



Witham

town council

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AGENDA

WITHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Date: **Monday, 21st November 2022** 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	J.	Bayford	(Town Mayor)
		J.	Goodman	(Deputy Town Mayor)
		S.	Ager	
		K.	Atwill	
		P.	Barlow	
		P.	Heath	
		S.	Hicks	
		C.	Jay	
		A.	Kilmartin	
		C.	Lager	
		M.	Lager	
		T.	Pleasance	
		S.	Rajeev	
		M.	Weeks	
		J.	Williams	
		R.	Williams	

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive and approve apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES

To receive the Minutes of the Meeting of Town Council held 24th October 2022 (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. TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

To receive details of the Town Mayor's engagements attended for period 25th October to 15th November 2022 attached at page 4 .

7. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

To receive the Town Clerk's report on matters arising attached at page 5.

8. BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE

To receive and comment on correspondence received from Paul Partridge, Head of Operations at Braintree District Council attached at page 6.

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS

(a) Planning and Transport Committee held 24th October and 7th November 2022

Minutes 128 to 157 (inclusive).

To receive a report of the Meetings.

(b) Environment Committee held 10th October 2022

Minutes 14 to 26 (inclusive).

To receive a report of the Meeting.

(c) Community Committee held 7th November 2022

Minutes 36 to 53 (inclusive).

To receive a report of the Meeting.

10. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

TO RESOLVE That under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the Meeting for the consideration of the remaining items of business on the grounds they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within Schedule 12A (S3) of the Local Government Act 1972.

11. COMMITTEE REPORT – CONTINUED

Community Committee held 7th November 2022 (continued)

Minutes 54 to 56 .

To receive a report of the Meeting.

12. LAND TRANSFER REPORT

To receive a Land Transfer report.

13. BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL ASSETS

To receive a report on Braintree District Council assets.

14. FUNDING REPORT

To receive a Funding Report.

15. RIVER WALK PATH AND CYCLEWAY PROGRAMME

To receive an Interim Stage 4 report on the River Walk Path and Cycleway Programme.



Nikki Smith
Town Clerk

NS/GK/15.11.2022



LIST OF MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS BETWEEN OCTOBER 25TH & NOVEMBER 15TH 2022

TUESDAY 25TH OCTOBER 2022, WAOS FLAMES OF INJUSTICE

Attended the WAOS performance of 'the flames of injustice' at Witham Public Hall.

SATURDAY 29TH OCTOBER 2022, ALLOTMENT ANNUAL SOUP DAY

Attended the annual soup day at the allotments.

SATURDAY 29TH OCTOBER 2022, HALLOWEEN TRAIL

Attended Witham Town Council's Wizard of Oz theme Halloween trail.

MONDAY 31ST OCTOBER 2022, TEMPLARS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION COMPETITION JUDGING

Judged the Templars Community Association pumpkin carving competition and presented a certificate.

MONDAY 14TH NOVEMBER 2022, PUDSEY NIGHT

Attended the Witham and Maldon SWANS Pudsey night at the RAF club.

Officer Report: [Town Clerk's Report](#)

The following matters are for members to note:

Remembrance Parade

Councillors and staff attended the Remembrance Parade at the Witham War Memorial arranged jointly with the Royal British Legion.

Warm Room

Numbers are steadily increasing for the Warm Room being held in the Function Room on a Monday and volunteers are still required to attend and play games or chat with visitors.

Christmas Fayre

The road closure has been confirmed for the Christmas Fayre being held in Newland Street on 3rd December 2022 from 3:00-7:00pm. Our thanks go to Councillor Ross Playle, Councillor Lee Scott and officers at Braintree District Council for assisting with this matter.

Volunteers will be required for a 'Mulled Wine' and a 'Neighbourhood Plan' stall, a list will be available at FTC that councillors can choose their preferred time slot from.

Carol Service

The Carol Service has been set for December 14th although the time and location are still to be confirmed.

Advice:

To receive and note.

F.A.O. The Chairman of Witham Town Council

Dear Chairman

The District Council has commenced its budget setting process for 2023/24 and I am writing to tell you about some proposals that are being considered as part of this process in relation to Operations.

Like most local authorities, we are facing a cost-of-operating crisis, much like the cost-of-living crisis facing our residents and the cost-of-trading issues our businesses are struggling with. This is being driven partly by the ongoing impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, but also by global increases in prices and interest rates as a result of the war in Ukraine amongst other factors.

At the same time, we are still uncertain what funding we will receive from central government and are awaiting decisions on new legislation such as the Environment Act 2021 and possible changes to the Planning system, all of which will impact the budget.

Fortunately, we have been prudent in managing our finances – both in terms of reducing costs and generating income - which has left us in a sound position. We can therefore afford to use some of our reserves to manage these extremely difficult times. However, the effects of the global economic uncertainty and inflationary pressures have hit us hard and required us to find further savings and/or additional income to close the financial gap. More people need our services and support each year and the costs of providing services have increased.

We have identified some potential options to reduce costs, deliver savings and increase income that will partly mitigate the budget gap, mainly in 2023/24, although some will impact in later years. We want to be clear that no decisions have been taken yet; the proposals will go through the usual budget process and final decisions won't be made until the Cabinet and Council Meetings on 7 & 21 February 2023 respectively. However, as a key partner, we wanted to share with you some of these proposals which, if approved, will result in changes to service delivery.

PROPOSAL 1: 50% Reduction in cutting urban amenity verges

The Council currently cuts the urban amenity verges 12 -14 times throughout the growing season (spring/autumn/summer), and is proposing to reduce this to 6 – 7 cuts. This will not only save £30,000 a year, but also support climate change at a local level by protecting natural habitat to improve sustainability and increase biodiversity.

PROPOSAL 2: Cease planting of summer/winter bedding and replace with sustainable planting or grass over

This proposal relates to beds in our cemeteries, public gardens and some of our public open spaces and would achieve a minimum saving of £6,000. We know from recent experience that the cost of plants has doubled and the requirement for increased

maintenance (watering) also impacts labour costs meaning that that we would have insufficient budget to fund this area of work in the future. The saving will be achieved from 2024/25 as funding would still be required next year to modify the beds.

PROPOSAL 3: Cease the provision of hanging baskets at Halstead Public Gardens, Causeway House and Braintree Town Centre

This proposal would save a minimum of £9,000 (see comments under Proposal 2 above).

PROPOSAL 4 – Review of Litter and Dog Bin Routes

We are continuously looking at how we can improve the delivery of our services in order to ensure they are as cost effective and efficient as possible. Next year we have planned a review of the litter and dog bins on public open spaces and, where appropriate, will engage with stakeholders once the review commences.

PROPOSAL 5 – Cease printing of refuse/recycling collection calendars and just retain on-line facility

In recent years, there has been a big change in the way customers interact with the Council, with most preferring to use digital channels to request services, obtain information and make transactions. With less reliance on more traditional modes of communication, it is proposed to dispense with printed calendars and signpost customers to our website where they can either download a copy of the full collection calendar or just view their next collection day. We acknowledge that some people may still require a printed version of the calendar and so a hard copy can be made available to those who have difficulty accessing the internet on request. This proposal will realise a saving of £25,000.

PROPOSAL 6 – Review of Car Parking Tariff and Concessions

Income fell drastically during the covid-19 pandemic and although we have seen customers coming back into our car parks, it has not recovered to pre-pandemic levels. At the same time, our costs have increased. We will therefore be considering tariff increases across the board and also propose to withdraw the 10p after 3 concession and apply the standard tariff which, in itself, will generate an additional £39,000 income per annum. Car parking charges were last increased in 2018.

OTHER PROPOSALS

As I have explained above, no decisions have yet been taken on whether the proposals will go ahead, as the final budget won't be agreed until February 2023.

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