Witham town council

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MINUTES

Meeting of: **Environment Committee**

Date: **Monday 26th January 2026**

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

Present:	Councillors:	J.	Martin	(Chairman)
		E.	Adelaja	
		B.	Fleet	
		J.	Goodman	
		L.	Headley	
		J.	Robertson	
		B.	Taylor	
		H.	Andrews	(Deputy Town Clerk)
		G.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)

30. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J.C. Coleman and J.M. Coleman. Councillor Sloma was absent.

RESOLVED That the apologies be received and approved.

31. MINUTES

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Environment Committee held 13th October 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

32. INTERESTS

Councillor Fleet declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute 38 – Witham Tree Group, as a member of that group.

33. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the press and public present.

34. CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk's Report on matters arising was received.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

35. COMMITTEE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

The income and expenditure report for the period 1st April 2025 to 31st December 2025 was received.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that all the tree budget and earmarked reserves would be used for tree maintenance.

RESOLVED That the income and expenditure report for the period 1st April to 31st December 2025 was received and noted.

36. OPEN SPACES MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

The Minutes from the Open Spaces Management Sub-Committee meeting held on 3rd December 2025 were received.

Members spoke about the erosion of the river bank and the Deputy Town Clerk advised that professional advice would be sought from Darren Tansley of Essex Wildlife Trust so as not to disturb the kingfisher's habitat.

RESOLVED That the Minutes from the Open Spaces Management Sub-Committee meeting held 3rd December 2025 be received and noted.

37. SECTION 106 STEERING GROUP

The Minutes from the Section 106 Steering Group meeting held on 29th October 2025 were received.

Members spoke about the public art funding for the Maltings Lane estate. The Deputy Town Clerk said that she had met with officers from Braintree District Council earlier in the month to discuss Section 106 funding. It had been agreed that as long as a consultant was in place by the expiry date in March, it would be acceptable to the District Council and so invitations to tender had been made. She said that it had been a useful meeting with all the outstanding projects and payments being discussed. They were also aware that there was a lack of facilities in North Ward yet Section 106 money had been redirected to South Ward which would be reviewed.

RESOLVED That the Minutes from the Section 106 Steering Group meeting held 29th October 2025 be received and noted.

38. WITHAM TREE GROUP

Councillor Fleet had declared an interest.

Witham Tree Group minutes held in October 2025, November 2025 and January 2026 were received.

Members were informed that most of the tree planting had been completed. A line of Foxglove trees had been planted in the cemetery entrance which would look spectacular when in flower.

A question was asked about the Lynfield Elm which was Dutch Elm disease resistant. Members were aware that it was proposed to be felled and a specialist company would lift some of the many suckers and nurture to be planted elsewhere.

The Chairman congratulated the Tree Group and thanked them for their work.

RESOLVED That the Tree Group minutes be received and noted.

39. ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Members were asked to review and approve the Environmental Policy.

Comment was made that allotment holders were discouraged from using pesticide and the Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that this was part of their tenancy agreements.

RESOLVED That the amended Environmental Policy be received and agreed.

40. RIVER WALK BIODIVERSITY REPORT

A report was received.

The Deputy Town Clerk explained that whilst there budget available for a survey it was not considered value for money as the River Walk had so many diverse habitats. In-house surveys were already being undertaken with additional surveys and another Bio Blitz event planned for this year, so biodiversity data was being collected with residents encouraged to take part.

RESOLVED That the report be received and in-house surveys be undertaken rather than an expensive biodiversity audit.

41. 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.

42. ALLOTMENT CAR PARK

Quotations were received for improvements to the allotment car park to be funded by Section 106 contributions available.

Members were aware that this area had limited use and therefore considered that the lower quotation should be accepted.

RESOLVED That Harrington Brothers' quotation of £8,800 to carry out improvements to the Cut Throat Lane car park be accepted.

43. SECTION 106 REPORT

A report was received regarding the use of Section 106 monies to replace the bench and bin on the grass verge by the junction of Collingwood Road and The Avenue and to include a planter to enhance the site.

Members approved the report and agreed that the David Ogilvie Bench at a cost of £1,141.15 would be appropriate as it would be in keeping with the bench nearby at Chipping Hill.

RESOLVED That report be received and Section 106 money be used for replacement street furniture on the grass verge by the junction with Collingwood Road and The Avenue, with a David Ogilvie bench at a cost of £1,141.15, a Greenan open litter bin at a cost of £997 and an Airlee Rectangle Planter at a cost of £1,243.15.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting at 8 p.m.

Councillor J. Martin
Chairman

HA/GK/28.1.2026