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MINUTES

WITHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Date: **Monday 5th October 2026**

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

Present: Councillors -

P.	Heath	(Town Mayor)
E.	Adelaja	
L.	Barlow	
P.	Barlow	
J.M.	Coleman	
B.	Fleet	
J.	Goodman	
L.	Headley	
J.	Martin	
R.	Playle	
J.	Robertson	
N.	Smith	(Town Clerk)
G.	Kennedy	(Committee Secretary)
J.	Brown	(PA to the Council)

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81. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J.C. Coleman, R Ramage, B Taylor and E Williams. Councillor A Sloma was absent.

RESOLVED That the apologies be received and approved.

82. MINUTES

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on 7th September 2026 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

83. INTERESTS

Councillor Playle declared a non-registerable interest as a Member of Essex County Council.

Later in the meeting at Minute 91 – Community Asset Transfer Policy, Councillor Martin declared an other registerable interest as a Member of Braintree District Council.

84. QUESTIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no members of public present.

85. ESSEX COUNTY AND BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL UPDATE

Essex County Councillor Playle advised that government proposals for reorganisation were still being reviewed and there would be an update later this month. The District Council and Town Council elections would go ahead in May 2027.

He advised that the bus stop outside Morrisons Daily had now been replaced and that the one in Collingwood Road was due to be replaced next year. He added that there was currently a community transport survey.

Councillor Playle advised that the County Council had set targets for special educational needs and healthcare for children to reduce the backlog by the end of this year. Moving forward, the Council would hear all applications within 20 weeks.

Essex Highways had made the formal announcement to withdraw the Local Highways Panel. There had been no proposals as to how road safety measures or speed surveys would be moved forward in the future.

With regards to the emerging pot hole scheme, Bronte Road had been completed and Elderberry Gardens was due in 2027 but Hatfield Road was not on the list but had been marked up. Councillor Playle advised that he would continuing pursuing the vegetation issues and Councillor Heath said that Braintree District Council had set aside £150,000 to resolve this problem and Members were urged to report any issues.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

86. TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

Details of the Town Mayor's engagements attended for the period 31st August 2026 to 27th September 2026 were received.

The Town Mayor also reminded Councillors of the Live Well Age Well Fair that was to be held on 8th October and encouraged them to advertise the event to residents.

RESOLVED That the details be received and noted.

87. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

The Town Clerk explained that Green Space Games had been booked for a session during the October half term at the new Community Centre. There would be arts and crafts upstairs and sports in the main hall.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

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88. CONCLUSION OF AUDIT

The closure letter from PFK Littlejohn LLP, Section 3 of the External Auditor Report and Certificate were received. The Town Clerk advised that actions were underway for the points that were raised, but once again it was a successful audit.

Members congratulated the Town Clerk on a clean audit.

RESOLVED That the letter, Section 3 of the External Auditor Report and certificate were received.

89. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROLS

The Statement of Internal Controls was received.

The Town Clerk advised that the Town Council was required to produce this document.

RESOLVED That the Statement of Internal Controls be received and noted.

90. FINANCIAL SCRUTINY PANEL

A report from the Financial Scrutiny Panel which met on 24th September 2026 was received.

Members were advised that this was an extra audit to ensure that requirements were met.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

91. COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER POLICY

The Braintree District Council 'Community Asset Transfer Policy' was received and Members asked to consider any areas of land Witham Town Council might wish to see transferred. It had been suggested that two or three assets should be considered at a time.

Councillor Martin declared an interest as a Member of Braintree District Council.

Members considered possible assets to be acquired but the need to ensure double taxation would not affect residents. The Memorial Gardens was considered but discounted at this time as the memorial needed a full survey and possible underpinning.

RESOLVED That the Community Asset Transfer Policy document be received and initial enquiries with regards to Witham Town Park, area of land by Lidl and the finger of land by Asda be put forward for consideration of transfer.

92. REVIEW OF POLICIES

Members were asked to receive and approve the following policies for renewal.

(a) Officer, Member Relations Policy

The Officer, Member Relations Policy was received.

RESOLVED That the amended Officer, Member Relations Policy be received and agreed.

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(b) Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy

The Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy was received.

RESOLVED That the amended Sexual Harassment Prevent Policy be received and agreed.

(c) Stress Management Policy

The Stress Management Policy was received.

RESOLVED That the amended Stress Management Policy be received and agreed.

(d) Social Media Policy

The Social Media Policy was received.

The Town Clerk said that Members should not be using their role to obtain financial gain through social media. She considered that a four year review would be appropriate but if any further amendments were required the policy would be considered again.

RESOLVED That the amended Social Media Policy be received and agreed.

(e) Dignity at Work Policy

The Dignity at Work Policy was received.

RESOLVED That the amended Dignity at Work Policy be received and agreed.

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93. SECTION 106 – SAUL'S BRIDGE SPORTS GROUND

A report was received concerning the District Council's plan to install table tennis tables at the Saul's Bridge Sports Ground.

Members were informed that the District Council was consulting on the installation of table tennis tables as part of a Section 106 agreement.

Members were unhappy that this money had been for a development in the north of the town and should therefore have been spent in North Ward; and that an outdoor table tennis table was unlikely to get much use as it would be too windy. It was considered that the Town Council should have been involved in the Section 106 negotiation and that a variation should be sought.

RESOLVED That the report be received and that the Town Council oppose the proposal of installation of outdoor table tennis tables at Saul's Bridge as they would get little use and the Section 106 money should be spent in North Ward.

Members were asked to complete the questionnaire and to make their views known.

94. 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.

95. LAND TRANSFER

A report was received.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

96. LODGE FARM ALLOTMENTS

A report was received.

RESOLVED That the report be received and Birketts be appointed as the Town Council's solicitor in this matter.

97. WITHAM COMMUNITY CENTRE

A report was received.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted and the advice in the report be proceeded with.

98. MALDON ROAD PARK TOILETS

A report was received.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

There being no further business, the Town Mayor closed the Meeting at 8.35pm

Councillor P. Heath
Town Mayor

NS/GK/JB/09.10.2026

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