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MINUTES

Meeting of: **Community Committee**

Date: **Monday, 1st June 2026**

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

Present:	Councillors	J.C.	Coleman	(Chair)
		P.	Heath	(Vice Chair)
		E.	Adelaja	
		B.	Fleet	
		L.	Headley	
		R.	Playle	
		J.	Robertson	
		E.	Williams	
		N.	Smith	(Town Clerk)
		G.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)
		N.		(Assistant Finance Officer)
Community Special Sergeant		S.	Jesse	(Essex Police)

Two representatives from Community 360 and one member of the public.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L. Barlow and A. Sloma.

RESOLVED That the apologies be received and approved.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Community Committee held 24th February 2026 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. INTERESTS

No interests were declared at the time but at Minute 16 – Information Centre, Councillor Fleet declared an interest as a Trustee of the Witham Public Hall Trust.

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LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME QUALITY

4. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

No comment was made by the member of the public present.

5. GUEST SPEAKER

The Chair welcomed the two representatives from Community 360 to the Meeting.

They thanked the Town Council for the opportunity to speak about their work regarding access and services and the accountancy service.

It was explained that, in conjunction with Macmillan, Community 360 was undertaking work on bus routes and patient accessibility to medical appointments, particularly for those with long-term health issues. They planned to organise a workshop to seek views. He said that the initiative to overhaul connections for the community would ease social isolation for those who were affected by a lack of public transport. He added that they would be working directly with groups and that all vehicles would be accessibility compliant.

With regards to the Accountancy Service, it was explained that their aim was to help charities manage their finances, such as assets, payroll, bookkeeping and auditing, so they could concentrate on their core services. He said that seeking proper advice for charities was very expensive, but they could provide this advice at a lower, more affordable cost. He said that a perfect storm was being created with increases in taxes and minimum wage and charities no longer being able to rely on charitable giving. There were cutbacks on new projects, and 44% of charities expected the situation to worsen. He said that good financial management and governance were key to running a charity.

Members then had an opportunity to ask questions. Comment was made that Lodge Farm estate was closer to Hatfield Peverel railway station than Witham's. Without proper public transport into the town centre residents have the potential to be lonely and vulnerable. In response, it was explained that this was the importance to understanding where services do not exist and therefore it would be useful to have a council representative to attend the workshop. Members agreed on the need to recognise transport poverty which would affect the poorest and vulnerable who do not have access to a car.

The Chair thanked the representatives from Community 360 for attending the Meeting and they left leaflets describing their services.

6. ESSEX POLICE

Special Sergeant Jesse explained that May's summary of activities had just been produced. He was grateful for the opportunity to attend the recent Dog Show and the ability to attend all Town Council events as it was essential to interact with the community. He said that last weekend's patrol had resulted in his colleague issuing 16 speeding tickets whilst he had been concentrating on e scooter offences. He was very concerned that young teenagers were using scooters with the ability to go at speeds of up to 30 mph with the potential for fatalities. He had taken paperwork to three sets of parents issuing Section 59 Notices explaining that e scooters were not legal and pointing out the dangers of children, with no road sense, travelling at speeds of up to 30 mph.

He said that the half term break had been successful with lots of young people gathering at the skate park, he advocated lighting to encourage continued use in the darker months and keep the youngsters away from the town centre.

Members welcomed the proactive action taken to solve the e scooter issues. They asked about the recent closure of the Vape shop in Newland Street and whether it had been part of the recent

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raids on premises elsewhere in the country. It was explained that the shop had been investigated by Essex Trading Standards. Disposable vapes were being sold and sub-standard tobacco. In answer to a question it was explained that the owners of The Grove Centre needed to enforce the no riding rule but police could act if the riding was dangerous. Members then asked about e bikes, which were legal if pedal assisted but conversion kits allowed bikes to be ridden at speeds of up to 60 mph. The suggestion was made that the public need to be made aware and likewise parents. Information was available but it was hoped that a campaign would give greater knowledge. It was suggested that with good relationships with schools, sessions on the dangers and legality of e bikes and e scooters could be arranged. A by law on the River Walk was mooted.

The Chair thanked Special Sergeant Jesse for his valuable report.

7. GRANT AID PROJECT REVIEW

(i) 2nd Boys Brigade

A grant project review was received from the Boys Brigade.

Members agreed that this had been a good use of the grant aid budget.

RESOLVED That the project review from the Boy's Brigade be received and noted.

(ii) 7th Witham Guides

A grant project review was received from the Witham Guides.

RESOLVED That the project review from the Witham Guides be received and noted.

8. COUNCILLOR GRANT SCHEME POLICY

Members were asked to receive and approve the amended Councillor Grant Scheme Policy which now included a section that if there were funds remaining by the final Meeting of the Community Committee in a Civic Year, a resolution may be made for the balance to be transferred to an Earmarked Reserve for next year's Community Grant Fund.

RESOLVED That the amended Councillor Grant Scheme Policy be agreed and adopted.

9. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

The Town Clerk spoke about the recent Dog Show and the Bio Blitz. She said that there would be the Open Gardens on Saturday, 20th June 2026 with the Music Festival on 4th July 2026.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

10. COMMUNITY COMMITTEE INCOME, EXPENDITURE AND BUDGET REPORT

The Community Committee Income and Expenditure reports from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026 and 1st April to 30th April 2026 were received.

RESOLVED That the Income and Expenditure reports from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026 and 1st April to 30th April 2026 be received and noted.

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11. HIGH STREET SAFARI TRAILS

A report was received concerning Indaver sponsored safari trails.

Members welcomed these free events for families during the school holidays.

RESOLVED That the report be received and the initiative supported.

12. EVENTS EMR

A report on the movements in the Events EMR for last year were received.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

13. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT APP

A report was received regarding a community engagement app.

Members welcomed this proposal as it would provide a captive audience for Town Council information and the cost was reasonable.

RESOLVED That the report be received and approval given for a community engagement app.

14. SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media statistics for 1st February to 30th April 2026 were received.

The Town Clerk said that the continued closure of the District Council's public toilets in Lockram Lane had 33,000 hits in three weeks. There was a positive response to the sculptures on the River Walk with only two negative responses.

RESOLVED That the social media statistics be received and noted.

15. 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.

16. INFORMATION CENTRE

A report from the Information Centre Manager was received.

Contained in the report was information about the number of tickets sold for Jesus Christ Superstar held at the Public Hall. Comment was made that the Witham Public Hall Trust should be formally congratulated for their outstanding work.

Councillor Fleet declared an interest as a Trustee of the Witham Public Hall Trust.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

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17. S106 SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

A report was received regarding the direct bus service to Broomfield Hospital.

The Town Clerk asked for approval to seek Section 106 monies from Braintree District Council so funding would be available to lease the bus. It was hoped that the bus would be in service by July 2026.

Members agreed that this would be a valuable service to the community.

RESOLVED That Braintree District Council be asked to release £30,000 from Section 106 – Sustainable Transport, to fund the lease of the Digigo bus for the direct bus service to Broomfield Hospital.

There being no further business the Chair closed the Meeting at 8.27 p.m.

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Councillor J.C. Coleman
Chair
NS/GK/4.6.2026