



Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on 24 June 2025 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, East Street, Wareham at 7.30pm.

Members Present: Councillors Z Gover (Mayor), K Critchley (Deputy Mayor), D Budd, M Cotton, A Dallimore, I Davey, B Dean, S Dean, V Green, M Hill, L Kirk, D Robinson, M Tighe and S Wheatley.

Officers present: N Gray, Town Clerk & RFO

TC 026/25-26 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr D Cleaton and Cllr R Holloway

TC 027/25-26 **Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

TC 028/25-26 **Public participation time**

There was one member of the public present who did not wish to speak.

TC 029/25-26 **Confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting**

It was **RESOLVED** the minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held on 27 May 2025 be **APPROVED** and were signed by the Mayor.

TC 030/25-26 **Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting**

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

TC 031/25-26 **Reports by Dorset Councillors and representatives on outside bodies**

The report from Dorset Cllr B Ezzard was NOTED.

Cllr Wheatley informed the Council that she had met Her Royal Highness Princess Royal in Wimborne as part of the celebrations of the Citizens Advice Bureau anniversary.

Cllr Robinson reported back from a DAPTC meeting he had attended which focused on devolution and had confirmed the funding of Neighbourhood Planning had been withdrawn.

Cllr S Dean reported that the South and Southeast in Bloom judging had taken place earlier that day and there had been nothing given away as to how well Wareham had done. The Mayor thanked the Community Growers for their hard work in the Town.

TC 032/25-26 **Payments for outstanding creditors**

Members considered the list of payments for approval.

It was **RESOLVED** that payments in the sum of £ 45,306.90 be approved.

TC 033/25-26 **To receive such communications as the Town Mayor may wish to place before the Council**

There were no communications placed before Council.

The Mayor requested that any Councillors who hadn't responded to her Civic Service invitation please do so as soon as possible.

TC 034/25-26 Reports from committees and sub-groups

The minutes from the following meetings were NOTED:

- a) Amenities Committee – 15 April 2025
- b) Planning and Transport Committee – 15 April 2025 and 29 April 2025
- c) Policy, Resources and Finance – 11 March 2025
- d) Personnel Committee – 21 January 2025

TC 035/25-26 Q4 Budget Monitoring

The Q4 Budget Monitoring report was considered and noted.

TC 036/25-26 2024/25 Annual Budget Review

The 2024/25 Annual Budget Review considered and noted.

TC 037/25-26 Internal Audit Report

The Mayor introduced the final Internal Audit report for the 2024/25 financial year, noting she had been summoned to see the Internal Auditor during the visit to be notified of the issues and lack of compliance in respect of the Joint Burial Committee. She noted her request to the Auditor to be frank and bold in any recommendation to Council, which had been the case, and the Council must address the issue with a specific agenda item at the next meeting.

The Internal Audit Report for the 2024/25 financial year was considered and noted.

TC 038/25-26 Annual Governance Statement

The Clerk presented the Annual Governance Statement for the year ending 31 March 2025, noting it required signature in the meeting as it formed the documents to be submitted to the External Auditor.

The Clerk explained that as RFO she had ticked Box 7 as "no" because the recommendations from the Internal Auditor had not been actioned, and a note to the External Auditor was required for explanation. It was hoped the matter would not impede any PWLB loan application in the coming months.

The Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25 was **APPROVED** and duly signed by the Mayor and Clerk.

TC 039/25-26 Accounting Statements

The Clerk, as the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), presented the Accounting Statements for 2024/25, noting there had been the need to make restatements to last year's accounts because of the impact the Wareham Burial Joint Committee finances had on the Council's final figures.

As Responsible Financial Officer, the Clerk had correctly signed the Accounting Statements when they had been prepared in readiness for the meeting.

The Accounting Statements for the year ending 31 March 2025 were **APPROVED** and duly signed by the Mayor.

TC 040/25-26 Notice of Public Rights

The Clerk confirmed the dates for the Notice of Public Rights and Publication of the Unaudited Annual Governance and Accountability Return would be from Friday 27 June 2025 to Thursday 7 August 2025, with the notice being published on Wednesday 25 June 2025.

The Notice of Public Rights was **NOTED**.

TC 041/25-26 To Declare any Conflicts of Interest with the External Auditor, BDO LLP

The Clerk advised the Auditors, BDO, required that all Councils being audited to declare whether they had any conflicts of interest with BDO, and that a resolution be made accordingly.

It was **RESOLVED** that there were no conflicts of interest between the Council and BDO.

TC 042/25-26 Town Council Action List

Cllr Davey raised an issue with parking on the zig zags outside The Bear in South Street and requested that they be considered for repainting. The Clerk would take this to the Dorset Officer for consideration but encouraged all Councillors to report any parking breaches on the zig zags to the police, with photographic evidence, who would take action by post.

TC 043/25-26 Report of the Museum Manager

The Clerk read out some additional information shared by the Museum Co-ordinator in respect of offers of partnerships with Wessex Archaeology and Bournemouth University, who have indicated that they would like to donate items from a 2000's Wareham excavation but would also like to extend a visiting fellowship to the Museum Curator enabling use of the library research resources and academic journals. The Clerk noted this would be extremely important with the work in the Museum going forward.

The Clerk further read out a statement from the Museum Co-ordinator expressing deep concern at the poor stewardship of artifacts, particularly coins in the 1990's, which had taken place. The bar on the preservation and care of such prolific items should be very much higher, and this would be the case going forward to avoid any further damage occurring.

The Mayor asked that thanks be passed to the Museum Co-ordinator for her hard work and dedication since commencing in post, and welcomed the refreshing stance being taken in respect of important artifacts in the museum, which were now in very safe hands.

The Report of the Museum Co-ordinator was noted.

TC 044/25-26 Town Clerk's Update

The Town Clerk noted the following matters as an update for Council: -

- Consultation on the purchase of 2 North Street was underway with the Carnival meeting being the first community group to be presented to. A presentation to the WI will be done on 15 July and the Lions were being contacted with a view to a presentation on a date which suits. The website page was live with a link to the questions to be answered and some frequently asked questions, all of which had been shared with all members the previous Friday. Posters were on all the noticeboards and engagement with community groups would continue over the next two months. Of the 19 responses received to date all had been positive with only one negative response to the precept increase question, and the lady who had submitted the negative response had attended the office to find out why the purchase price was so much higher than it had been advertised in 2021. It has been explained that the granting of planning permission since 2021 had increased the market value.
- The final required confirmations from Councillors for the new toilet building were imminent with only the colour choice to be agreed. A planning application would then be submitted, and the closure of the toilets was looking likely for Autumn/Winter, which was logistically better.
- The three additional CCTV cameras were to be installed on 1 July. This would provide cover to East Street, North Street and South Street from the Cross, which were vulnerable spots. West Street would remain covered with the existing CCTV camera on the Town Hall building. The Local Neighbourhood Policing team were aware and pleased. The last meeting with the Purbeck Inspector had seen a report of crime in Wareham being reduced for the time of year, but is expected to rise once the summer holidays kicked in.
- The Chamber curtains were due to be fitted mid to end of July.
- The Grounds Team had been pressure washing the bridge, but it was so time consuming they were not able to complete this before the In Bloom judging. It would be completed in the coming weeks.
- The Clerk would be carrying out an engagement session with a group of students at Purbeck School on Thursday 26 June to get the Youth Council ball rolling. The Geography teacher organising the visit was extremely keen to get the Youth Council set up and running.
- The Government had actively shown its support for hybrid meetings in local government, and legislation was being considered for change to enable this. It would mean that, as a Council, we would be obliged to provide the facility for both Councillors and members of the public to join the meetings remotely. It is suspected that the legislation would require Councillors to be present for at least one or more meetings in a municipal year, and that Councillors attendance online is an exception rather than a rule, unless there are caring duties or disability restrictions. The Clerk would be looking into how other Town Councils were currently facilitating this, as some were already enabling the public to view meetings remotely, with a view to ensuring that Wareham is compliant in how it facilitates online meetings.
- The Town Clock appeared to have stopped! The Clockwinder had been made aware and would hopefully be repairing it soon. The Clerk had

approached a number of professional clock repair companies for the wall clock in the Council Chamber and was waiting to hear back from them.

- The asset transfer was continually being chased, but with a mindful eye that Dorset were low on staff within their legal team, and the Clerk was reluctant to jeopardise the relationship which had been built with Dorset around this subject. The Clerk had a Dorset Clerks meeting coming up in July where it would be raised again along with the street lighting issue and she would be putting more pressure on getting both issues sorted.
- The Clerk would be assisting the Carnival team with the impact of Martyn's Law, which is a huge piece of legislation that impacts both landowners and event organisers where events take place. The assistance being given would provide Council with the assurance that it is remaining legally compliant for the event taking place on its land.
- The Council Chamber additional chairs arrived the previous week but were flat packed and required assembly. This would be completed over the coming weeks.
- The flag poles were being replaced on 1 July.

The Clerk's update was noted.

TC 045/25-26 Any other items the Mayor deems urgent

The Mayor had no items deemed urgent.

Cllr Dallimore congratulated the Mayor on completing a marathon walk the previous Saturday.

TC 046/25-26 Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Town Council was scheduled to be held at 19:30hrs on 22 July 2025.

Mayor..... Date.....