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MINUTES

WITHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Date: **Monday, 15th June 2026**

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

Present: Councillors

P.	Heath	(Town Mayor)
J.C.	Coleman	(Deputy Town Mayor)
E.	Adelaja	
L.	Barlow	(arrived at 7.45 p.m.)
P.	Barlow	
J.M.	Coleman	
B.	Fleet	
J.	Goodman	
L.	Headley	
R.	Playle	
R.	Ramage	
J.	Robertson	
B.	Taylor	
E.	Williams	

Essex County Councillor	J.	Morris	(Witham West and Rural)
	N.	Smith	(Town Clerk)
	H.	Andrews	(Deputy Town Clerk)
	G.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)

And three members of the public.

34. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J. Martin.

RESOLVED That the apologies be received and approved.

35. MINUTES

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held 18th May 2026 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

36. INTERESTS

Councillor Goodman declared a non-registerable interest in Minute 49 – Maltings Lane Community Centre, as he knew a sub-contractor working at the centre.

Councillor J.C. Coleman declared a non-registerable interest in Minute 42 – Year End Internal Auditor's Report, as the Council for which he worked also used that auditor.

37. QUESTIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A member of the public first wished to thank those who had arranged for the roads around Coleman's bridge to be cleared of detritus from the quarry. He then explained that he had raised the issue to Braintree District Council about the length of time it had taken to re-open the refurbished toilets in Lockram Lane. He complained about the new waste/recycling system and that some residents had to wait four weeks for their general waste bins to be collected. He was concerned about increased seasonal demand particularly as there were no appropriate facilities at the recycling centre. He pointed out that Colchester City Council had a different mixed recycling system to Braintree's and asked what would happen when the councils merged under local government reorganisation. He said that the District Council was full of self-praise but they were not listening to residents' concerns. He spoke about the incorrect information on the polling cards and the spelling mistakes on the way-finder monoliths.

The Town Mayor understood his concerns explaining that he had been reporting weekly, since November, the toilets in Lockram Lane not being reopened. He said that the District Council would be holding a roadshow on Wednesday regarding recycling and they would review the system in September after a twelve week cycle. The mistake on the polling cards was to be reviewed and spelling mistakes on the monoliths were being remedied along with a new map being produced. He assured the member of the public that he would give him a full written response within a week.

Councillor L. Barlow arrived at the Meeting.

The member of the public was grateful for Council's time particularly as these were issues relating to the District Council.

38. ESSEX COUNTY AND BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL UPDATE

The Town Mayor welcomed the newly elected Essex County Councillor John Morris, Witham West and Rural to the Meeting.

Councillor Morris was pleased to have the opportunity to attend the Meeting. He said that he had only been a councillor for 4½ weeks and was still learning. He thanked Councillor Playle for his assistance. He said that Essex County Council had made a judicial challenge regarding the local government reorganisation.

The Town Mayor said that Councillor Morris was welcome to attend any Council Meeting and another Councillor offered him the opportunity to walk around West Ward and learn about local issues.

Essex County Councillor Playle was pleased to report that there had been a full resurfacing of Forest Road but Malting Lane between Maldon Road and Gershwin Boulevard would be delayed until July 2026. He was disappointed that the Member-Led scheme of road and footpath repairs had been cancelled but in its place three roads could be repaired and he had nominated Hatfield Road, Braintree Road and Elderberry Gardens. The future of the Local Highways Panel was being reviewed and in addition the system of having the assistance of a nominated Highways Officer had been disbanded. He mentioned the poor re-instatement of the grass area at the bottom of Guithaven Street which had now been re-seeded by Cadent. He spoke of the poor record in Essex regarding children with special educational needs and disabilities which was due to the lack of educational psychologists and the consequent delay in producing care plans. He said that the issue of schools being over-subscribed by 2027 would be raised with the Department of Education. He was pleased to announce that he had £10,000 for community support.

It was mentioned that Braintree District Council would be having Meetings to the end of October to discuss the Local Plan.

The Town Mayor thanked everyone for their reports.

39. TACKLING SPEEDING/20s PLENTY

The Chairman of the Planning and Transport Committee explained that the results from the Speed Indicator Device were regularly monitored and that possible locations for a new device were being sought on both speeding and safety grounds.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

40. TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

Details of the Town Mayor's engagements attended for period 24th March to 17th May 2026 were received.

RESOLVED That the details be received and noted.

41. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

The Town Clerk reminded Members that there would be the Open Gardens event on Saturday and programmes would be on sale in the Information Centre which would also be open on the day.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

42. YEAR END INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT

The Internal Auditor's Report for the year ending 31st March 2026 was received.

Members were impressed with the service offered by the Internal Auditor and the level of assurance given. In answer to a question the Town Clerk explained that she had been advised to create a separate GDPR policy which would contain all the relevant components contained in existing policies.

RESOLVED That the Internal Auditor's Report for the year ending 31st March 2026 be received and noted.

43. WITHAM TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2025/2026

The Draft Annual Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2026 were received.

RESOLVED That the Annual Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2026 be received and adopted.

44. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) – SECTION 1 GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

The Town Council's Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31st March 2026 was received.

The Town Clerk explained that it was for Members to agree if all the boxes on the Governance Statement should be ticked if they felt all obligations had been met. She said that for box 10 work had been undertaken to ensure that all documentation on the website was accessibility compliant.

RESOLVED That all the boxes on the statement be ticked as all the obligations had been met and the Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31st March 2026 be agreed and signed by the Town Mayor.

45. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) – SECTION 2 ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

The Town Council's Section 2 Accounting Statements for the year ended 31st March 2026 was received.

RESOLVED That the Annual Governance and Accountability Statements Section 2 be agreed and signed by the Town Mayor.

46. MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

Details of Members' Attendance at Meetings for the Civic Year 2025/2026 were received.

The Town Mayor spoke of the importance to attend all meetings and if unable to do so, send apologies.

RESOLVED That the details be received and noted.

47. 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.

48. LAND TRANSFER

A report was received.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

49. MALTINGS LANE COMMUNITY CENTRE

A report was received.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

Councillor J.C. Coleman then left the Meeting.

50. S106 PUBLIC ART APPOINTMENT

A report was received.

The Town Clerk said that presentations had been made by two artists with designs to include metal seats in bunds, with Witham historical scenes carved into the sides, kaleidoscopes, using mirrors, and lattice seats. There was £105,000 towards public art as part of Section 106 Developers Funding. She added that bunds and knee rails would give added protection to the building.

Members had an opportunity to see the proposals and after discussion it was agreed to commission Artist 1.

RESOLVED That the information be received and Michael Condron commissioned to supply public art at the Witham Community Centre.

51. NOTICE OF DISPUTE

An email was received.

RESOLVED That the email be received and noted.

There being no further business the Town Mayor closed the Meeting at 8.45 p.m.

Councillor P. Heath
Town Mayor

NS/GK/18.6.2026