvements, remedial work to the historic wall, which separates parts of the cemetery, is planned for next year. The gate serving the new cemetery area from High Town Road is due to be replaced. A landscaping scheme will be undertaken using a £10,000 donation from RACE, including perimeter hedging and rows of pleached trees to improve the appearance of the site and screen existing fencing. Funding is already available for part of the tree planting programme this year, with further funding to be sought for completion next year.

Members who had visited the site praised the transformation, describing it as looking "amazing".

RESOLVED: 1) That the Cemetery Working Party notes of the meeting on 26th October 2026 (*Annex B*) be received and the planting update noted;
2) That the proposed ashes interment and scattering / memorial locations and the small upright headstone approach (applying existing charges for equivalent ashes plots) be approved; and
3) That officers be authorised to complete the practical arrangements and bring the new ashes plots into use within approved budgets, subject to necessary checks and consents.

ACTION C Bennett / S Bracher

OS/6598
GROUNDS FACILITIES MEETING

The Town Clerk emphasised the importance of obtaining the right professional and technical advice at the outset of the proposed building project. Two delivery options are being considered:

- A design-and-build approach, where a single contractor is responsible for both the design and construction of the building, similar to the approach used for the Long Lane project.
- A traditional procurement approach, where an architect is appointed to design the project before the construction contract is tendered separately.

Members agreed that specialist advice is needed to determine which procurement route would provide the best outcome. Three companies had been contacted to provide quotations for this initial consultancy advice and responses were awaited. This will clarify if the budget for this advice is sufficient.

RESOLVED: That the notes of the Grounds Facilities informal meeting on 21st October 2026 (*Annex C*) be received.

ACTION	**C Bennett**

OS/6599
TOWN COUNCIL PRIORITIES FOR 2027-28 AND 2028-29

Members considered the Town Clerk's report and priorities for the remaining two financial years of the Town Council Strategy 2026-2029 (*Annex D*), which are within the Committee's remit. An update was provided on progress against current priorities.

Consideration was given to future priorities identified in the report:-

- Cemetery development and Grounds Facility department – Work continues on both.
- Carvers Masterplan – This is entirely funding dependant. Until the outcome of the current CIL funding application is known, it is unclear if Phase 2 can progress or if funding will need to be secured from another source.
- Carvers clubhouse and youth provision- The discussion on the deep dive into the operation of the Clubhouse noted partnership with youth work.
- Play Strategy – Members were keen to progress however it was acknowledged as a large piece of work looking at current equipment and sites.
- Recreational mitigation improvements
- Developing skills and capacity in the Grounds team – This is a longer-term approach to sustain skills and capacity.
- Events and the town centre – Given confirmation of the investment by NFDC in the Thriving Market Place (TMP) project, consideration could be given to diverting resources to events and support of the High Street.

Members discussed whether the proposed list of priorities was realistic given available resources. Some felt the programme of work was ambitious and should be prioritised, while others preferred an 'aim-high' approach, with the strategy adapting as circumstances evolved. It was noted that Play Strategy and the Thriving Market Place project depends on the same officer.

Funding uncertainties, including future Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) income and external grant opportunities, were recognised as key factors affecting delivery. In view of this, it was suggested that it would be helpful to have the projected figures for CIL receipts re-modelled.

Priorities for 2027-28 were identified as finishing the cemetery project, progressing the grounds department facilities building (due to the time constraints associated with the grant of planning permission), Carvers clubhouse and youth provision and Carvers Masterplan Phase 2 (if CIL funding is secured). Developing the Grounds Team skills could be progressed by the Grounds Manager.

Officers were asked to refine proposals in light of comments received and report further as part of the wider strategic planning process. It was suggested that there could be an alternative way of presenting the strategic aims to members of the public.

RESOLVED: That the draft priorities and comments made by Members be submitted for further consideration and officers refine proposals and report further as part of the wider strategic planning process.

ACTION	**C Bennett**

Chairman's initials

OS/6600
PROJECTS

Poulner Lakes Track Maintenance – Procurement for the Poulner Lakes track maintenance project is expected to begin this year, allowing progress to be made on a scheme that has experienced delays. The Council can then consider how funds can be contributed for improvement of the tracks.

Youth Work Partnership - Progress has been slower than anticipated due to recruitment difficulties, although a youth worker has now been identified. Work has already commenced within local schools. Proposals currently include weekly sessions for younger and older age groups and it is hoped that these will start in the next few weeks. It was hoped that there may be evidence to report at the next meeting, which may inform budget considerations for 27/28.

Christmas lights – The aim had been to fill in gaps in the Christmas lights on buildings in the Market Place, including the old cinema building and between Fred Olsen and Prezzo, however difficulties have been encountered due to permissions required in the Conservation Area and for listed buildings.

RESOLVED: That the updated projects report (*Annex F)* be received.

OS/6601
COMMUNICATIONS

RESOLVED: That there be publicity regarding the development of the cemetery extension, in due course.

ACTION C Bennett

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.34pm.

Note: The text in the Action Boxes above does not form part of these minutes.

RECEIVED
25th November 2026

APPROVED
2nd December 2026

TOWN MAYOR

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Chairman's initials

Events Management Sub-Committee

Notes of meeting held on Wednesday 21st October at 11.30am at Carvers Clubhouse

Present: Cllr Mary DeBoos (Chair)
Cllr Luke Dadford

In attendance:
Charly Keith – Clubhouse and Events Manager
Ebony Hooper – Clubhouse and Events Assistant

Apologies: Cllr Becci Windsor

1. **Declarations of interest**

No interests were declared.

2. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd September 2026 were circulated.

The following points were noted, revised from the previous minutes:

- 120 advance tickets, with 30 additional tickets held in reserve in case of advance demand.
- Gifts priced at £2.50 each.
- Tickets priced at £5 each.

3. **Ringwood Grand Fireworks – Final event plan**

A pre-event briefing meeting was held the previous evening. Sponsored event posts are being prepared for social media, and sponsors have been acknowledged on the website.

The Event Management Plan (EMP) has been approved and confirmed. Path closures are in place, with notices ready for distribution.

Action –
- Send the pre-event briefing to all volunteers.
- Ensure sponsored social media posts are published.
- Distribute the path closure notices as required.

4. **Any updates for Winter Wanderland**

Event planning and logistics

The Event Management Plan and road closure documentation have been submitted.

The funfair location remains to be confirmed, and further planning is required for the Grotto.

A souvenir stall will operate within the market stalls. A volunteer will be required to set up the gazebo, run the stall throughout the event and pack it down at the end of the day. Refer to RLOS RE Volunteers. The possibility of involving the Rotary Club in relation to souvenirs was also discussed, and Cllr DeBoos will speak to Glenys.

The group will review souvenir pricing at the next meeting to consider whether any items could be reduced in price.

Grotto arrangements

The Grotto layout will differ from previous years, with the entrance located through the courtyard. Men's Shed are currently making more decorations for the courtyard and the Carvers Clubhouse team will be within the courtyard making arts and crafts with children while they wait.

The proposed arrangements include:

- A maximum of two adults per family.
- Capacity planning for 20 people per 40-minute period, with 10 people inside the courtyard per 20 minutes.
- Buggy parking within the courtyard, laid out with barriers.
- The Grotto team to confirm decorations, volunteer requirements and whether a marquee will be needed.

HomeSense has approached Cllr DeBoos regarding potential funding for gifts or Grotto decorations.

Event operations and entertainment

The following arrangements were discussed:

- Luke will operate the snow machine in the castle area.
- Barriers will be required around the castle, with five barriers allocated for the gateway.
- A CD player will be available for playing Christmas songs, if needed.
- Clear Insurance banners will be displayed, with opportunities for drinks and photographs to be considered.
- The Round Table will be approached regarding traffic management when coordinating Santa.
- It was suggested that Michelle will accompany Santa in the sleigh and provide support during the Furlong walkabout. Michelle will also coordinate Santa's departure.
- A 20-minute break will be incorporated into the relevant arrangements.
- Two WhatsApp groups will be created to coordinate both events.

Action –

- Review souvenir prices and discuss whether any items can be reduced to cost price.
- Discuss with Greyfriars the possibility of selling calendars there.
- Recirculate the Event Management Plan and event maps.
- EH to follow up with the Clear Insurance Management regarding tickets for the Grotto.
- Confirm the funfair location.
- Confirm Grotto decorations, volunteer support and marquee requirements.
- Follow up with HomeSense regarding potential funding.
- Approach Glenys & Rotary Club regarding souvenir stall involvement.
- Confirm traffic management arrangements with the Round Table.
- Create a WhatsApp group for both events.

5. Any Other Business

Event coordination

In place of holding another meeting before the events, CK will distribute the updated event management plan and event map via email. CK will also brief the Winter Wanderland volunteers in advance of the event – rather than holding one volunteer meeting, it's likely CK will meet with 'the Grotto team' and other volunteers separately or via email.

Residents' letters will need to be printed prior to the event, along with the table cards. Reindeer Ramble materials will be printed in-house and delivered to the Gateway and Reindeer shops.

Future meetings

A meeting was proposed for Tuesday 19 January 2027 at 9:30am, ahead of the February RLOS meeting.

RLOS feedback and future events

No decision was made regarding dates for subsequent Fireworks events. Future planning will need to take into consideration PJS and the value their event has for the community, the funfair logistics and litter picking arrangements for the day after the event.

Actions:

- CK to distribute the event plans and brief Winter Wanderland volunteers.
- Print the Residents' letters and table cards to distribute nearer the time.
- Print Reindeer Ramble materials in-house and arrange delivery to the Gateway and Reindeer shops.
- Review RLOS feedback and consider PJS, funfair and litter-picking requirements before confirming future event dates.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 12:45pm

The next Event Sub-Committee meeting – Tuesday 19th January at 9.30am

RECEIVED APPROVED

RLOS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SUB-COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Ringwood
Town Council

COMMITTEE REPORT

Report title	Cemetery Development – Working Party Recommendations and Planting Update
Committee	Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces
Date	4 November 2026
Report author	Charmaine Bennett, Town Clerk

Decision Summary

Purpose	To consider the Working Party proposals and receive the planting update.
Decision type	To approve
Financial impact	First-phase planting within the £10,000 RACE contribution. Further funding to be considered separately.
Budget provision	External funding received from RACE. Funding for remaining planting in 2027/28 is not yet confirmed.
Confidential / exempt	No

1. Introduction and reason for report

To consider the proposals arising from the Cemetery Review Working Party meeting on 16 October 2026 and receive an update on planting. The meeting notes accompany this report; the matters requiring the Committee's consideration are set out below.

2. Background Information

The Working Party supported an initial ashes interment area beside the end of the existing path, before entering the former allotment area, opposite the Muslim graves. Plots would accommodate up to two sets of ashes, with small upright headstones facing the path.

Members also supported developing a scattering area and associated memorial beneath the large existing tree on the cemetery side of the former allotment boundary. Approval would enable officers to complete the detailed layout and practical arrangements. The first phase would form part of a coherent wider layout and remain clear of the drainage area under investigation.

The Working Party favoured a memorial tree rather than a tower structure. Officers are obtaining comparable quotations and developing the proposed base and setting for further consideration. No supplier, purchase or £20,000 budget bid was recommended, it is hoped that this can be brought forward at the next meeting for budget consideration.

Planting update

The Grounds Manager will proceed with purchasing and planting the hedging and approximately half of the proposed pleached trees, using the £10,000 contribution already received from RACE. Planting will take place as soon as practicable.

The Grounds Manager has confirmed that the remaining pleached trees can be added next year and are expected to form a consistent planting scheme as they establish.

3. Financial Implications (if applicable)

The first phase of planting will be delivered within the existing £10,000 RACE contribution.

Officers will seek to establish the availability of external funding in time to inform the 2027/28 budget process. Any remaining funding requirement would then be brought to the Council for consideration.

The memorial proposal will return with fuller costs and proposed funding for consideration. No additional allocation or reserve drawdown is sought through this report.

4. Issues for Decision and Recommendations

Members are asked to:

a. Receive the Working Party notes of 16 October 2026 and note the planting update.

b. Approve the proposed ashes interment and scattering/memorial locations and the small upright headstone approach, applying existing charges for equivalent ashes plots.

c. Authorise officers to complete the practical arrangements and bring the new ashes plots into use within approved budgets, subject to necessary checks and consents.

Cemetery Review Working Party
Notes of meeting held 16 October 2026, Online

Present: Cllrs Philip Day, Janet Georgiou and Glenys Turner; Charmaine Bennett, Town Clerk; Tony Robinson, Grounds Manager; Sam Bracher, Office Administrator (joined during the meeting).

At Philip Day's invitation, the Town Clerk led the meeting. These notes follow the agenda order; planting was discussed towards the end. Janet Georgiou experienced connection difficulties and received a brief recap after the other participants left.

1. Apologies for absence
It was noted that Lynn had stepped back from the working party. Philip Day explained that her contribution had focused on the initial design and layout. No other apologies were recorded.

2. Declarations of interest
No formal declarations of interest were recorded.

3. Previous meeting and matters arising
The March meeting notes were agreed. The Town Clerk reported that the previous actions were understood to have been completed.

4. Progress since the last meeting
Members welcomed the substantial progress on the former allotment site and thanked Tony and the grounds team. The ground had been levelled and seeded, and paths laid with a hoggin surface over a prepared base. Tony explained that this would allow tarmac to be added later without reconstructing the paths.

The Town Clerk reported expenditure of £29,592, with a small amount of finishing work remaining. The £10,000 RACE contribution for trees and hedging had been received. CIL funding had reduced the amount required from the Cemetery Reserve. Later discussion clarified that the planting expenditure was matched by the RACE income, rather than being an additional unfunded cost to the Council.

5. Existing drainage arrangements
Members discussed an existing private drainage system within the cemetery land. Further clarification is needed on the route and extent of underground pipework and any implications for cemetery development and future maintenance access.

Members supported seeking further technical and environmental advice and reviewing the relevant documentation. The proposed first phase of ashes provision would be located away from the area under investigation.

Actions: The Town Clerk to provide the relevant documents to Cllr Day for review and seek advice from the appropriate environmental authority. The Grounds Manager to seek advice from the cemetery association.

6. Bringing the new ashes area into use

Members reviewed Sam's layout visual and discussed how to provide facilities promptly while retaining the intention to create an attractive landscaped garden. Glenys emphasised the need for a coherent layout and planting, rather than piecemeal expansion of the burial area. Janet raised concerns about scattering near neighbouring gardens and the prevailing wind. Sam explained the differences between surface scattering, pouring ashes into soil and interment.

The preferred direction was to provide a scattering area and associated memorial beneath the large existing tree, on the cemetery side of the former allotment boundary. Members recognised that this differed from locating all facilities within the former allotment area. The location offered easier access and made use of ground where roots constrained burial. Tony identified no immediate practical objection to developing the proposal.

Members supported starting ashes interments in the area beside the end of the existing path, before entering the former allotments, opposite the Muslim graves and near the tree area. Development could then progress into the extension. The layout and orientation should allow this first section to be incorporated into the wider garden as planting developed, while giving time to resolve the drainage issue.

Sam and Stephen's proposal for plots accommodating up to two sets of ashes with small upright headstones was supported, with headstones facing the path. Sam explained that local stonemason advice indicated little price difference from desk tablets, depending on material, and described the ground movement problems in the existing tablet area. Individual memorial designs could vary within the permitted dimensions; the preference was for small upright headstones to give a consistent arrangement.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the proposals would be taken to RLOS. No new fee was agreed: the discussion clarified that the suggested charge followed the existing double ashes plot approach. The practical method of accommodating a second interment needed Stephen's input.

Action: Town Clerk to take the proposed locations and small-headstone approach to RLOS. Cemetery staff to develop the marking-out and layout, ensuring consistency with subsequent phases; Sam to obtain Stephen's input on arrangements for second interments.

7. Trees and planting

Tony proposed using large planters for trees along the central route to reduce future root damage to paths. Boundary hedging would use whips, set back from the fence to allow maintenance access. Members supported the planter approach in principle, provided it could be accommodated within the £10,000 RACE contribution and its funding conditions.

Action: Tony to speak to Mary to confirm whether RACE funding can cover planters as well as trees and hedging. An alternative would be needed if planters were not eligible.

8. Development priorities and funding

Members favoured a memorial tree in the style of the Mulberry Tree illustrated in Sam's paper, rather than a tower structure. This was a preference for the type of

feature, not approval of a supplier or purchase. They discussed appearance, durability, plaque supply and the benefits of using local suppliers. Sam highlighted the risk of depending on one company for replacement plaques.

Philip did not favour a formal public consultation, although he was open to seeking ideas more widely. No consultation programme was agreed.

Action: Sam to investigate comparable memorial trees and obtain two or three quotations, exploring local suppliers and whether plaques could be supplied locally. Tony to develop options and costs for the base and setting. Officers to bring back a visual proposal and fuller costs.

The Town Clerk raised a possible £20,000 budget bid for the memorial feature and base for 2027/28. Philip reserved his position on the finances and asked that this remain an option rather than a formal recommendation. No £20,000 bid, reserve drawdown or wider funding plan was agreed.

The indicative programme included the deteriorating boundary wall, water provision, a gate, existing path repairs and memorial features. The gate change had been held back to allow grass to establish. Covered seating was questioned as a priority; deferral or removal was suggested, but no revised programme was settled.

The Town Clerk outlined possible CIL funding for extension works, reserve funding for existing paths and a budget bid for the memorial. In response to questions about the £15,000 path repair estimate, Tony described approximately 40 metres affected by roots from 11 Lawson’s cypress trees, whose removal had already been agreed. Roots were also damaging coping and nearby graves. The figure was an indicative estimate based on comparable work, not a quotation or an approved allocation.

No decision was recorded on annual reserve contributions or longer-term car park resurfacing provision.

9. Recommendations and next steps

A further meeting would consider a revised design and fuller memorial costs following the agreed enquiries. No date was fixed. Members thanked Sam for her research and Tony and the grounds team for the improvements on site.

C

Grounds Facilities Project Sub- Committee
NOTES OF INFORMAL PROJECT MEETING

21 October 2026

This was an informal project meeting rather than a formally convened meeting of the Grounds Facilities Project Sub-Committee. The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss the project and agree preparatory actions. No decisions committing the Council to expenditure or the appointment of consultants or contractors were made.

Present

- Councillor Philip Day
- Councillor Peter Kelleher
- Councillor Andy Briers
- Charmaine Bennett, Town Clerk
- Michelle Gordon, Responsible Financial Officer
- Cllr Rae Frederick, who arrived at approximately 18:50

Absent: Cllr Janet Georgiou

1. Purpose and current position

The purpose of the meeting was to consider how to progress the Grounds Facilities Project following the grant of planning permission and what professional and technical input would be required to move from the planning-approved scheme towards a construction-ready project.

It was noted that £10,000 was available in the current budget to begin progressing the project, although the scope and likely cost of the next stage had not yet been established.

2. Approach to design and construction

The meeting discussed the two broad approaches available: a design-and-build route, under which a contractor would take responsibility for developing the design and constructing the building; or a traditional route involving the appointment of an architect to develop the scheme into detailed working drawings and specifications before the construction work was tendered.

The advantages and risks of both approaches were considered. A more fully developed design and specification before tendering could provide greater clarity about requirements and reduce the number of provisional sums or unknown costs. It was also noted that an architect might fulfil a contract administration role, but that this would not necessarily include day-to-day project management or quality supervision on site.

There was support for obtaining professional architectural advice before deciding which procurement route would best suit the project.

3. Technical and specialist requirements

The planning drawings would require considerable further development before construction and tender documentation could be produced. Potential requirements discussed included structural engineering,

drainage design, mechanical and electrical services, fire requirements, Building Regulations approval, the fuel tank and wash-down arrangements, and other specialist advice.

The planning conditions would also need to be reviewed and addressed as the project progressed, including the requirements relating to a Construction Method Statement and ecological enhancement details.

4. Access and construction arrangements

The meeting discussed both construction access and the longer-term operational access arrangements for the Grounds Team.

Concern was raised about whether the proposed Carvers Lane access would remain usable when vehicles were parked in the road. The existing planning information would need to be checked to establish what had been proposed and approved for access and egress, and whether further highways or traffic management advice might be required.

For construction purposes, it was anticipated that significant construction traffic might need to use the Southampton Road access. Safe segregation of construction vehicles from users of Carvers Recreation Ground would need to be considered as part of the Construction Method Statement.

Temporary accommodation and secure storage for the Grounds Team and its equipment during construction would also need to be considered. Options discussed included temporary containers on site or temporary commercial accommodation.

5. Project cost and funding

It was recognised that an early indication of the likely overall project cost would be important before the Council considered affordability and possible funding arrangements. The Public Works Loan Board was mentioned as one potential source of funding, but no funding decision was made.

The initial professional advice should therefore, if possible, provide an indication of likely construction costs as well as the services available and the basis on which professional fees would be charged.

6. Initial professional advice

It was agreed that the Town Clerk would prepare a short brief setting out the current position and seeking advice on the work required to progress the scheme from planning approval through detailed design towards construction.

The intention was to approach three suitably experienced architectural practices. They would be asked to outline the services they could provide, the likely professional and specialist input required, their proposed fee arrangements and, if possible at this stage, an early indication of likely construction costs.

A number of possible practices were mentioned during the discussion. The information obtained would be brought back for consideration before any appointment or commitment to expenditure was made.

7. Project Action Tracker

Actions arising from the meeting will be recorded and maintained in the Grounds Facilities Project Action Tracker. The tracker will provide the ongoing record of action owners, target dates, progress and next steps.

Ringwood
Town Council

COMMITTEE REPORT

Report title	Town Council priorities for 2027–28 and 2028–29
Committee	Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces
Date	4 November 2026
Report author	Charmaine Bennett, Town Clerk

Decision Summary

Purpose	To invite members to consider priorities for the remaining two financial years of the Town Council Strategy 2026–2029.
Decision type	Recommendation to Full Council
Financial impact	No expenditure approval sought. Delivery may require future investment and officer time.
Budget provision	Any additional provision to be considered separately through budget setting or a costed report.
Confidential / exempt	No

Introduction and reason for report

Full Council agreed on 30 September 2026 to invite committees and working parties to review relevant priorities and actions, with recommendations brought together for consideration in November. This report invites members to consider priorities within this Committee's remit for 2027–28 and 2028–29.

The Town Council Strategy 2026–2029 is attached as Appendix 1. The Council's agreed strategy and its four existing themes remain the basis for discussion. Members are invited to consider whether planned actions remain priorities, any changes to their timing and any additional proposals of their own. Officers will advise on delivery and resources and implement the actions agreed.

Progress against current priorities

Cemetery development and work towards a new Grounds Department facility are continuing, and a youth-work partnership pilot is taking place this year. Delivery and monitoring of Open Space Management Plans now form part of the routine work programme. Members are invited to consider removing this as a separate strategic action while retaining the plans as the basis for ongoing management.

Priorities for members to consider

Cemetery development and Grounds Department facility

Members are invited to consider including delivery of phase two of the Cemetery Development Plan in 2027–28 and retaining progression of the new Grounds Department facility. Delivery timetables would reflect project progress, agreed scope and available resources.

Carvers Masterplan

Members are invited to consider retaining implementation and completion of phase two in 2027–28 and the existing proposal to review requirements for phase three. Timing would be informed by progress and funding, alongside the proposed work on the Clubhouse's future direction.

Carvers Clubhouse and youth provision

The briefing and members' discussion before this meeting provide a basis for considering the Clubhouse's future development. Members are invited to consider developing and beginning implementation of a longer-term plan in 2027–28, potentially covering three years. Its purpose and scope would reflect members' conclusions from that discussion.

Evaluation of the current youth-work partnership pilot could inform that plan and the next stage of youth provision. Members are invited to consider whether to develop these together, while allowing for any provision outside the Clubhouse. Delivery and review of agreed arrangements could continue in 2028–29.

Play Strategy

Members are invited to consider retaining development of the Play Strategy in 2027–28, followed by implementation of agreed priorities in 2028–29. This is likely to be a substantial piece of work; its scope will inform the time and resources required.

Recreational mitigation improvements

Members are invited to consider including work with New Forest District Council to deliver agreed improvements at Poulner Lakes and progress proposals for The Mount in 2027–28, subject to the programme agreed with NFDC. Delivery could extend into 2028–29. Detailed proposals, including any Council funding or maintenance commitments, would return to members.

Developing skills and capacity in the Grounds team

Members are invited to consider a longer-term approach to sustaining skills and capacity within the Grounds team as a priority for 2027–28. This could support continuity of service through staff development, sharing practical knowledge and exploring opportunities to bring new people into grounds maintenance, including through an apprenticeship.

The purpose would be to invest in the team and prepare for future staffing changes as they arise. Proposals would be developed with staff involvement and considered through the Staffing Committee, with costs and delivery implications brought forward for member consideration.

Events and the town centre

Members are invited to consider the Committee's contribution to town-centre events alongside the business engagement and town-centre priorities being considered by Planning, Town & Environment. With Thriving Market Place works currently anticipated to begin in early 2029, members may wish to consider opportunities for events ahead of that project, rather than making the 2027–28 action dependent on its outcome. The existing events review in 2028–29 could be retained to plan for the following three years.

Proposed strategy wording

The following short actions are offered for members to recommend, amend or omit, or supplement with their own proposals. They sit within the existing strategic themes; inclusion and timing remain for members to determine.

Improve our facilities, services and green spaces 2027–28

- Deliver cemetery development phase two.

• Progress the new Grounds facility.

• Complete Carvers phase two and review phase three.

• Develop a Clubhouse business plan incorporating future youth provision.

• Scope and develop the Play Strategy.

• Progress recreational mitigation improvements with NFDC.

• Develop Grounds team skills and capacity.

Develop, energise and facilitate events 2027–28

• Explore events supporting town centre vitality.

2028–29

• Implement agreed Play Strategy priorities.

• Progress the agreed Clubhouse plan.

• Review outcomes of agreed youth provision.

• Continue agreed recreational mitigation improvements.

• Review events and plan future provision.

Delivery and financial implications

No expenditure or staffing changes are proposed for approval through this report. Members are invited to weigh the number, scale and timing of priorities against routine service commitments and available capacity. The 2027 elections and councillor induction will also require substantial officer time. Costs and delivery requirements would inform subsequent reports and budget decisions.

The Committee's priorities and longer-term proposals can also inform the next Town Council strategy, intended to take effect from April 2029 following consultation during 2028–29.

Issues for decision and recommendations

Members are invited to:

1. Consider the Council's priorities within this Committee's remit for 2027–28 and 2028–29.

2. Agree the actions, wording and timing to recommend to Full Council, using the proposals in this report as a starting point and identifying any amendments, additions or omissions.

E

Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces
Project Oversight Report - November 2026

1. Introduction and reason for report
This report provides the Committee with an overview of live projects within its remit, enabling members to monitor progress, risks, and financial implications, and to identify where further information or a separate report is required for decision-making.

2. Background
The project planner is updated weekly by officers and forms part of the Council's wider arrangements for project oversight and governance. Projects are reported by exception, with operational delivery managed by officers under existing delegations.

3. Scope of report
This report includes projects within the remit of this Committee only. Projects governed through other Committees are reported separately and are not included here.

Project title	Purpose/intended outcome	Status	Progress update	Key risks/issues	Next milestone/ decision point	Committee interaction required	Senior Officer (oversight)	Delivery lead	Financial poistion
Grounds Department Sheds Replacement	To replace the Grounds team's sub-standard workshop, garaging, office and storage facilities with a fit-for-purpose building, improving operational efficiency, health and safety, and long-term asset resilience.	In progress	Although a formal meeting of the Grounds, Facilities and Projects Sub-Committee has not yet taken place, discussions have been held with Sub-Committee members to progress the project. Initial enquiries have been made with architectural firms to obtain quotations and advice on the professional support required to develop the approved plans to the next stage. Options and recommendations will be brought to a formal Sub-Committee meeting in November.	Financial: Construction and professional fees remain subject to detailed design and procurement. Delivery: Appointment of appropriate professional support and agreement of the delivery route are required before the project can progress to detailed design and tender stage.	Consideration of architect and professional support quotations by the Grounds, Facilities and Projects Sub-Committee in November, with recommendations to Policy & Finance as required.	RLOS: Grounds, Facilities and Projects Sub-Committee to review options and make recommendations. Policy & Finance Committee approval may be required for future expenditure and project progression.	Town Clerk	Town Clerk	Propsed budget provision of £10,000 for next stage
Poulner Lakes track maintenance	To establish a sustainable and cost-effective approach to maintaining and improving the access tracks at Poulner Lakes to an acceptable standard, ensuring continued safe use while clarifying long-term maintenance responsibilities.	In progress – awaiting confirmation of delivery arrangements	NFDC continues to include the access improvements within its recreational mitigation work programme. No substantive project developments have occurred since the last report. A meeting with NFDC officers is scheduled to further discuss project scope, delivery arrangements and programme timescales. RTC continues to seek confirmation that the full track length, associated repairs and any agreed site enhancements can be incorporated within the proposed works.	Delivery: Project programme remains dependent on NFDC timescales and delivery arrangements. Timing: Works will need to take account of Fishing Club activities and suitable ground/weather conditions. Scope: Final extent of works and any associated site enhancements remain to be confirmed.	Meeting with NFDC officers to obtain an update on project scope, programme and procurement arrangements. Confirmation of delivery approach and indicative timescales.	Members to be updated following discussions with NFDC. Any significant changes to scope, enhancements or future site naming proposals to be considered by the appropriate committee.	Town Clerk	Grounds Manager	£15000 from RTC CIL agreed. No change

Cemetery Development	To secure the Council's future cemetery capacity through phased development of the former allotment land, while providing improved options for the interment and scattering of cremated remains, memorialisation and a Garden of Remembrance.	In progress – site establishment and detailed planning	Initial site preparation is substantially complete. The former allotment site has been cleared, existing paths extended and the new cemetery area seeded. The area is establishing well and will shortly be mown and treated for weeds as required. Attention is now moving to detailed planning of the future use and layout of the site.	Design/capacity: The layout needs to make effective long-term use of the available land while providing appropriate areas for burials, ashes, memorialisation and a Garden of Remembrance. Service offer: Decisions are required on the types of plots, memorialisation and other options the Council intends to make available. Financial: Subsequent development and landscaping costs will depend on the agreed layout, facilities and phasing.	Cemetery Working Party meeting in October to consider and finalise the proposed location of the different cemetery zones, including burial areas, ashes, memorialisation and the Garden of Remembrance, and to consider the range of plots, memorial and other options to be offered.	Working Party to develop the next-stage layout and recommendations, with proposals subsequently reported to Committee as required.	Town Clerk	Grounds Manager	Cemetery Development Reserve available. £10,000 RACE funding has been requested for release. Costs for the next phase will be developed once the layout, service offer and proposed enhancements are agreed.
Youth Work – Initial Scoping and Partnership Development	To develop sustainable youth work provision in the town through a partnership-based model aligned to Council priorities and identified community need.	In progress – delivery model being developed	Discussions have taken place with representatives from Poulner Baptist Church and Youth for Christ to explore practical options for delivering youth work provision from Carvers Clubhouse. A potential model is being developed involving one evening per week, with separate sessions for Year 6 pupils and for secondary-age young people. Subject to final arrangements, delivery is expected to commence in late autumn/winter 2026. Partners are also considering options for maintaining and sustaining the service beyond the initial pilot phase.	Delivery: Final arrangements with delivery partners, staffing and safeguarding requirements need to be confirmed before activities can commence. Sustainability: A longer-term funding and delivery model will be required if the service proves successful. Participation: Future attendance levels and community demand will inform the scale and frequency of provision.	Agree final delivery arrangements with partner organisations and establish a start date for pilot youth sessions at Carvers Clubhouse. Consider longer-term sustainability and funding requirements following initial implementation.	Members to be kept informed of implementation progress and initial participation levels. Further reports to be brought forward if additional resources, funding or longer-term commitments are required.	Town Clerk	Clubhouse Manager	£4,000 approved for initial/pilot youth work activity in 2026/27. Funding has not yet been drawn down/paid.

Christmas lights review	To review the existing Christmas light display and identify proportionate improvements that enhance the town centre's festive offer, while ensuring value for money and operational practicality.	In progress	Installation dates for the festive lighting and delivery dates for Christmas trees have been agreed. Work continues to maximise the visual impact of the Market Place display whilst ensuring that any proposals are compatible with conservation and listed building requirements but members should be aware that our options may be limited.	Heritage and conservation constraints may limit the extent of enhancements that can be delivered within the Market Place. Operational arrangements must ensure that lighting fixings are suitable and do not damage buildings or trees. Any additional enhancements remain subject to available budget and contractor capacity.	Finalise the 2026 installation arrangements, confirm any enhancements that can be delivered within heritage constraints and prepare for the Christmas lights switch-on event.	Note progress. Any material additional expenditure or significant changes to the scheme to be referred to members as required.	Town Clerk		Existing scheme budget applies. Any additional expenditure arising from enhancements to be identified and approved as required.
Externally Led Projects – Council Oversight and Engagement									
North Poulner and The Mount – Access and Open Space Enhancements (know as Ri9)	Part of the Greenway Project, led by New Forest District Council and funded through Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), aimed at protecting sensitive sites within the National Park by improving local walking routes and encouraging more sustainable use.	In progress	NFDC has confirmed that the project is within its programme and considers community engagement to be the appropriate next stage before proposals are developed further. NFDC will prepare an engagement plan, talking points and consultation materials. RTC will identify relevant community groups and support member involvement. Opportunities for complementary enhancements, including public art/wooden sculptures, are also being explored.	Dependency: Programme and delivery remain led by NFDC. Community: Early engagement will be important to identify local concerns and issues, including any known antisocial behaviour considerations. Funding: Public art or similar enhancements would fall outside recreational mitigation	NFDC to provide community engagement material and brief RTC members, anticipated November/December 2026, ahead of community engagement.	Members to receive an update before public engagement and be appropriately involved in the engagement process.	Town Clerk		No direct financial implications for the Town Council.
North Ringwood - walking route improvements project (known as Ri6 by NFDC)	NFDC-led recreational mitigation project to replace the bridge providing pedestrian access to the Poulner Lakes recreational area.	In progress – external delivery	NFDC is progressing the replacement bridge and has asked whether RTC would be willing to take on future management responsibility. Members have previously indicated broad support in principle, subject to understanding the associated long-term liabilities.	Asset liability: RTC needs to understand the future inspection, maintenance, repair and replacement obligations before accepting responsibility for the bridge. Dependency: Delivery remains dependent on NFDC's project programme.	NFDC to provide details of ongoing maintenance requirements and costs, together with a proposed Memorandum of Understanding.	Decision required on whether RTC should accept future management responsibility once the maintenance information and proposed MoU have been received.	Town Clerk		Replacement project funded/delivered externally by NFDC. Potential future financial liability for RTC if it accepts ongoing management responsibility.

4. Recommendation Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

For further information, please contact:
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