APPLEBY-IN-WESTMORLAND TOWN COUNCIL

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Finance Committee Minutes

For the meeting held in the Moot Hall

Monday 9th March 2026 at 7.10pm

Present:

Cllr Heap (Chair)
Cllr Anderton
Cllr Curley
Cllr Davidson

Also in attendance:

Cllr Connell
Cllr Kemp
Cllr Hilsden
Cllr Railton
Cllr Smith
Town Clerk and Clerk's Assistant

F1/03/26 Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from Cllr Chalmers.

F2/03/26 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest to report.

F3/03/26 Management Accounts

The Chair presented the Management Accounts for February 2026.

The Management Accounts for February 2026 were accepted and **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council.

F4/03/26 Precept for 2026-27

Westmorland & Furness Council have acknowledged the Council's precept request. They will be announcing all the precept awards soon.

F5/03/26 Shop Front Grant Improvement Scheme

The grant panel had met to discuss the three applications received and it was agreed in principle to award each applicant a grant towards their proposed shop front improvements, subject to any conditions in their grant offer letter.

F6/03/26 External Auditor – additional costs

The external auditors had charged an additional fee of £1,250. This was over and above their fixed rate fee of £840 for carrying out an audit of the Council's year end accounts. This fee related to additional costs for 'challenge matters' to investigate complaints received from an elector(s) on the Council's arrangements for renting out Fair Hill during the Horse Fair.

The Finance Chair and Clerk had written to the auditors on 26th October stating that the Council wasn't prepared to pay this additional amount until information was received outlining what the costs related to. The auditors replied on 25th February explaining that when they receive formal objections or points from electors, they have a statutory obligation to investigate these. As this was not a matter that affects many smaller authorities, it therefore took some time to deal with. Their time had been spent reviewing the complaints received, raising queries with both parties as a result of their review and subsequent queries following on from this.

They concluded that their investigations revealed the Council was taking a reasoned and reasonable approach to this matter and they did not feel that any additional reporting was required and have closed their file on this matter.

Cllr Heap felt that the explanation from the auditors was insufficient in detail and they should be contacted again to ask for a full breakdown of how many hours had been spent on what task and at what rate.

F7/03/26 Councillors' reports and items for future agendas

There were no items for future agendas.

F8/03/26 Next Meeting

To note that the next meeting of the Finance Committee will be on **Monday 13th April 2026** at **7.15pm**, or at the rising of the Planning and General Purposes Committee in the Moot Hall.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.31pm.

At the Council Meeting held on **Wednesday 18th March 2026**, the Chair of this meeting was authorised by the Committee to sign these minutes, to confirm they are a true and accurate record:

Cllr Heap