



Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on 23 September 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, D Cleaton, M Cotton, A Dallimore, V Green, R Holloway, L Kirk, D Robinson and S Wheatley.

Officers present: N Gray, Town Clerk & RFO, S Dickins, Deputy Town Clerk

TC 083/25-26 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs I Davey, B Dean, S Dean, M Hill and M Tighe.

TC 084/25-26 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

TC 085/25-26 Public participation time

There were eleven members of the public present, four of whom spoke.

Three residents spoke in relation to the Town Museum project and public consultation regarding the PWLB loan, noting concerns regarding a potential precept increase and the breadth of the recent public consultation. A fourth resident enquired how the Wareham Neighbourhood Plan would be conducted in relation to the Dorset Local Plan, as well as when the Dorset Local Plan pop-up event on The Quay would take place.

The Mayor noted that residents with specific questions should direct them in writing to the Town Council Office to receive full responses.

TC 086/25-26 Confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting

TC 069/25-26: Removal of superfluous “after” in the first sentence.

It was **RESOLVED** the minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held on 26 August 2025 be **APPROVED** and would be signed by the Mayor, subject to the above amendment.

TC 087/25-26 Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting

There were no matters arising.

TC 088/25-26 Reports by Dorset Councillors and representatives on outside bodies

The report from Cllr Holloway was NOTED.

Cllr Critchley noted a resident’s question regarding the Dorset Local Plan pop-up event and asked Cllr Holloway for clarification of when the event was to take place. Cllr Holloway noted that the event was confirmed for Saturday 27 September 2025 at 9:00am on The Quay and that Cllr Bartlett, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Emergency Planning, would be in attendance.

TC 089/25-26 Payments for outstanding creditors

Council considered the list of payments for approval.

It was **RESOLVED** that payments in the sum of £52,681.89 be approved.

TC 090/25-26 To receive such communications as the Town Mayor may wish to place before the Council

There were no communications placed before Council.

TC 091/25-26 Reports from committees and sub-groups

The minutes from the following meetings were NOTED:

- a) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group – 19/06/2025
- b) Planning and Transport Committee – 22/07/2025 and 12/08/2025
- c) Policy, Resources and Finance – 08/07/2025

TC 092/25-26 Transfer of Funds to CCLA

The Town Clerk noted that the Town Council would soon receive the second tranche of the annual precept and highlighted the prudence of transferring £150,000 of these monies to the high-interest CCLA account.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the transfer of £150,000 to the high-interest CCLA account upon receipt of the precept funds.

TC 093/25-26 Volunteer of the Year Award Panel

The Mayor noted that a panel would need to be constituted, with herself as chair, to consider nominations for the Volunteer of the Year Award and invited members to volunteer their availability.

Cllrs Cotton, Critchley, Kirk and Wheatley volunteered to be members of the Volunteer of the Year Award Panel.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Mayor and Cllrs Cotton, Critchley, Kirk and Wheatley would constitute the Volunteer of the Year Award Panel, with the Mayor acting as Chair.

TC 094/25-26 Dorset Council Local Plan Consultation

Councillors considered the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group's recommended response to the Dorset Local Plan Consultation.

The Mayor noted the expertise, experience and effort which had been put into the creation of the recommendation for Council and thanked the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group for its work. The Mayor also noted a letter which had been drafted for the attention of Cllr Ireland, Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate, Performance and Safeguarding, and Cllr Bartlett, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Emergency Planning, which expanded upon the recommended response and commended both to Council. Cllr Holloway highlighted that sites included in the consultation were only proposals at this stage.

Cllr Robinson noted that there was mention of infrastructure in question 8 referring to schools but failing to identify GP surgeries, sewage treatment and other infrastructure. Cllr Robinson further highlighted the benefit residents gain from access to green belt areas and that proposals within the Dorset Council Local Plan consultation risked diminishing that access and to open-air spaces which he suggested should be included in the Town Council's response to question 13.

Cllr Robinson suggested including comment on the Johns Road (H6) site within question 20 that vehicular access was at a sharp 90° angle joining from Carey Road which required consideration to make safe for development proposals, given the heavy pedestrian traffic in the area.

The Mayor noted the developments proposed on the land near the Worgret Roundabout fell within the Parish of Arne and would mean that Wareham Town Council would not benefit from the development being within its boundaries in respect to the precept but would incur the pressure on its infrastructure.

It was **RESOLVED** the recommended draft letter be circulated to councillors and authority be given to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to send it to Cllr Ireland and Cllr Bartlett.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group's commendation as Wareham Town Council's response to the Dorset Local Plan Consultation, subject to minor typographical corrections and the inclusions of Cllr Robinson's comments raised in respect to questions 8, 13 and 20.

TC 095/25-26 Asset Transfers

The Town Clerk noted discussions she had had with Dorset Council in respect to asset transfers and that she was expecting proposed heads of terms for the Former Middle School Field for a lease term of 30 years for Council to consider.

The Town Clerk noted that a piece of Dorset Council land between the A351, Bere Road and Sandford Road had been identified as a potentially suitable location for a skatepark, alleviating the need for the Town Council to site a skatepark at the Former Middle School Field. The Town Clerk noted that she'd had preliminary discussions with Dorset Council which had responded positively to a potential asset transfer to the Town Council. The Town Clerk highlighted police support for the proposed skatepark location, minimising anti-social behaviour risks and allowing easy monitoring by police. The location was suitably removed from the nearest houses and was surrounded by road and near the railway, which would minimise any noise impact and lend itself to CCTV provisions to be mounted as required.

The Town Clerk noted that Dorset Council had suggested that Wareham Town Council placed an asset transfer request with a condition that it seeks to secure planning permission for a skate park on the site before the asset is transferred.

Cllr Critchley noted concerns and frustration that Dorset Council was still only prepared to offer a 30-year lease on the land at the Former Middle School Field, highlighting that these lease terms would prevent the Town Council from securing grant funding to build a sports pavilion for organised sports at the Former Middle School Field to move sports from the Recreation Ground and his frustration that Dorset Council had reneged on its prior commitments to transfer the land in perpetuity. Cllr Critchley asked if there had been any explanation from Dorset Council regarding the change of its former position.

The Town Clerk noted that she had negotiated the terms of the lease from 25 to 30 years, but that Dorset Council had been unagreeable to consider a longer lease.

It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Holloway investigate why Dorset Council had altered its position in relation to the length of a prospective asset transfer lease for the land at the Former Middle School Field for report to Council.

It was **RESOLVED** to delegate authority to the Town Clerk in principal to pursue the possibility of an asset transfer for the land between the A351, Bere Road and Sandford Road on the basis of it being subject to planning permission for a skate park on the site, and report back to Council with the findings.

TC 096/25-26 Town Council Action List

The Town Council action list was noted.

TC 097/25-26 Report of the Museum Co-ordinator

The Mayor noted the substantial amount of positive activity being undertaken within the museum.

The Town Clerk noted the Museum Co-ordinator had identified two longstanding gas masks within the museum’s collection which likely contained asbestos in their filters. It was highlighted that steps to ensure these could be safely displayed, either having the asbestos professionally removed or displaying them in a compliant sealed container were underway. The Town Clerk highlighted that many museums no longer displayed or accepted gas masks as donations, which might enhance Wareham Town Museum’s unique offer in future, as viewing gas masks in museums would become increasingly rare.

The Museum Co-ordinator’s report was noted.

TC 098/25-26 Town Clerk’s Update

The Town Clerk noted that the Museum Co-ordinator and Administration Officer were organising a Halloween trail event along with another object handing event at the library in October 2025.

The Town Clerk noted that the proposed new Howards Lane Toilet had entered public consultation within the planning permission phase.

TC 099/25-26 Any other items the Mayor deems urgent

There were no other items deemed urgent.

TC 100/25-26 Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Town Council was scheduled to be held on Tuesday 28 October 2025 at 7:30pm.

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