



Town Hall | 61 Newland Street | Witham | CM8 2FE  
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## MINUTES

Meeting of: **Community Committee**

Date: **Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> February 2026**

Place: **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Newland Street, Witham, CM8 2FE**

Present: Councillors J.C. Coleman (Chairman)  
P. Heath (Vice Chairman)  
E. Adelaja  
L. Barlow  
L. Headley  
J. Martin  
R. Ramage  
J. Robertson

Also in attendance: Cllrs P. Barlow  
B. Fleet

Essex Police: Sgt A. Christian (Neighbourhood Policing)  
Sgt S. Jesse (Community Special)  
M. Witchall (Roller World)  
N. Smith (Town Clerk)  
G. Kennedy (Committee Clerk)  
N. Zaviazun (Financial Officer)

### 44. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Playle who had another Council Meeting to attend and Councillor Williams.

**RESOLVED** That the apologies be received and approved.

### 45. MINUTES

**RESOLVED** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Community Committee held 10<sup>th</sup> November 2025 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

**46. INTERESTS**

There were no interests declared at the time but at Minute 55 – Community Committee Income, Expenditure and Budget Report, Councillor J.C. Coleman declared a non-pecuniary interest as he had been involved in the procurement exercise to obtain Christmas lights at his place of work.

**47. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

There were no members of the press or public present.

**48. GUEST SPEAKER**

The Chairman welcomed Mr Matt Witchall to the Meeting to talk about skating facilities in Witham.

Mr Witchall spoke about the potential opportunity to bring Roller World, which had previously been based in Colchester, to Witham. He said that Witham would be an ideal centre for such a facility with its good links to the rest of Essex. He was hoping for support, guidance and recommendations from the Town Council. He spoke of the opportunities to create an indoor skate park and other youth projects too. In answer to a question he said that an Olympic level facility would take a year to progress but temporary accommodation could also be used. He said that events were held in Charter Hall in Colchester four times a year and the rink could be set up within two hours. He said that as Roller World was a registered charity, grants would be available and as now skate boarding is an Olympic sport substantial sums would be available. He cited the example of a facility in Corby which had the largest indoor facility including studios and classrooms. Refurbishment of a factory would take six months and cost £1.6m. He said that a full business plan was in place and premises were now required. He spoke of the benefits for young people and the potential for attracting revenue growth.

Members spoke in support of the project and the interest in the skate park with 60 young people taking part in the graffiti event. Mr Witchall would be put in contact with the Witham Industrial Watch regarding possible suitable premises becoming available.

The Chairman thanked Mr Witchall for his informative report.

**49. ESSEX POLICE**

The Chairman welcomed PS. Christian and S/SGT. Jesse to the Meeting.

PS Christian explained that he was in charge of the Neighbour Policing teams in Braintree and Uttlesford which covered five towns. He cited crime statistics for the Braintree District and for Witham. He said that recorded crime was down but there was an increase in possession of weapons, citing the four knives that were seized at Halloween; but there was an increase in sexual offences. He said that there had also been a decrease in anti-social behaviour. He reported that £3¼m of cocaine had been seized three weeks ago and police were investigating.

PS Christian spoke about visibility and that a vehicle had been based at Witham's fire station between 2 p.m. and midnight which would improve response times. This would be monitored over the next two months.

S/SGT Jesse then gave a report regarding the work of the community specials. He explained that despite the cold, wet weather, he and his colleague had been out doing speed checks, stopping 43 motorists in one day, and patrolling. He spoke of the recent arrest of prolific shoplifters. Members then had the opportunity to ask questions. It was explained that if a motorist is recorded by Community Speed Watch as speeding, Essex Police would send a letter

of advice regardless of where the motorist lives. It was considered that there was under reporting of shop lifting offences.

The Chairman thanked PS Christian and S/SGT Jesse for their reports and made comment about the use of the CCTV in the town to assist police.

**50. TOWN COUNCIL POLICIES**

**(a) Grant Awarding Policy**

The Grant Awarding Policy was received and Members asked to review.

**RESOLVED** That the amended Grant Awarding Policy be received and approved.

**(b) Councillor Grant Scheme Policy**

The Councillor Grant Scheme Policy was received and Members asked to review.

Comment was made that the grant should not be used for personal enhancement. It was agreed that during the lead up to elections it would be inappropriate to give grants and this should be included in the Policy.

**RESOLVED** That the Councillor Grant Scheme Policy be amended to include a sentence relating to grants not being made during the lead up to elections, be approved.

**51. PROJECT REVIEW REPORTS**

**(a) Witham Carnival Association**

The project review report from the Witham Carnival Association was received.

**RESOLVED** That the report be received and noted.

**(b) Friends of Witham St John CIC**

The project review report from the Witham Carnival Association was received.

**RESOLVED** That the report be received and noted.

The Chairman then proposed that under Standing Orders 10(vi) that Item 13 – Green Space Games, on the Agenda be considered next.

**52. GREEN SPACE GAMES**

The Town Clerk gave a verbal report concerning Maldon CVS Green Space Games. She said that teenage volunteers under the guidance of trained leaders would be invited to run games and crafts for children aged 3 to 11. Parents would be expected to stay so there would be no safeguarding issues. The cost would be £330 per session and she suggested four sessions, possibly one at May half term on the River Walk and the others during the summer holidays at the community centre. In answer to a question the Town Clerk said that between 50 to 70 children would take part, booked through Maldon CVS and advertised by the Town Council, but no one would be turned away on the day. CVS would bring all the equipment but the Town Council could have a branded gazebo on site.

Members agreed to support this initiative.

**RESOLVED** That it be agreed to fund four sessions to be run by Maldon CVS Green Space at a total cost of £1,320 to be funded from the Community Grant Aid budget.

**53. GRANT APPLICATIONS**

**(a) Witham Carnival Association**

A grant aid request from Witham Carnival Association was received.

It was proposed that a grant of £8,000 be made as last year but an informal discussion be had concerning the sustainability of the carnival as the proceeds from the street collection was given to charity rather than fund the following year's carnival. It was agreed that the Carnival Association should be made aware that there would be no guarantee that funding would be available in the next administration.

**RESOLVED** That the grant aid request be received and the Witham Carnival Association be given a grant of £8,000 to run the carnival but they be made aware of the need to become sustainable.

**(b) Friends of Witham St John CIC**

A grant aid request from Friends of Witham St John CIC was received.

Members were aware of the good support that St John gave during the year.

**RESOLVED** That the grant aid request be received and a grant of £3,500 given to the Friends of Witham St John CIC to assist with the running costs of the hall.

**(c) The Hub**

A grant aid request was received from The Hub.

Members understood the importance of help filling in forms and how grateful the public were for this facility. It was agreed that the remaining budget would be given to the Hub.

**RESOLVED** That the grant aid request be received and a grant of £2,516 given to The Hub to employ a person to assist in filling in forms.

**54. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

The Town Clerk had nothing to report.

**55. COMMUNITY COMMITTEE INCOME, EXPENDITURE AND BUDGET REPORT**

The Community Committee Income and Expenditure report for the period up to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2026 was received.

Members commented that the Town Council would be getting £30,000 from Braintree District Council's £240,000, which would be used towards Christmas decorations.

Councillor J.C. Coleman declared a non-pecuniary interest as he had been involved in the procurement exercise for Christmas lights at his place of work.

**RESOLVED** That the Community Committee Income, Expenditure and Budget Report for the period up to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2026 be received and noted.

#### **56. WITHAM TOWN TRAIL**

A report was received and Members asked to consider the Town Council taking over responsibility for the Heritage Walking Trail.

Members agreed that the Town Council should assume responsibility for the Heritage Walking Trail website at a cost of £140 per annum and that staff would be able to maintain and make improvements.

**RESOLVED** That the Town Council takes responsibility for the Heritage Walking Trail website.

#### **57. CCTV EXPANSION**

A report about a possible expansion of the council's CCTV network was received.

Members considered that the decrease in crime was due to the CCTV network in the town and agreed that this first stage project should be taken forward.

**RESOLVED** That officers obtain detailed technical options and costings for additional cameras on both the 'old' system (which requires line-of-sight between units but would be more stable) and the 'new' system, (which utilised data sim cards) seek views from Essex Police on priority locations for any additional cameras; undertake proportionate engagement with residents and other stakeholders on perceived CCTV gaps and priority locations; and that a further report be brought back to Committee/Council with costed options, recommended locations and any associated revenue implications before any decision was made to install additional cameras.

#### **58. SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social media statistics were received.

**RESOLVED** That the social media statistics be received and noted.

#### **59. WITHAM TOWN PARK IMPROVEMENTS**

A letter was received regarding additional Section 106 payments arising from the Gimsos development.

Members were informed that the Planning and Transport Committee had agreed to £150,000 compensation.

The Town Clerk explained that it was an aspiration of the Town Council to convert the toilet block into a kiosk. She said that outdoor gyms, as suggested in the letter, were being removed by other authorities and it would limit further the area that could be used for the carnival and other events. Members added that there was already outdoor gym equipment at Spa and Bramble Road. The Town Clerk said that there would be a business plan to lease the premises

but it would be necessary to employ a planning consultant and architect.

Members considered that this would significantly improve the park's facilities and appearance, creating a more welcoming and attractive focal point for both residents of the Gimsons development and the wider community. By enhancing the amenity space in the park, residents whose properties have been adversely affected are more likely to want to spend time in the area.

Councillor Headley left the Council Chamber.

**RESOLVED** That, subject to the District Council being in agreement to the supplementary Section 106 monies being used to convert the toilet block in the town park into a kiosk, it be agreed that the Town Clerk be tasked to appoint a planning consultant and architect to carry out the work.

**60. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** That under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 S.1(2) and in accordance with Standing Order 3(d), the press and public should be excluded from the remainder of the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Councillor Headley returned to the Council Chamber.

**61. INFORMATION CENTRE**

A report was received from the Information Centre Manager.

Members congratulated the Centre Manager on her brilliant work as the face of the Council and her role in setting up the weekly Chatty Café.

**RESOLVED** That the report be received, the Information Centre Manager congratulated and thanked for her work.

**62. SEC 106 CONSULTANT**

A report was received regarding the appointment of a consultant for the Witham Community Centre interactive public art project.

Members were informed that only one full proposal was received but the subsequent interview had been successful and Members agreed that Half Moon Creative Arts CIC as the Section 106 Public Art Consultant.

**RESOLVED** That Alison Turnbull Associates (trading as Half Moon Creative Arts CIC) be appointed as the Section 106 Public Art Consultant for the Witham Community Centre interactive public art installation project, on the basis of experience, sector recommendation and the proposal submitted; that a consultant fee of £12,000 for Stages 1-4 of the commission be approved, to be funded by the Section 106 public art contributions; that delegated authority be given to the Town Clerk to finalise and sign the contract, make any adjustments to the scope and programme as required; and that the full project be delivered within the agreed Section 106 funding available of £119,814.81.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting at 8.55 p.m.

Councillor J.C. Coleman  
Chairman  
NS/GK/5.3.2026

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