



Town Hall | 61 Newland Street | Witham | CM8 2FE
01376 520627
witham.gov.uk

MINUTES

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

Meeting of: **Town Council**

Date: **Monday, 18th May 2026**

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

Present: Councillors

P.	Heath	(Retiring Town Mayor)
J.C.	Coleman	(Deputy Town Mayor)
E.	Adelaja	
L.	Barlow	
P.	Barlow	
J.M.	Coleman	
J.	Goodman	
L.	Headley	
J.	Martin	
R.	Playle	
R.	Ramage	
J.	Robertson	
B.	Taylor	
N.	Smith	(Town Clerk)
H.	Andrews	(Deputy Town Clerk)
G.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)

And two members of the public.

1. ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR FOR 2026/2027

The Town Mayor welcomed everyone to the Annual Meeting of the Town Council and called for nominations to elect a Town Mayor to serve for the Civic Year 2026/2027.

Councillor J.C. Coleman in nominating Councillor Heath to be re-elected as Town Mayor said it was an historic occasion to serve a fourth term of office and a sign of respect amongst his fellow Councillors. Paul had served with energy and compassion, attending countless events and genuinely listening to residents. He had a great pride in the town and in his role as Town Mayor.

RESOLVED That Councillor P. Heath be elected to serve as the Town Mayor for the Civic Year 2026/2027.

2. DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

The Declaration of Acceptance of Office was duly signed by the Town Mayor and witnessed by the Town Clerk.

RESOLVED That the signed Declaration of Acceptance of Office be received and noted.

3. APOLOGIES

(i) Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Fleet and Councillor Williams had said that he would be late.

RESOLVED That the apologies be received and approved.

(ii) Apologies were received from Councillor Sloma as he was away on a business trip.

RESOLVED That the apologies and reason for absence be received and approved.

4. INTERESTS

No interests were declared at the time but later in the Meeting at Minute 14(f) – Allotment Appeal Panel, Councillor Playle declared a non-pecuniary interest as his father rented an allotment and at Minute 22 – Appointment of the Internal Auditor for 2026/2027, Councillor J.C. Coleman declared a non-pecuniary interest as the Council for which he works used the same internal auditor.

5. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR FOR 2026/2027

The Town Mayor called for nominations to appoint a Deputy Town Mayor to serve for the Civic Year 2026/2027.

Councillor Robertson nominated Councillor J.C. Coleman to serve a second term as Deputy Town Mayor and spoke of his youth and energy he put into the role.

RESOLVED That Councillor J.C. Coleman be elected to serve as Deputy Town Mayor for the Civic Year 2026/2027.

6. DISPOSAL OF TOWN MAYOR'S APPEAL 2025/2026

The Town Mayor advised that he had raised almost £5,000 for the Alzheimer's Society and hoped to be able to roll the Appeal over to his second term of office. If this was not possible then consent to dispose of funds would be taken to the next Town Council Meeting.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

7. TOWN MAYOR'S ALLOWANCE FOR THE CIVIC YEAR 2026/2027

Members were asked to authorise payment of the Town Mayor's Allowance set at £2,000 for the Civic Year 2026/2027.

RESOLVED That payment of the Town Mayor's Allowance at £2,000 be authorised.

8. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Witham Town Council Meeting held 7th April 2026 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Town Mayor.

9. **APPOINTMENT OF LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

It was agreed to continue with the current arrangement not to appoint a Leader of the Council for this Civic Year.

RESOLVED That the Council does not appoint a Leader for the Civic Year.

10. **APPOINTMENT/ DISSOLUTION OF COMMITTEES**

Members agreed to disband the Cycling Development Group.

RESOLVED That the Cycling Development Group be disbanded.

11. **APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO COMMITTEES**

Nominations were received to appoint Members to serve on the following Standing Committees for the Civic Year 2026/2027 -

(a) Community Committee

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Community Committee for the ensuing Civic Year –

Councillors	E.	Adelaja
	L.	Barlow
	J.C.	Coleman
	B.	Fleet
	L.	Headley
	P.	Heath
	R.	Playle
	J.	Robertson
	A.	Sloma
	E.	Williams

(b) Environment Committee

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Environment Committee for the ensuing Civic Year –

Councillors	J.C.	Coleman
	J.M.	Coleman
	B.	Fleet
	J.	Goodman
	L.	Headley
	J.	Martin
	J.	Robertson
	A.	Sloma
	B.	Taylor
	E.	Williams

(c) Policy and Resources Committee

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Policy and Resources Committee for the ensuing Civic Year –

Councillors	L.	Barlow
	P.	Barlow
	B.	Fleet
	J.	Goodman
	P.	Heath
	J.	Martin
	R.	Playle
	R.	Ramage
	J.	Robertson
	B.	Taylor

(d) Planning and Transport Committee

Members recognised the commitment required to attend fortnightly meetings and it was therefore agreed to reduce the number of Members to eight.

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Planning and Transport Committee for the ensuing Civic Year –

Councillors	E.	Adelaja
	P.	Barlow
	J.M.	Coleman
	L.	Headley
	R.	Playle
	R.	Ramage
	J.	Robertson
	E.	Williams

(e) Staffing Committee

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Staffing Committee for the ensuing Civic Year –

Councillors	L.	Barlow
	P.	Barlow
	B.	Fleet
	P.	Heath
	J.	Martin
	R.	Playle

(f) Estimates Committee

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Estimates Committee for the ensuing Civic Year –

Councillors	E.	Adelaja
	P.	Barlow
	J.C.	Coleman

J.M. Coleman
B. Fleet
P. Heath
J. Martin
J. Robertson

12. APPOINTMENT OF STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRS/VICES

Nominations were received to appoint Chair and Vice Chair to the following Committees for the Civic Year 2026/2027:

(a) Community Committee

RESOLVED That Councillor J.C. Coleman be appointed to serve as Chair and Councillor Heath appointed as Vice Chair of the Community Committee for the Civic Year 2026/2027.

(b) Environment Committee

RESOLVED That Councillor Robertson be appointed to serve as Chair and Councillor J.M. Coleman as Vice Chair of the Environment Committee for the Civic Year 2026/2027.

(c) Policy and Resources Committee

RESOLVED That Councillor Heath be appointed to serve as Chair and Councillor P. Barlow as Vice Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee for the Civic Year 2026/2027.

(d) Planning and Transport Committee

RESOLVED That Councillor P. Barlow be appointed to serve as Chair and Councillor Robertson as Vice Chair of the Planning and Transport Committee for the Civic Year 2026/2027.

(e) Staffing Committee

RESOLVED That Councillor P. Barlow be appointed to serve as Chair and Councillor Martin as Vice Chair of the Staffing Committee for the Civic Year 2026/2027.

(f) Estimates Committee

RESOLVED That Councillor Heath be appointed to serve as Chair and Councillor J.C. Coleman as Vice Chair for the Civic Year 2026/2027.

13. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO SUB-COMMITTEES

Nominations were received to appoint Members to serve on the following Sub-Committees for the Civic Year 2026/2027:

(a) Open Spaces Management Sub-Committee

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Open Spaces Management Sub-Committee for the ensuing Civic Year –

Councillors	J.M.	Coleman
	B.	Fleet
	J.	Goodman
	P.	Heath
	R.	Ramage

14. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Nominations were received to appoint Members to the following Advisory Committees for the Civic Year 2026/2027:

(a) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group for the ensuing Civic Year –

Councillors	P.	Barlow
	J.C.	Coleman
	B.	Fleet
	J.	Goodman
	L.	Headley
	R.	Playle

(b) Improving Healthcare Facilities Working Group

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Improving Healthcare Facilities Working Group –

Councillors	P.	Barlow
	J.M.	Coleman
	J.	Goodman
	L.	Headley
	R.	Ramage
	B.	Taylor

(c) Section 106 Steering Group

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Section 106 Steering Group –

Councillors	L.	Barlow
	P.	Barlow
	J.C.	Coleman
	B.	Fleet
	L.	Headley
	P.	Heath
	R.	Playle
	B.	Taylor

(d) Financial Scrutiny Review Panel

RESOLVED That the following be elected to serve on the Financial Scrutiny Review Panel for the ensuing Civic Year –

Councillors	P.	Barlow
	B.	Fleet
	J.	Goodman

(e) The Voice Editing Panel

RESOLVED That the following be elected to serve on the Voice Editing Panel for the ensuing Civic Year –

Councillors	B.	Fleet
	J.	Goodman
	P.	Heath
	R.	Playle

(f) Allotment Appeal Panel

Councillor Playle declared a non-pecuniary interest as his father rented an allotment.

RESOLVED That the following be elected to serve on the Allotment Appeal Panel for the ensuing Civic Year –

Councillors	P.	Barlow
	J.M.	Coleman
	B.	Fleet (with Councillor P. Heath to act as a reserve)

15. APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES AND REPRESENTATIVES

Members were asked to appoint Members to the following representative positions for the Civic Year 2026/2027:

(a) Braintree Association of Local Councils

RESOLVED That Councillor J. Robertson serve as the Town Council representative on the Braintree Association of Local Councils.

(b) Chamber of Commerce

Members noted that that the Chamber of Commerce had not met for some time.

RESOLVED That Councillors P. Barlow and R. Ramage serve as the Town Council representatives for the Chamber of Commerce.

(c) Citizens Advice

Members noted that the Citizens Advice was no longer local but it would be useful to retain a contact.

RESOLVED That Councillor L. Barlow serve as the Town Council representative for the Citizens Advice.

(d) Witham Carnival Association

RESOLVED That Councillor P. Barlow serve as the Town Council representative on the Witham Carnival Association.

(e) Passenger Transport Panel

RESOLVED That Councillor L. Headley serve as the Town Council representative on the Passenger Transport Panel.

(f) Equalities and Communities Ambassador

RESOLVED That Councillors L. Barlow and J.C. Coleman serve as Town Council's Equalities and Communities Ambassadors.

16. ADOPTION OF STANDING ORDERS

A report was received relating to the changes to the current Standing Orders which were for adoption.

RESOLVED That the report be received and the amended Standing Orders be adopted.

17. ADOPTION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Members were asked to receive and adopt the new Financial Regulations for the Civic Year 2026/2027.

Comment was made about the balance to ensure confidentiality when dealing with members of staff.

RESOLVED That the new Financial Regulations for the Civic Year 2026/2027 be received and adopted.

18. ADOPTION OF CODE OF CONDUCT

The new Code of Conduct for the Civic Year 2026/2027 was received.

The Town Clerk explained that a report relating to interests would be circulated to Members.

RESOLVED That the new Code of Conduct for the Civic Year 2026/2027 be received and adopted.

19. SCHEME OF DELEGATION

A report relating to the changes to the current Scheme of Delegation was received.

It was agreed to reduce the number of Members on the Planning and Transport Committee to eight.

RESOLVED That the Scheme of Delegation, to include the reduction of Members on the Planning and Transport Committee to eight, be agreed.

20. APPOINTMENT OF AUTHORISED SIGNATORIES

Members confirmed the Authorised Signatories.

RESOLVED That Councillors P. Barlow, J.C. Coleman, B. Fleet, P. Heath, L. Headley and R. Playle continue as the Authorised Signatories.

21. ASSET REVIEW

The Council's assets were received and Members asked to review.

It was noted that the valuation of the allotments had increased by £2.00 and it was explained that this was a nominal amount for the fencing of the two allotment sites.

RESOLVED That the Council's assets be received and agreed.

22. APPOINTMENT OF THE INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR 2026/2027

Councillor J.C. Coleman declared a non-pecuniary interest as the Council for which he works used the same internal auditor.

Members confirmed that Heelis and Lodge would continue to provide the Council's internal audit for the financial year 2026/2027.

RESOLVED That Heelis and Lodge continue as the Council's internal auditor for the financial year 2026/2027.

23. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STATEMENT

Members were asked to receive and approve the Community Engagement Statement.

RESOLVED That the Community Engagement Statement be approved.

24. TREASURY & INVESTMENT POLICY

The Town Council's Treasury Investment Policy was received.

Members suggested some minor amendments to include using point 1 as the policy overview.

RESOLVED That the proposed amendments be agreed and the Town Council's Treasury Investment Policy be renewed.

25. TIME AND PLACE OF ORDINARY MEETINGS

Members were asked to adopt the Meeting Calendar for 2026 – 2027.

It was asked that the date of the Scrutiny Panel's Meeting in September be changed which was agreed.

RESOLVED That a new date for the Scrutiny Panel be arranged and the Meeting Schedule for 2026 – 2027 be amended and adopted.

26. WAIVER OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT OF ARTIST-S106 PUBLIC ART

A report was received to approve a waiver for the Section 106 Public Art installation at the Witham Community Centre. The Town Clerk reminded Members that a consultant had been employed to commission and manage the high-quality art installation funded from Section 106 monies and that Financial Regulations required competitive quotations. She had been meeting the artists involved.

RESOLVED That the Council agrees to waive the relevant provisions of Financial Regulations 5 relating to competitive quotations for this project.

27. WITHAM COMMUNITY CENTRE EMR

The Town Clerk explained that agreement was required to spend money from the Earmarked Reserves for furnishing the centre but she would also be seeking grants where possible.

RESOLVED That permission be granted to use monies from the Maltings Lane and Land Improvements Earmarked Reserves for furnishing the Community Centre.

28. BAD DEBT WRITE-OFF

A report was received regarding a bad debt amounting to £40.

The Town Clerk said that the debt had been chased for over a year.

RESOLVED That the report be received and the £40 debt written off.

29. 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.

30. S106 SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT CONTRIBUTIONS

It was explained that figures were not available so that the matter would need to be deferred to the next meeting.

RESOLVED That the matter be deferred to the next Town Council Meeting.

31. S104 AGREEMENT

Members agreed that the S104 agreement could be signed in relation to the Gimsons development.

RESOLVED That the S104 agreement be signed.

32. WITHAM COMMUNITY CENTRE

A verbal report was received.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

33. UNAUTHORISED WORKS

A verbal report was received.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

In closing Members congratulated Councillor Heath on being re-elected, speaking of his commitment to the town and his enthusiasm.

The Town Mayor said that he could not have been so successful in his role without the support of all Members and staff. He thanked everyone for their help in the past year and looked forward to the forthcoming Civic Year.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting at 8.30 p.m.

Councillor P Heath
Town Mayor
NS/GK/21.5.2026