Witham town council

Town Hall | 61 Newland Street | Witham | CM8 2FE
01376 520627
witham.gov.uk

MINUTES

Meeting of: **Environment Committee**

Date: **19th October 2026**

Place: **Town Hall, 61 Newland Street, Witham.**

Present: Councillors: J. Robertson (Chairman)
J.C. Coleman
B. Fleet
J. Goodman
L. Headley
J. Martin
E. Williams

Also in attendance: Cllrs P. Barlow
R. Ramage

H. Andrews (Deputy Town Clerk)
G. Kennedy (Committee Clerk)

DRAFT

44. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Taylor, and Councillors J.M. Coleman and Sloma were absent.

45. MINUTES

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Environment Committee held on 26th January 2026 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

46. INTERESTS

Councillor Fleet declared a non-registerable interest in Minute 52 – Tree Group, as a member of that organisation.

47. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There was no member of the press or public present.

48. CLERK'S REPORT

The Deputy Clerk's Report on matters arising was received and she added that there had been lots of positive comments regarding the new street furniture at the junction with Collingwood Road and The Avenue.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

49. COMMITTEE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

The income and expenditure reports for the year ended 31st March 2026 and for the period 1st April to 30th September 2026 were received.

RESOLVED That the income and expenditure reports be received and noted.

50. 2027 – 2028 DRAFT BUDGET

A draft budget for a proposed Environment Committee Budget for 2027-2028 was received and Members asked to comment.

In answer to a question the Deputy Town Clerk explained that the proposed open spaces management software would assist in working more efficiently, task allocation and mapping assets.

RESOLVED That the draft Environment Committee Budget for 2027 – 2028 be received and supported.

51. OPEN SPACES MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

The Minutes from the Open Spaces Management Sub-Committee Meetings held on 4th March, 3rd June and 2nd September 2026 were received.

RESOLVED That the Minutes from the Open Spaces Management Sub-Committee Meetings be received and noted.

52. WITHAM TREE GROUP

Councillor Fleet had declared an interest.

(a) A report from the Witham Tree Group covering their activities for the 2025–2026 season was received.

In answer to a question, Councillor Fleet explained that the Tree Group had been contracted to plant and water trees by the Forestry Commission but had not been paid for last summer. They will begin to plant new trees from November and will be receiving help from a bio-diversity group from Wivenhoe. He added that drought resistant trees were being considered.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

(b) The Witham Tree Group minutes for the meetings held in February, March, April, May, June and August 2026 were received.

RESOLVED That the minutes be received and noted.

DRAFT

53. REVIEW OF POLICIES

Members were asked to review the following policies -

(a) The Hire of Open Spaces policy was received.

RESOLVED That the Hire of Open Spaces Policy be received and approved.

(b) The Commemorative Items on Witham Town Council Open Spaces Policy was received.

RESOLVED That the Commemorative Items on Witham Town Council Open Spaces Policy be received and approved.

(c) The Snow Clearance Policy was received.

The Deputy Town Clerk explained that this had been amended to include the new Community Centre.

RESOLVED That the Snow Clearance Policy be received and approved.

(d) The Biodiversity Policy was received.

RESOLVED That the Biodiversity Policy be received and approved.

54. ALLOTMENT MANAGEMENT

(a) An Allotment Rental Charges Report was received.

RESOLVED That the Allotment Rental Charges Report be received and the rent increase to 56 p per m2 from 2028/2029 be approved.

(b) The Allotment Site Management Policy was received.

The Deputy Town Clerk explained that there had been a few changes.

RESOLVED That the Allotment Site Management Policy be received and approved.

55. SCATTERING OF ASHES POLICY REPORT

A report about the Scattering of Ashes Policy was received.

The Deputy Town Clerk explained that the policy had been difficult to implement and therefore recommended that the policy be withdrawn. Members were happy to support the decision.

RESOLVED That the report be received and the policy be withdrawn.

56. WHETMEAD NATURE RESERVE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Whetmead Nature Reserve Management Plan was received as recommended by the Open Spaces Management Sub-Committee.

DRAFT

RESOLVED That the Whetmead Nature Reserve Management Plan be received and approved.

57. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED That under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 S.1(2) and in accordance with the 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.

58. SECTION 106 REPORT

A report was received regarding a proposed replacement bench and bin at the corner of Spinks Lane and Hatfield Road along with a planter and two replacement benches in Howbridge Road using Section 106 development funding.

Members commented that the new street furniture in Collingwood Road had been well received and were supportive of the recommendation.

RESOLVED That the proposed street furniture of three benches, one bin and one planter, at a total cost of £6,259.60 using Section 106 funding be approved.

59. TREES

A report was received about tree surveys on the River Walk and Closed Churchyard.

Members discussed the quotations received and it was agreed to appoint Tracy Clarke Tree Consultancy.

RESOLVED That Tracy Clarke Tree Consultancy be appointed to undertake tree surveys on the River Walk and Closed Churchyard at a total cost £4,210.

60. LAND IMPROVEMENT

A report was received regarding the installation of earth bunds along the Community Centre boundary and the multi-use games area field to provide additional protection against unauthorised vehicle access whilst also creating informal seating for people.

Members discussed the quotations received and on balance agreed to use a local company that would provide turfed bunds.

RESOLVED That OC Fire and Security be appointed to create and turf bunds at a cost of £15,500 and that the use of the Land Improvement Ear Marked Reserve be authorised.

There being no further business the Chair closed the Meeting at 8.23 p.m.

Councillor J. Robertson
HA/GK/27.10.2026

DRAFT