

**Minutes of the Annual Town Council Meeting
held in the Council Chamber, Chantry Centre, Chantry Way, CM11 2AP
on Thursday 7th May 2026 at 7.00pm**

Present: Chairman: Cllr J Devlin
Vice-Chairman: Cllr M Thomas

Councillors: A Adshead, P Bunyan, R Clark, E Davies, M Dear, K Herlock, C May,
M Moore, K Mordecai, I Scott, H Stuart, G Talbot, A Talboys,

Also Present: the Town Clerk

- 1. Election of Chairman for the Municipal Year 2026-27**
Cllr Dear proposed Cllr J Devlin. Seconded by Cllr Thomas.

RESOLVED: that Cllr Jim Devlin is elected as Chairman for the ensuing municipal year.

- 2. Statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office**
Cllr Devlin made the Statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

In the Chair Cllr J Devlin

- 3. Appointment of Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year 2026-27**
Cllr Dear proposed Cllr M Thomas. Seconded by Cllr Clark.

RESOLVED: that Cllr Mark Thomas be appointed Vice-Chairman for the ensuing municipal year.

- 4. Apologies for Absence**
Cllrs E Davies, G St. Pierre and J Tutton

- 5. Members Declarations of Interest with regard to Items on the Agenda**
None.

- 6. Public Participation Session with Respect to Items on the Agenda and other Matters of Mutual Interest**
None.

- 7. Previous Chairman's Report**
A report from Cllr Devlin had been circulated with the meeting papers. He informed members that at his meeting with Borough Cllr Callaghan on 30th April the topics of Local Government Reorganisation and local elections were discussed. He also advised that James Henshaw has resigned from the Town Council.

RESOLVED: information noted.

- 8. Chairman's Allowance**
In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 s.15(5) and further to the Town Council meeting held on 11th December 2025, the Chairman's Allowance for the 2026/27 financial year remains at £450.00. Cllr Devlin proposed that a portion of this allowance is donated to a meningitis research charity in memory of a colleague's daughter. All members were in agreement.

RESOLVED: (i) information noted, and; (ii) that £200 is donated to Meningitis Now.

- 9. Appointment of Members to Serve upon Committees**
 Members received a list of the Committees and the members that had expressed an interest in serving on them.
- RESOLVED:** that members are appointed to Finance & General Purposes, Health, Wellbeing and Environment and Planning Committees as per the attached list.
(see Appendix A)
- 10. Working Parties, Project Groups and Sub-Committees**
- RESOLVED:** that members be appointed to Working Parties, Project Groups and Sub-Committees as per the attached list.
(see Appendix A)
- 11. Appointment of Members to Outside Bodies**
- RESOLVED:** that members be appointed to the outside bodies as per the attached list.
(See Appendix B)
- 12. Bank Signatories**
 Members were advised of the following:
- (i) **Barclays Bank** – Cllrs J Devlin, K Mordecai, M Moore, M Thomas and the Town Clerk
 - (ii) **Saffron Building Society** – Cllrs J Devlin, M Moore and the Town Clerk
 - (ii) **Bank of Scotland** - Cllrs J Devlin, G Talbot, M Thomas and the Town Clerk
- RESOLVED:** that all account signatories remain unchanged.
- 13. Keyholders – The Chantry Centre**
 At the present time the following are authorised keyholders:
- Staff: Mrs D Tonkiss, Mrs B Drummond, Ms D Percy, Mr A Taylor
 Blakes Fire & Security Systems (alarm response keyholder)
 Fullfield Facilities Management (cleaning contractor) x 2
 Town Councillors – A Adshead, R Clark, Chairman
 All other Town Councillors have fob access only – no building key
- RESOLVED:** information noted.
- 14. Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 12th March 2026**
 Members **(a)** received the minutes of the meeting held on 12th March 2026, and; **(b)** approved the signing of the minutes as a true record.
- RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 12th March 2026 be approved and adopted.
- 15. Committee Meetings**
- (a) Planning Committee held on 31st March and 28th April 2026**
 Cllr May presented the minutes of the meetings held on 31st March and 28th April. 27 applications were reviewed by Committee with 5 objections. Basildon Council has been asked to provide an additional finger post sign from the High Street to the Town Council, and a sign outside the Chantry Centre denoting it is home to the Town Council has been passed to Finance and General Purposes for action. Cllr May presented the following recommendations:
- (i) that the change to Planning Committee process and procedure implemented in January is not continued;
 - (ii) Planning Committee holds one meeting every four

weeks to consider all applications – to be reviewed after 6 months, and; (iii) that a proposal of interest in the land at Quilters School being used for allotments is expressed to the School Governors by sending a letter on behalf of the Council.

RESOLVED: (i) that the current process and procedure for Planning committee is discontinued; (ii) that Planning Committee meets every 4 weeks and considers all applications received, and; (iii) a letter is sent to Quilters School expressing interest in the use of the land for allotments.

(b) Health, Wellbeing & Environment Committee held on 7th April 2026

Cllr Moore presented the minutes of the meeting held on 7th April 2026.

(c) Finance & General Purposes Committee held on 16th April 2026

Cllr Adshead presented the minutes of the meeting held on 16th April 2026. He advised members that a separate office for the Town Clerk is being investigated, and the lift refurbishment is starting on 11th May. It was recommended that a task and finish group is established to investigate the feasibility of live streaming/filming Council meetings.

RESOLVED: (i) that a Broadcasting project group is set up to investigate live streaming/filming of Council meetings, and; (ii) the group members are Cllrs Devlin, Dear, Clark and Talboys.

(d) Staffing Sub-Committee held on 15th April 2026

Cllr Thomas presented the minutes. He advised members that all staff appraisals have been undertaken and the Local Government Pension Scheme Discretions Policy Statement is due for review.

RESOLVED: that in all other respects the minutes of all the above meetings are approved and adopted.

16. Internal Audit Year End 2025/26

(i) Internal Auditors Report for Financial Year End.

Members received and considered the report from Heelis and Lodge following the inspection of accounts for the financial year April 2025 to March 2026.

RESOLVED: information noted

(ii) Reappointment of Internal Auditor

In accordance with Financial Regulations members were asked to consider and approve the re-appointment of Heelis and Lodge as competent and independent internal auditors for the financial year 2026-27.

RESOLVED: that Heelis and Lodge be reappointed as competent and independent internal auditors for the financial year 2026-27.

17. Statement on Internal Control for the Year Ending 31 March 2026

Members received and considered the Statement on Internal Control for the year ended 31 March 2026 prior to the AGAR 2025/26 approval.

RESOLVED: that the Statement on Internal Control for the year ended 31 March 2026 is approved.

18. Approval of Annual Governance Statement 2025-26

Members received and considered the Annual Governance Statement.

RESOLVED: that the Annual Governance Statement be approved and signed.

19. Approval of Annual Return 2025-26

Members received and considered the Accounting Statements for 2025-26

RESOLVED: that the Accounting Statements be approved and are duly signed by the Chairman.

20. Courses and Conferences

Members received and considered the following:

(a) & (b) a list of forthcoming courses from CouncilWise and EALC

(c) to approve the attendance of the Office Administrator on the CouncilWise Permitted Development Rights course on 16th June at a cost of £72

(d) to approve the attendance of the Town Clerk on the SLCC AGM and training day on 17th June 2026 at a cost of £27

(e) first aid training has been booked for Friday 31st July 12pm to 7pm.

RESOLVED: (i) that the office administrator and Town Clerk are approved to attend the respective course/training day and that all expenses are met by the Town Council under LGA 1972 s.11, and; **(ii)** all other information is noted.

21. Review of Complaints Procedure

In accordance with Standing Order 5j(xvi) members considered and reviewed the Complaints Procedure.

RESOLVED: that the Complaints Procedure is approved and retained.

22. Review of Standing Orders

Members undertook the Annual Review of Standing Orders. There were no revisions or amendments.

RESOLVED: that Standing Orders are approved and adopted.

23. Civility and Respect Pledge

Members received and considered the Statements contained in the Civility and Respect Pledge which is supported by both NALC and the SLCC.

RESOLVED: that the Council agrees to abide by the statements contained in the Civility and Respect Pledge

24. Items for Consideration for Press Release

- Annual Report/Town Crier
- Chair and Vice Chair for new municipal year

25. Questions from the Press and Public

None.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.25pm

Cllr Devlin Date