



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

AGENDA

WITHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Date: **Monday, 1st September 2025** Time: **7:30 p.m.**

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

Members are hereby summoned to attend the above Meeting to transact the following business. Members are respectfully reminded that each item on the Agenda should be carefully examined. If you have any interest, it must be duly declared.

To be present:

Councillors:

P. Heath	(Town Mayor)	J. Martin
J.C. Coleman	(Deputy Town Mayor)	R. Playle
E. Adelaja		R. Ramage
L. Barlow		J. Robertson
P. Barlow		A. Sloma
J.M. Coleman		B. Taylor
B. Fleet		E. Williams
L. Headley		

Nikki Smith
Town Clerk
NS/GK/27.8.2025

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive and approve apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES

To receive the Minutes of the Meeting of Town Council held 11th August 2025 (previously circulated).

3. INTERESTS

To receive any declarations of interest that Members may wish to give notice of on matters pertaining to any item on this agenda.

4. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

An opportunity to enable members of the press and public present to comment.

Order Note: A maximum of 30 minutes is designated for public participation time with no individual speaker exceeding three minutes unless otherwise granted an extension by the Chairman under Standing Order 3(F) & 3(G)

5. ESSEX COUNTY AND BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL UPDATE

To receive reports from Essex County and Braintree District Councillors on matters relating to Witham.

6. 20'S PLENTY/TACKLING SPEEDING REPORT

To receive a verbal report from the Chairman of Planning and Transport Committee and to consider whether it is necessary to continue these monthly reports.

7. TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

To receive details of the Town Mayor's engagements attended for period 7th to 26th August 2025 attached at page 4.

8. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

To receive a verbal report from the Town Clerk on matters arising.

9. CASUAL VACANCY

To note that following the resignation of Tom Hewitt there is a casual vacancy on the Town Council.

10. SOCIAL MEDIA FOR MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

To receive and approve the Social Media for Members and Officers policy attached at page 7.

11. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

To note that there is a new website regarding the proposed devolution - <https://www.essexlgrhub.org/stronger-greater-essex>

12. BUS SERVICES

To receive a response from the Secretary of State for Health attached at page 11 (Minute 58 refers).

13. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

At this point, the Chair will move the following resolution: 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.

14. LAND TRANSFER

To receive an update attached at page 12.

15. TOWN HALL SECURITY IMPROVEMENTS

To receive quotations for security improvements at the Town Hall and consider approving payment from the Major Repairs and Renewals EMR (to follow).

**LIST OF MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS BETWEEN
7th August 2025 – 26th August 2025
Councillor Paul Heath**

Thursday 7th August 2025

Attended Teddy Bear's Picnic at Maldon Road.

Saturday 9th August 2025

Attended St George's Summer Tea Party for residents, families and staff accompanied by the Deputy Mayor.

Tuesday 12th August 2025

Attended Moorfield Court Annual Sausage Sizzle accompanied by the Town Clerk.

Thursday 14th August 2025

Attended Witham RBL film afternoon - Champions.

Friday 15th August 2025

Attended the RBL VJ Day Commemorative Event at the War Memorial accompanied by The Town Clerk and Councillors Headley and P Barlow.

Attended the RAFA Club VJ Day event.

Saturday 16th August 2025

Attended the RBL VJ Day event at the RBL accompanied by the Deputy Mayor and Councillors Headley and L Barlow.

Sunday 17th August 2025

Attended the RBL Sunday Cinema club – The Jazz Singer

Thursday 21st August 2025

Attended Lift New Rickstones (New Rickstones Academy) photo call for the artificial grass pitch completion.

Attended Holmes & Hill Solicitors networking event at Paper Mill Lock, accompanied by the PA to the Council.

**LIST OF DEPUTY MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS BETWEEN
7th August 2025 – 26th August 2025
Councillor Jack Coleman**

Thursday 14th August 2025

Attended Witham Skate Park with Deputy Town Clerk for the Art Event.

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Witham Town Council – Social Media Policy for Members and Officers

Guide to use of Social Media by Members and Officers

Policy Overview

This policy explains the way in which members and staff are advised to use their social media accounts to avoid legal and reputational risk to both themselves and the council. It aims to protect the council's reputation while allowing for effective communication with the public through social media platforms.

Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, social media includes (but is not limited to) such websites as:

- Facebook
- ~~Twitter~~ X
- LinkedIn
- YouTube
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- TikTok

Additionally, this policy covers emerging social media platforms that may become relevant in the future.

For the purpose of this policy, media devices include:

- Mobile Phones
- Tablets
- Cameras
- Laptops
- Any other device capable of recording

Code of Conduct- Members

If acting in the capacity as a councillor rather than a member of the public, adherence to the Code of Conduct applies to online activities in the same way as with any other form of communication and members are still bound by the Nolan Principles.

Members should be aware that their online presence, even in a personal capacity, can reflect on their role as a councillor and the council as a whole.

If a member has an account where they comment as both a councillor and an individual it might be presumed that the views expressed are those of the council rather than the member personally when this may not be the case. It is suggested that members have two accounts, one for personal interaction and another to express their views as a councillor and to interact with members of the public.

If members are not commenting or posting in the official capacity as a member of the council, they should refrain from using Councillor in front of their name as this could be misinterpreted.

Relevant elements of the Members Code of Conduct are:

- You are a member of Witham Town Council and hence you shall have regard to the following principles – selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

- You must promote and support high standards of conduct when serving in your public post, in particular as characterised by the above requirements, by leadership and example.
- You must, when using or authorising the use by others of the resources of your authority, ensure that such resources are not used improperly for political purposes (including party political purposes) and you must have regard to any applicable Local Authority Code of Publicity made under the Local Government Act 1986.

Members must not disclose any confidential information on social media. The same standards must be upheld as when communicating in a more formal context.

Members must not issue statements or press releases on behalf of the council.

Members must not post photographs on their private accounts of staff members without permission regardless of whether these have been taken at council events.

Members must exercise particular care before posting comments related to any topics under current or potential council consideration. Positive or negative expressions of opinion may be understood by the community as official council endorsement, and could be in conflict with law, restrictions, or council operational requirements (such as health and safety checks).

Posts that appear to endorse or encourage activities contrary to regulations, may create legal or operational issues for the council. Members should consider potential ramifications before sharing, liking, or commenting on such matters in any public forum.

Code of Conduct-Officers

When representing the council officers must adhere to the staff Code of Conduct.

Officers should refrain from posting on behalf of the council unless from an official Witham Town Council social media account and with express permission from the Town Clerk.

Although not mandatory it is suggested that officers do not advertise on social media their place of work so that personal opinions cannot be misinterpreted as those of the council.

Officers should be mindful that their personal social media activity could be linked back to their role at the council, even if they don't explicitly state their employment.

Relevant elements of the Staff Code of Conduct are:

- Close personal familiarity between employees and individual Councillors can damage the relationship and prove embarrassing to other employees and councillors and should, therefore, be avoided.
- Employees should avoid doing anything which could reflect adversely on the Council.
- All information or knowledge obtained during the course of an employee's employment must be treated as confidential, unless and until it is formally made public.

Considerations for both Members and Officers

Whether posting from personal or official councillor social media accounts the following should be taken into consideration:

- Could the post bring the council into disrepute? Members and Officers should not publish anything that could reasonably be perceived as reflecting badly upon or lowering the reputation of themselves or the council.

- Compliance with equality laws. Do not publish anything that might be seen as racist, sexist, ageist, homophobic or anti faith.
- Are there appropriate privacy settings in place for personal social media accounts?
- Even if a post is deleted it will likely have been read by others before it is removed and shared several times.
- Be aware that sharing someone else's post can be seen as agreeing or supporting the content or the person that originally posted.
- Be aware that publishing information obtained from a members' position on the council or through the work as an officer will make the individual posting seen to be a representative of the council.
- It is not appropriate for Members to request or accept a Council employee or contractor providing services to the council as a 'friend' on social media as this can suggest a personal relationship. Exceptions can be made when the relationship was formed prior to either the Member or Officer being elected to or employed by the council.
- Members should refrain from tagging council employees into posts on social media relating to council work as this identifies them as employees to members of the public. Councillors may publicise the work of the council as a whole but should not identify staff by name.

Before commenting or sharing content relating to local issues members should take steps to consider:

- Whether their comment could be seen as an official endorsement or contravene council policy or statutory obligations.

- Whether their post could unintentionally encourage activities or displays that may result in public safety risks, unauthorised works, or reputational harm.

- The likelihood that their online activity will prompt residents or interest groups to take similar actions in the local community, potentially creating operational or compliance issues.

Members and officers should be aware of the potential for cyberbullying and online harassment. Any instances of such behaviour should be reported to the Town Clerk immediately.

Legal Issues

- **Libel-** If a statement is posted online about a person which is both untrue and damaging to their reputation it could result in legal action being taken and damages awarded against the poster.
- **Copyright-** If images or text are posted without first obtaining permission this can result in a breach of copyright and again lead to legal action.
- **Data Protection-** Personal information about an individual should not be posted online without the express consent of that individual.
- **Bias and Predetermination-** If a member is involved in any decision-making process, they are expected to attend the committee or hearing prepared to listen to the views of others and weigh up all of the evidence. If a comment has already been made on social media then the member could be seen to have made a predetermination before the meeting and any vote, they took part in could be challenged as unlawful.
- **Defamation Act 2013:** Members and officers should be aware that this act applies to online statements and that the defence of "honest opinion" requires the statement to be based on facts

The council will ~~provide regular~~ **make available** training and updates on social media best practices and legal considerations to ensure all members and officers are aware of their responsibilities when using these platforms.

Agreed at Minute 143 of FTC Meeting held

06.07.2020

Reviewed: 01.09.2025

Review Date: September 2026

POLICY NO: WTC/038 - Full Town Council

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*From the Ministerial Correspondence
and Public Enquiries Unit*

39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

Agenda Item 12

Our ref: DE-1626083

26 August 2025

Dear Ms Smith,

Thank you for your correspondence of 28 July about health deficiencies and public transport to hospital appointments in Witham. I have been asked to reply.

I appreciate the concerns you have raised.

However, I hope you will understand that the way services are provided is a matter for the NHS locally. Matters concerning patient care need to be resolved by the responsible organisation and the clinicians responsible for that patient's care. The role of the Department is to set national policy for the NHS and adult care services, and as such ministers are unable to comment on, or intervene in, individual cases.

If you have not already done so, you may wish to contact Mid and South Essex Integrated Care System which may be able to assist further. Details on how to do so can be found by visiting www.midandsouthessex.ics.nhs.uk/about/boards/integrated-care-board/.

With regard to the issue of transport links, this is not something that sits in the Department of Health and Social Care's remit. If you have not already done so, you may wish to contact the Department for Transport (DfT). Contact details for the DfT can be found by visiting www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport.

I am sorry I cannot be more directly helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Correspondence Officer
Ministerial Correspondence and Public Enquiries
Department of Health and Social Care

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