



Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on 24 February 2026 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, East Street, Wareham at 7.30pm.

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

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

TC 169/25-26 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr D Cleaton, Cllr I Davey, Cllr Z Gover, Cllr R Holloway and Cllr M Tighe. Cllr Critchley agreed to chair the meeting.

TC 170/25-26 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

TC 171/25-26 Public participation time

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

TC 172/25-26 Confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting

TC 163/25-26 Inclusion of precept figures which would have resulted from the use of £50,000 from the General Fund.

It was **RESOLVED** that subject to the above amendments, the minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held on 27 January 2026 be **APPROVED** and would be signed by the Deputy Mayor following the meeting.

TC 173/25-26 Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting

There were no matters arising.

TC 174/25-26 Reports by Dorset Councillors and representatives on outside bodies

The Town Clerk noted Cllr Ezzard's wish for the Purbeck Shuttle 200 update to be emphasised and that Purbeck Community Rail Partnership would approach the Town Council in future to seek funding. The Town Clerk noted a meeting she attended the previous week with stakeholders highlighting that the Purbeck Community Rail Partnership was likely to receive contributions from Dorset Council, Perenco and others.

Cllr Robinson noted his attendance at the Town Band's Annual General Meeting and reported that the band had had a successful financial year. The Town Band wished to relay its thanks to the Town Council for the £500 grant received earlier in the year. Cllr Robinson also noted that the Town Band had switched to a more cost-effective energy provider following discussions.

The report from Cllr Ezzard was NOTED.

TC 175/25-26 Payments for outstanding creditors

Council considered the list of payments for approval.

It was **RESOLVED** that payments in the sum of £703,694.92 be approved.

TC 176/25-26 To receive such communications as the Town Mayor may wish to place before the Council

There were no communications placed before Council.

TC 177/25-26 Reports from committees and sub-groups

Cllr Wheatley enquired whether the trampoline had subsequently been installed at the Carey Hall Play Area. The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed it had been installed.

The minutes from the following meetings were NOTED:

- a) Amenities Committee – 09/12/2025
- b) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group – 13/11/2025
- c) Personnel Committee – 14/10/2025
- d) Planning and Transport Committee – 13/01/2026 and 27/01/2026
- e) Policy, Resources and Finance – 11/11/2025 noted in the previous meeting.

TC 178/25-26 Review of the Effectiveness and Independence of the Internal Audit Function

Council noted the report regarding the effectiveness, independence and competence of Council's internal auditor in accordance with Regulation 6 of the Accounts and Audits Regulations 2015 and to support Assertions 2 and 6 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council confirms its annual review of the effectiveness of internal control and Internal Audit and is satisfied that adequate and effective arrangements are in place.

TC 179/25-26 Signing and Sealing of Purchase Documents

The Town Clerk noted the completion for the purchase of 2 North Street was imminent and highlighted the requirements for the signing and sealing of the transfer document for the Solicitor in accordance with Standing Orders.

The Town Clerk noted the building's current condition, future opportunities for Councillors to visit the building, the prudence of capturing before and after photographs to keep members of the public abreast of the project's development and the way the project will be managed.

It was **RESOLVED** that the transfer document be duly signed and sealed in accordance with Standing Orders.

TC 180/25-26 Draft Reserves Policy

Council considered the draft reserves policy with the Town Clerk noting the requirements for Council to annually review its reserve policy.

It was **RESOLVED** that the reserves policy be approved.

TC 181/25-26 Council Bank Account Mandate

Council reviewed the current bank mandate for the Council and held a considered discussion regarding the practicalities of amending authorised bank signatories. It also considered the number of authorised signatories to be added and a suitable frequency of reviewing this.

It was **RESOLVED** that having reviewed its bank mandate and authorised signatories, Council confirmed that it remained accurate and compliant with Council's Financial Regulations and that Cllr S Dean be added as an authorised bank signatory and a further review be carried out following the Annual Town Council meeting.

TC 182/25-26 Old School Playing Field Asset Transfer

The Town Clerk noted her correspondence with Dorset Council regarding the Old School Playing Field Asset Transfer and that information had only been forthcoming that same afternoon which had been too late to facilitate a paper being drafted. Correspondence from both Dorset Council and Wareham Rangers Football Club was shared which demonstrated a pressing need for the Town Council to secure the asset transfer of the Old School Playing Field.

The Town Clerk noted that the 30-year lease offered by Dorset Council in its correspondence was not subject to further negotiation and that other parties may be offered a lease of the Old School Playing Field should the Town Council not accept this.

Councillors thoroughly considered the implications of maintaining and operating the Old School Playing Field for the purposes of organised sports and noted the disappointment that more favourable lease terms could not be secured at present. The prudence of accepting the 30-year lease offered by Dorset Council to secure the site's usage and meet the needs of sporting provisions was considered important.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council accept the offer of a 30-year lease for the Old School Playing Field and for the Town Clerk to proceed with obtaining Heads of Terms.

TC 183/25-26 Town Council Action List

The Town Council Action List was NOTED.

TC 184/25-26 Report of the Museum Co-ordinator

Councillors noted their pleasure at the positive nature of the museum's growing activity and that thanks to be relayed to the Museum Co-ordinator.

Cllr S Dean noted the vinyl night fundraiser on the evening of 27 February 2026 in support of the museum and encouraged Councillors to attend. The Town Clerk noted that Mr K Burt, a Grounds Operative at the Town Council, had volunteered his time and vinyl collection to facilitate the evening. The Town Clerk highlighted the generosity of local businesses in donating raffle prizes for the evening which had been very much appreciated.

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillors held a vote of thanks to all the businesses in Wareham for their generous support of the vinyl night fundraiser.

The report of the Museum Co-ordinator was NOTED.

TC 185/25-26 Town Clerk's Update

The Town Clerk noted that the most substantive updates had been covered within the meeting's agenda other than the operational running of the Council.

The Town Clerk's update was NOTED.

TC 186/25-26 Any other items the Mayor deems urgent

There was no other business deemed urgent.

TC 187/25-26 Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Town Council was scheduled to be held on Tuesday 24 March 2026 at 7:30pm.

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