Minutes of the proceedings of the **CHILTON TOWN COUNCIL MEETING** held at Hutton House, on Tuesday 8th July 2025

Present: -- Chair - Cllr. S. Reece (Mayor)
Cllrs: - D. Bright, E. Bruce, D. English, P. Malpas & S. Sutherland
Town Clerk (TC) - Mrs. Joanne Dickinson
Member of the public- None
County Councillor – S. Bowron – left the meeting at 7.20pm

The meeting commenced at 6.01pm

33. Apologies for Absence –Cllr Herbert- apologies accepted

34. Declarations of Interest- Cllr Sutherland and Cllr Malpas for agenda item 25, minute number 57

35. Member Dispensations- The following dispensation was submitted by Cllr Stuart Sutherland- *I am writing to request a dispensation as a Councillor for the Allotment, Cemetery and Open Spaces Committee.*

I now have a personal interest in the Hambleton Way site as of 24/6/25. I would like to participate in the committee and not take part in votes that would personally benefit myself.

I am requesting a dispensation for the committee as I believe my participation is justified due to my expertise and the specific needs of this committee due to council membership levels.

I understand that this interest and dispensation would exclude me from decision making on matters benefiting the Hambleton way site in the circumstances where a benefit would be received by myself, allocations on the site and inspections on the site.

Cllr Sutherland left the meeting when this agenda item was discussed. The salient points highlighted were as follows-

i. As Cllr Sutherland is Chair of the Committee how will this work in practice- Town Clerk advised that when Cllr Sutherland is required to leave the meeting for an agenda item to be discussed then the Vice Chair would Chair the meeting. If the Vice Chair isn't present then the committee can appoint a Chair for that agenda item to be discussed.
ii. Town Clerk was asked if the advice of the Monitoring Officer should be sought. Town Clerk advised as Proper Officer this is within the scope of what can be agreed.
iii. Town Clerk advised that Cllr Sutherland should not have any input into matters on Hambleton Way allotments during a meeting and that should include allotment allocations.
iv. As it is up to the Member whether they leave the room during an agenda item being discussed of which they have a dispensation. The Town Clerk would advise the Member that it is strongly advised that they leave the room. If this was not abided to then the Town Clerk would state in the minutes that this advice had been given to the Member and review the dispensation that had been given by adding to the agenda for Full Council to review.

v. If a Member with a dispensation advises they will stay in the meeting when matters are being discussed regarding the allotment site they have a plot on as to leave the room would make the meeting inquorate. The Town Clerk would advise that the agenda item could be deferred or added to the agenda of a Full Council meeting if urgent.

vi. Members had a concern of public perception if any works are carried out on the allotment site.

vii. The allotment committee recommend the rents and then they are reviewed and agreed at Full Council as part of the budget process.

viii. Allotment allocations are currently carried out in conjunction with Cllr Sutherland.

Members agreed to the granting of the dispensation subject to-

a. Cllr Sutherland not taking part in the allotment allocation process
b. Clarity to be provided on how this will work in practice to be included in the minutes

Cllr Sutherland returned to the meeting.

The Chair informed Cllr Sutherland that the dispensation has been agreed in principle and the Town Clerk will update Cllr Sutherland after the meeting with how that would work in practice.

36. Public Participation- None present

37. Mayor's Report – See Appendix 1 for the update from the Mayor which is attached to the minutes. In addition, Elemore School have invited the Councillors to an event at the school. The Mayor to circulate the information.
Members accepted the report

38. Consider any applications received for the Town Councillor Vacancies, if applicable- Town Clerk advised that no applications had been received and had sought advice from Electoral Services who advised that it may be best for the council to leave the number of councillors for now. If the number of councilors is reduced then that may trigger future regular by-elections. Cooption vacancies to be advertised and the deadline date will be the date of the next council meeting.

39. Approve minutes of the following meeting and recommendations therein-

a. Chilton Town Council Meeting held on 10th June 2025
RESOLVED- Cllr Sutherland proposed the minutes be accepted as a true record. Seconded by Cllr English. All agreed.

40. Receive minutes of the following committee meetings
a. Allotment, Open Spaces and Cemetery Committee Meeting held on 2nd June 2025
Members received the minutes

41. County Councillors Report- Cllr Bowron informed the County Council meeting is on the following week and he is involved with the County Durham Plan. A Member queried why the schedule for Cllr Bowron isn't allowed to be published following on from a query from a resident. Cllr Bowron advised he is receiving death threats online which is being dealt with as Operation Fox which has information about it online. Town Clerk asked if the County Councillor Surgery can be advertised online. Cllr Bowron advised that this was acceptable.
Members agreed to accept the report

42. Review the Resolution Log- The Town Clerk to circulate the updated information after the meeting and the following points were highlighted-
a. School play park signs received and Cllr Sutherland will install them

b. Funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner for funding for first aid training and stab packs -no funding availability in the current round of funding.
c. Miners Memorial ownership- Durham Miners' Association don't look after the Memorial. Town Clerk has emailed Durham Aged Miners Home to request permission and awaiting a response.
d. Farm Business Tenancy agreement has been signed and Town Clerk thanked Cllr Reece for checking through the tenancy once it had been updated.
e. The work at the gate and railings at the cemetery will be carried out imminently.
f. Building Conditions Report for Hutton House taking place on 18th July 2025 and the Cemetery building on 21st July 2025.
g. The Church will let the council borrow their tables and chairs on 30th August 2025 for free, subject to the council arranging collection and return of them.
h. Elemore School initiative, Cllr Reece will ask the school for an update.

43. Review the applications received for the Community Grants Funding- deferred for discussion later in the meeting, minute number

RESOLVED- Cllr English proposed that that under Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the public, and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. Seconded by Cllr Sutherland. All agreed.

44. Review the Civic Duties budget expenditure for 25/26- Town Clerk advised that there is £200 budgeted for civic duties. The Mayor can claim for expenses when attending Civic Events but the Mayor advised she would not be claiming for the expenses and will personally pay for the events she attends. For Civic Events showcasing Chilton it is unsustainable for the costs to be paid for by Members.
RESOLVED- Cllr Malpas proposed that a budget of £500 be allocated for costs relating to the Mayor 'At Home' Event. Seconded by Cllr Bruce. All agreed.
RECOMMENDATION- Mayor 'At Home' Event next year to consider charging a ticket price as many other councils are charging this year.

45. Consider a request for funding of life vac anti-choking devices throughout the town- Members discussed that they would be good to have in the town and discussed various locations and the best option of life vac devices.
RESOLVED- Cllr Reece proposed the council approve the purchase of the two life vac choking devices and travel kit which is a combination purchase. The travel kit to be provided to the Miners Welfare Trust. One device to be installed in Hutton House and Sainsburys to be asked if they would have one in their shop. Seconded by Cllr English. All agreed.

46. Review and agree the contractor from the quotations received for the weekly watering of the hanging baskets following on from the Town Clerk receiving further information about the frequency of the watering of the flowers- deferred for discussion later in the meeting, minute number

RESOLVED- Cllr Sutherland proposed that that under Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the public, and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. Seconded by Cllr English. All agreed.

47. Discuss funding options that may be available from external organisations- Members discussed options for funding through Tarmac Ltd. Members agreed to await the feedback of the building conditions report and then discuss at a future meeting.

48. Receive Appendix 1 for April 2025, May 2025 and June 2025- this was agreed at the Financial, Audit, Risk and Health and Safety Committee Meeting held on 24.6.25-
RESOLVED- Cllr Malpas proposed the council receive the information. Seconded by Cllr Bright. All agreed.

49. Receive the detailed income and expenditure of the council from 1st April 2025 to 31st May 2025- this was agreed at the Financial, Audit, Risk and Health and Safety Committee Meeting held on 24.6.25.
RESOLVED – Cllr Bright proposed the council receive the information. Seconded by Cllr Sutherland. All agreed.

50. Adopt the updated Delegation Scheme following on from the Terms of References agreed for each committee.
RESOLVED- Cllr Malpas proposed the council adopt the policy. Seconded by Cllr Sutherland. All agreed.

51. Adopt the Asbestos Risk Register- this was recommended for adoption at the Financial, Audit, Risk and Health and Safety Committee Meeting held on 24.6.25
RESOLVED- Cllr English proposed the council adopt the policy. Seconded by Cllr Sutherland. All agreed.

52. Adopt the Hazardous Substances Policy (COSHH) - this was recommended for adoption at the Financial, Audit, Risk and Health and Safety Committee Meeting held on 24.6.25.
RESOLVED- Cllr Malpas proposed the council adopt the policy. Seconded by Cllr English. All agreed.

53. Adopt the Cemetery Privacy Notice- this was agreed at the Allotment, Open Spaces and Allotment Committee Meeting held on 23rd June 2025
RESOLVED- Cllr Malpas proposed the council adopt the policy. Seconded by Cllr Sutherland. All agreed.

54. Adopt the Allotment Privacy Notice - this was agreed at the Allotment, Open Spaces and Allotment Committee Meeting held on 23rd June 2025
RESOLVED- Cllr Sutherland proposed the council adopt the policy. Seconded by Cllr Malpas. All agreed.

55. Adopt the updated General Privacy Notice
RESOLVED- Cllr English proposed the council adopt the policy. Seconded by Cllr Malpas. All agreed.

56. Adopt the updated Health and Safety Policy- Town Clerk advised that the reporting committee changed from Policy and Resources to Financial, Audit, Risk and Health and Safety Committee.
RESOLVED- Cllr English proposed the council adopt the policy. Seconded by Cllr Bruce. All agreed.

57. Review a report from the Town Clerk regarding outstanding actions at the allotment sites-
Cllr Sutherland left the meeting prior to Members discussing this matter due to an aforementioned declaration of interest.
Members received a report from the Town Clerk on outstanding actions at the allotment sites. The following recommendations were agreed by Members-

a. Ensure that future works that are agreed should have greater control over the works that are carried out.
b. New fence at West Chilton Terrace where there are 2 taps that have been blocked into the plots. Members expressed concern that this was not identified as an issue when the contractor was asked to quote/carry out the works and that will add to the costs of the fencing works.
c. Moving the taps may open up other issues with the pipework which will not be known until the work is carried out, if agreed.
d. Town Clerk to ask the contractor if they will move the fencing at no extra cost to rectify the issue. Based on this outcome the council will discuss how best to proceed.

e. Special Town Council Meeting to be arranged for Members to receive a report on the decision making process on how the fence has been installed, blocking the taps and leaving gaps in between the old and the current fence.

Cllr Sutherland returned to the meeting after this agenda item had been discussed.

58. **Nominate up to 2 councillors to apply for vacancies on the Durham County Councils Standards Committee- RESOLVED- Cllr Malpas proposed the council nominate Cllr Reece. Seconded by Cllr English. All agreed.**

59. Receive an update on the Neighbourhood Plan- Cllr Reece advised that there has been a change in funding which has been withdrawn. Currently working with DCC Strategic Planning to look into where other funding could come from. May be able to pick up some assistance with DCC when they are working through the Local Plan. A meeting of the next Advisory Group to be arranged for end of July/ early August. This would coincide with a public meeting which will be attended by DCC Strategic Planning Team. The Business Consultation to commence again.

60. Receive the Charity Report- To update the council that the trust is pursuing the Heritage Lottery Bid and have asked if the council will provide a letter of support which Cllr Reece will draft. Various other organisations have provided letters of support. Storage of council assets can not be carried out due to equipment needed by the trust. Request from Trust for the Christmas Motifs/lights to be taken out of the container.
Members agreed to this request for a letter of support and a request for the Christmas Motifs/Lights to be removed from the container.
Lights/Motifs that pass the PAT Testing to be stored in the council container and those that don't pass to be placed in the Town Council garage and make a future decision on those to repair and those to discard.

61. Receive an update from the Community & Events Working Group- A meeting was agreed to take place on 15th July 2025 after the training sessions. Cllr Reece advised that The Chapter will be including an article about the show. Cllr Reece asked permission for Bishop FM to broadcast from the event and they will need access to the electricity. A copy of their logo will be on the programme.
Members agreed to this request.

RESOLVED- Cllr Sutherland proposed that that under Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. Seconded by Cllr English. All agreed.

Cllr Bowron left the meeting

62. Review the applications received for the Community Grants Funding- Members were provided with paper copies of the 5 grants that have been applied for and a brief overview of each application request was provided.
Cllr Bruce and Cllr Sutherland declared an interest on the application from Chilton Academy Friends
Cllr English declared an interest on the application from the Chilton Scouts Group.
RESOLVED- Cllr Malpas proposed the council approve the applications of £500 funding from 1st Chilton Scout Group, Capture Films, Chilton Academy Friends, Chilton Community Fund & Chilton Juniors FC. They will be required to attend our presentation on 22nd July 2025 at 7.15pm. Seconded by Cllr Bright. All agreed.

Ferryhill Town Band had sent a speculative letter asking if the council would donate towards their costs to attend the National Finals. Members discussed the request.

RESOLVED- Cllr Reece proposed the council donate £250 to Ferryhill Town Band and ask if they will change their name to Chilton and Ferryhill Town Band. Seconded by Cllr Malpas. All agreed.

63. Review and agree the contractor from the quotations received for the weekly watering of the hanging baskets following on from the Town Clerk receiving further information about the frequency of the watering of the flowers- Town Clerk updated Members with the costs of the watering of the hanging baskets, planters and the 2 x tiered planters. Contractor 1 will charge £65 per visit which includes watering of the planters and tiered planters on an adhoc basis at no extra cost. Contractor 2 will charge £63 per visit with a charge of 80p for any additional watering of a planters or a tiered planters. Therefore, the additional cost is an unknown quantity as it depends on the weather.

Town Clerk advised that the grounds maintenance contractor is unable to continue watering the flowerbeds as it is taking up a lot of time. The cost to carry out a watering of the flowerbeds will be £45 per time watered. Town Clerk advised that contractor 2 will charge 80p to water a flower beds. Town Clerk to ask contractor 1 what they would charge to water the flower beds and see if it's less than Contractor 2.
RECOMMENDATION- Town Clerk to circulate the information by email for the matter to be agreed as soon as possible due to the fact the 16 waterings originally agreed to the contractor end this week.

64. Receive an update, if received regarding the disputed land - Town Clerk provided information from the Chartered Surveyor to Members.
RECOMMENDATION-Town Clerk to take a picture of the fencing and send to the Chartered Surveyor to see if the matter has been resolved. If not, then the Chartered Surveyor to continue the next course of action in this matter.

65. Discuss the school play park- - Town Clerk was asked to obtain a quote for an 8ft high fence against the wall. Awaiting costs of the materials which will be circulated to Members. A quote for shrubs was obtained which would be £125 per shrub and around 30 would be required. This cost does not include any labour or materials for planting the shrubs.
RECOMMENDATION- The council draft a statement informing residents that the cost of installing shrubs at £125 per tree is not cost effective and from advice taken from the contractor there is evidence that they may not be effective. The Town Council are looking into other options such as fencing and will provide an update in due course

Meeting Closed at 9pm.

Cllr Sue Reece,
Mayor of Chilton Town Council,
9th September 2025