



Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on 28 October 2025 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, East Street, Wareham at 7.00pm.

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

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

TC 101/25-26 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr D Cleaton, Cllr A Dallimore, Cllr M Hill and Cllr D Robinson.

TC 102/25-26 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

TC 103/25-26 Public participation time

There were four members of the public present, two of whom spoke in relation to the former skate park at Hauses Field.

One resident raised disappointment at the skate park's removal and historic requests for copies of reports relating to its decommissioning due to safety, and the qualifications of officers who undertook the inspections. A second resident noted disappointment at the skate park's removal citing that the facility appeared safe and that residents are now required to travel to use alternate skate parks.

TC 104/25-26 Confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting

TC 095/25-26 "Cllr Hollway" corrected to "Cllr Holloway".

TC 095/25-26 to more clearly reflect the in-principle nature of the investigations into the feasibility of a skate park prior to an asset transfer being pursued.

TC 097/25-26 "undertaking" corrected to "undertaken".

It was **RESOLVED** the minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held on 23 September 2025 were APPROVED subject to the above amendments and would be signed by the Mayor following the meeting.

TC 105/25-26 Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting

Cllr Holloway noted his discussions relaying the Town Council's concerns at The Former Middle School Field's lease length with the Dorset Council Asset Transfer team and Cllr Biggs, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Property & Assets and Economic Growth. Cllr Holloway noted that Cllr Biggs had promised to investigate the transfer to identify a mutually acceptable solution. The Mayor thanked Cllr Holloway and requested that he keep Council updated.

TC 106/25-26 Reports by Dorset Councillors and representatives on outside bodies

The report from Cllr Ezzard was NOTED.

Cllr S Dean noted the Wareham Community Growers' success in the South & South-East in Bloom 2025 awards, having received the following awards:

Wareham Small Town	Gold
Wareham Churchyard	Gold
Wareham Town Pound Level 5	Outstanding
Northmoor Wildlife Haven Level 4	Thriving
Moreton's Lane Garden Level 4	Thriving
Wareham Hospital Gardens Level 4	Thriving
Carey Hall Gardens Level 3	Advancing

The Mayor led a vote of thanks to the Wareham Community Growers and asked that thanks be relayed in writing.

Cllr Cotton noted the Christmas Lights Committee were installing Christmas lights in North, South, East and West streets on 01.11.2025 and 02.11.2025. Cllr Cotton reported that the Christmas Lights Committee had also been able to purchase additional lights this year.

TC 107/25-26 Payments for outstanding creditors

Council considered the list of payments for approval.

Cllr Budd noted payments to Suez and that Council had resolved to change commercial waste provider to Dorset Council. He asked whether this transfer had taken place. The Deputy Town Clerk noted that the delay in transfer was due to the Suez contract's cancellation period and that the new waste provision by Dorset Council would commence by 17.11.2025.

It was **RESOLVED** that payments in the sum of £47,458.18 be approved.

TC 108/25-26 To receive such communications as the Town Mayor may wish to place before the Council

There were no communications placed before Council.

TC 109/25-26 Reports from committees and sub-groups

The minutes from the following meetings were NOTED:

- a) Amenities Committee – 12/08/2025
- b) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group – 11/09/2025
- c) Personnel Committee – 12/08/2025
- d) Planning and Transport Committee – 09/09/2025 & 23/09/2025

TC 110/25-26 Dorset Council Draft Framework for Developing Town Plans

The Town Clerk noted that members' comments and feedback were sought for the Draft Framework for Developing Town Plans. The document had been received at short notice and the requested deadline for feedback was the end of the working day on 29.10.2025. The Town Clerk highlighted that the document had been shared with Town and Parish Clerks initially with limited understanding that Town Council feedback would need to be considered by Council, which had compounded the tight timeline for response.

Councillors discussed the document's impact on Town and Parish Councils and the resources available to them to be able to complete the work. It was felt the fundamental principles of the document were very good and that Wareham would benefit from the document's approach. The Town Clerk noted the next Strategic Plan could incorporate the basis of the document.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk request an extension to allow councillors to feed back by 31.10.2025 for inclusion in the response, and that the Town Council would express its willingness to engage with the Draft Framework for Developing Town Plans in principle.

TC 111/25-26 External Audit Report 2024/25 Financial Year

Councillors noted the External Audit Report.

TC 112/25-26 Council Insurance Renewal

Councillors considered the insurance renewal cost for the 2025/26 year.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council renew its insurance policy with Zurich Municipal at a cost of £8528.48 with the expenditure being taken from Office Costs – Insurance.

TC 113/25-26 PWLB Resolution Update

Councillors considered the paper in respect to the adding of the potential precept increase figure to the loan application with an indicative caveat clause.

It was **RESOLVED** that, for transparency and in addition to the resolution made at the Council meeting on 26 August 2025, the annual loan repayment for the first year could increase the precept by 21.99% or approximately £51.36 per annum per band D property, based on the 2025/26 budget and Tax Base. The exact figure is not known until Dorset Council release the 2026/27 tax base figures and the Town Council's final budget has been agreed; therefore, this figure is subject to increase or decrease.

TC 114/25-26 Town Council Action List

Cllr Tighe noted that herself, Cllr Cotton and the Deputy Town Clerk had met with students at The Purbeck School with a view to realising a Youth Council. Cllr Tighe noted insightful student feedback regarding library service visibility and public safety at the train station. The Town Clerk noted that the original purpose of the meeting was reaching consensus on a Terms of Reference for a Youth Council, and this would need to be done to ensure the Council fulfilled its governance commitments and that safeguarding for students was considered.

Cllr Holloway noted he too had raised concerns of library visibility and had been in discussions regarding train station lighting with the Police, but that this was Network Rail's responsibility.

The Town Council action list was noted.

TC 115/25-26 Report of Museum Co-ordinator

The Mayor noted another object handling event on 31.10.2025, which had previously been very successful. The Mayor highlighted that Wareham had been bustling with pumpkin trail participants and shared her gratitude to the Museum Co-ordinator and Administration Officer for their efforts.

The Museum Co-ordinator's report was noted.

TC 116/25-26 Town Clerk's Update

The Town Clerk noted an uncommunicated heritage lamppost head replacement at The Quay which had been reported by the Mayor. The light had reportedly been damaged requiring a temporary replacement. A replacement heritage lamppost head was to be installed soon. Replacements would be closely monitored. The Mayor noted the reportedly damaged light was within view of Council CCTV cameras and could be investigated.

The Town Clerk noted a letter from Vikki Slade, MP for Mid Dorset and North Poole, regarding a resident's concerns over 2 North Street's purchase for the Town Museum. The Town Clerk expressed disappointment that misinformation had been relayed to the Member of Parliament by the resident and that Cllr Holloway's response, noted in the letter, was that he was unable to clarify the questions raised, directing the MP to the Clerk.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the letter and response would be shared with Council and that she would respond with the factual information and full responses to the questions. Cllr Davey noted disappointment at the Member of Parliament's lack of support for the project and her lack of engagement with the Council regarding the project's development along with the tone of correspondence.

The Town Clerk noted that the Council had received a visit and caution from Ofcom regarding a Council CCTV camera's operating channel. The Town Clerk noted that the CCTV camera had been erroneously set to the wrong channel by the installer, but that remedial action was in hand.

The Town Clerk proposed that Council explored suspending a Christmas Reception this to minimise any financial impact on the local taxpayer. The Town Clerk noted that the awarding of the Volunteer of the Year award could either take place alongside the Full Council meeting on 16 December 2025 or alternatively could be incorporated as part of the Wareham Business Awards being hosted in the Town Hall on 22 January 2026.

Cllr Critchley noted his reluctance to suspend a Christmas Reception and suggested whether the Volunteer of the Year presentation may be included in the Mayor Making ceremony. Council considered when would be the most suitable dates to hold the Volunteer of the Year presentation and presentations of grants to Community organisations.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Volunteer of the Year Award be granted at the Wareham Business Awards on 22 January 2026, with consideration to making the award at the Mayor Making Ceremony annually going forward. The Annual Grant cheques would be presented at the Town Council Meeting in December.

TC 117/25-26 Any other items the Mayor deems urgent

There were no other items deemed urgent.

TC 118/25-26 Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Town Council was scheduled to be held on Tuesday 25 November 2025 at 19:30.

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

Initials.....