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MINUTES

WITHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Date: **Monday, 11th August 2025**

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

Present: Councillors:

P.	Heath	(Town Mayor)
J.C.	Coleman	(Deputy Town Mayor)
L.	Barlow	
P.	Barlow	
J.M.	Coleman	
B.	Fleet	
L.	Headley	
T.	Hewitt	
J.	Martin	
R.	Playle	
R.	Ramage	
J.	Robertson	
B.	Taylor	
E.	Williams	(arrived 7.33 p.m.)
N.	Smith	(Town Clerk)
H.	Andrews	(Deputy Town Clerk)
G.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)

65. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Adelaja and Sloma.

66. MINUTES

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of Town Council held 7th July 2025 be received and approved.

67. INTERESTS

Councillors J.C. Coleman and J.M. Coleman declared non-pecuniary interests in Minute 80 – Christmas Lights, as Councillor J.C. Coleman, in his capacity as an employee of Great Dunmow Town Council, had been involved in a recent process to appoint a new contractor for Christmas Lights and they would therefore leave the Council Chamber at that point.

68. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the press or public present.

69. ESSEX COUNTY AND BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL UPDATE

Essex County Councillor Playle explained that the Council was working on the final proposals for three unitary councils for Essex. The proposals would be going to its Council Meeting on 18th September 2025 before the Government would decide on which business case to adopt. He said that work as part of the Member-Led scheme would shortly take place in Forest Road and Maldon Road; and Lime Close and Laburnum Way footpaths. He had chased up the Council in relation to the upgrading of bus shelters near the Town Hall following the new contractor being appointed. He spoke about the disappointment of the A12 widening scheme being cancelled and hoped that the prolonged problems with the bridge to the south of Witham could be alleviated. He said that the National Grid upgrade taking pylons across East Anglia would be going for a Development Consent Order in the autumn. Finally he reported that the Rivenhall incinerator had begun operation that day. There was still one outstanding planning dispute and concerns about air pollution.

In answer to a question it was explained that work on the A12 bridge was planned for autumn 2026 but it was hoped that the bridge could be made one-way and local traffic from Latneys come into Witham via Hatfield Peverel.

It was explained that it had been a quiet time for Braintree Council Meetings but lots of dates had been set to discuss the Local Plan.

The Town Mayor thanked Councillors Playle and Ramage for their reports.

70. 20'S PLENTY/TACKLING SPEEDING REPORT

The Chairman of the Planning and Transport Committee explained that proposed 20 mph zones outside schools would be considered and the contract had been awarded for the Vehicle Activated Sign.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

71. TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

Details of the Town Mayor's engagements attended for period 3rd July to 6th August 2025 were received.

The Town Mayor said that he had been attending lots of events and each one had been a privilege and pleasure and in some cases inspirational. He quoted the Ladies Cricket Club, he was there at the launch and within a month they had progressed from being a group of enthusiastic ladies into a team which came second in a tournament. He had attended both Catholic and Muslim celebrations showing the diversity of the town. He had met with a number of youth organisations and saw the benefit and support they give to young people. He mentioned the Care Homes he had visited and the pride staff had in their work and the care they gave. He was particularly proud that Witham had been awarded creditation as a Dementia Friendly Town and finally spoke about the Veterans' monthly coffee morning and the privilege he felt in being in their company. He stressed that it had been a fantastic period.

RESOLVED That the details be received and noted.

72. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

The Town Clerk explained that she had spoken to the Lord of the Manor and it had been agreed to close the Charter Market in October 2025 with rent of £2,000 agreed up to that date.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

73. A12 WIDENING SCHEME CANCELLATION

A letter was received from Priti Patel, MP regarding the cancellation of the A12 widening scheme.

Comment was made by Councillor Fleet that in his opinion the announcement of the cancellation was clumsily done as he thought a deferment would have been preferable to cancellation. It was also commented that the letter to the Town Council was addressed to the occupant which was sloppy and disrespectful.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

74. LEAVE OF ABSENCE

A request for leave of absence from Councillor Adelaja was received.

RESOLVED That the Leave of Absence for Councillor Adelaja to 28th October 2025 be approved.

75. APPOINTMENT OF A DEVOLUTION WORKING GROUP

Members agreed the need of a Devolution Working Group.

RESOLVED That the following Members be appointed to serve on the Devolution Working Group for the ensuing Civic Year –

Councillors	P.	Barlow
	J.C.	Coleman
	J.M.	Coleman
	B.	Fleet
	L.	Headley
	P.	Heath
	T.	Hewitt
	R.	Playle
	R.	Ramage
	J.	Robertson
	B.	Taylor
	E.	Williams

76. 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.

77. WITHAM COMMUNITY CENTRE

The monthly progress report and an update from Braintree District Council were received.

RESOLVED That the report be received.

78. LAND TRANSFER

A report was received.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

79. MEETING WITH BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL

The Town Mayor gave a verbal report.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

80. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Councillors J.C. Coleman and J.M. Coleman had declared interests and left the Meeting.

Tenders were received and reviewed in accordance with the published evaluation criteria.

Members agreed that Gala Lights should be awarded the tender having submitted the most advantageous tender with the highest assessment score.

RESOLVED That Gala Lights be awarded the five year contract at an annual cost of £11,530.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting at 8.11 p.m.

Councillor P. Heath
Town Mayor

NS/GK/18.8.2025