Chard Town Council

The Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard, Somerset TA20 1PP

01460 239567 www.chard.gov.uk

Mayor: Cllr Victoria Bates

Chief Executive & Town Clerk: David Bell

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the **Amenities and Events Committee** held on **Tuesday 9th September 2025 at 7pm** in the Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard TA20 1PP.

Present: Councillors; Baker (Chair), Bulmer, Eggins, Hussey, O'Brien, and Williams.

In Attendance: Chief Executive & Town Clerk (CE&TC) David Bell, , Kevin Dyer Deputy Town Clerk & Operations Manager.

Public Participation Time

No members of the public were in attendance.

A presentation on CCTV matters was given by Mr Dan Chard.
The Chairman thanked Mr Chard and suggested that he meet with the Chief Executive & Town Clerk to move matters forward and also consider the wider aspects of CCTV around the town, which could then be brought back to Full Council.

Section 1 – Standing Items

2025/21 **Apologies for Absence**
Apologies were received from Cllrs, A Kenton, J Kenton, Hassan and Shortland.
All personal.

2025/22 **Declarations of Interest**
Councillor Bulmer, for clarity, regarding Item 2025/34 (Flower Beds) sought clarification on his position and intends to stay for that item. There being no financial considerations, this was agreed.

2025/23 **Committee Meeting Minutes**
The minutes had been previously circulated. Some Councillors stated they had not received the minutes and others confirmed they had.

Minutes of the 11th of March 2025:

Proposed: Councillor Hussey Seconded: Councillor Williams

Unanimous

Resolved:

To approve the Minutes of 11th March 2025.

17th of June 2025:

It was agreed the minutes generally reflect matters resolved. Item 2025/16 should read "Rotary Club and Peace Garden", not "see page 4". It was agreed that Chard Town Council to work in partnership with Chard Rotary Club using the garden adjacent to the old office to create a peace garden.

Proposed: Councillor Williams Seconded: Councillor Hussey.

For: 5, Against: 0, Abstentions 2.

Resolved:

Subject to these minor changes, to accept the Minutes of the 17th June 2025.

Section 2 – Items To Note

2025/24 **Chief Executive & Town Clerk Updates**.
The Jocelyn Park changing rooms have been made watertight and meetings were being organised to discuss finances and handover.

It was noted and appreciated that there is other work to be done.

Committee noted the current situation.

2025/25 **Ashcroft Park Disabled Equipment**
Officers are in the process of obtaining quotes from specialists. There is a lot of community interest in this, both on social media and directly to the council.

The Committee noted the update.

2025/26 **Halcombe Park**
The landowner has been approached and will not give approval for the Dirt Track due to the earthworks involved. However, he did state he would be amenable to the installation of the gravel pedestrian track around the perimeter.

The Committee noted the update.

2025/27 **Rotary Club and Peace Garden**
The Chief Executive & Town Clerk was happy to proceed with Councillor Bulmer present as the item is to note the current situation and there are no financial matters or decisions to be taken.

The Committee noted that the project is progressing well and does not require funding from Chard Town Council.

2025/28 **Chapel Gates**
Positive comments were made about the design and appearance.

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Committee noted that the gates had been installed, and all works are complete under budget.

2025/29 Tree Work

Councillor Baker declared a personal interest on this one, as a member of the PCC for St Mary's Church.
The Chief Executive & Town Clerk was requested to look at the funding situation and consider EMR matters with a view to proposing virement at Full Council, should it be appropriate.

Committee noted that works at St Mary's Churchyard, Henson Park and Stringfellow Park have been completed.

2025/30 Outcomes Somerset and Devon Fire and Rescue Service Operational Review of the Guildhall

Members noted that our caretaking staff are very focused on the safety of the building. A new fire panel had been installed 18 months ago and three fire visits had been undertaken by Somerset and Devon Fire Rescue Team. Councillors thanked the team.

Committee noted the outcome.

2025/31 Allotment Plot Clearance

Councillors noted that plot clearance currently cost between £300 and £400.
15 plots are left unattended. Within this there are, perhaps, five people that are seriously ill.
It was recognised as a credit to the reception team for achieving improvements in the systems and processes.
There are four forum meetings per year, and a very good relationship has been built up with the Allotment Committee. Changes to the eviction process with be brought to Full Council in due course.

Committee noted the item.

The Chief Executive left the meeting at 19:43 to investigate the higher than normal rainfall and returned again at 19:45

2025/32 Chard to Ilminster Cycle Path

Responsibilities, ownerships and such matters are all clearly definable.
What is missing is the will to do something on a tripartite approach.
The matter is to be further investigated by the Officers.

Committee note the situation and the way forward.

2025/33 Events Updates

Staff sickness had prevented a written report being produced.
However, the previous report had been comprehensive. The team are endeavouring to bring events across parks as well as at the Guildhall.

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Upcoming events were noted and include Carnival, Street Fair, Remembrance and Christmas lights. It was commented that this is a very busy time of year.

Committee noted the events update.

Section 3 Items For Decision

2025/34 **Flower Beds**

There is great interest, particularly from our community, in maintaining all flowerbeds in Chard.

Proposed: Councillor Richter Seconded: Councillor Williams.

Resolved:
That Chard Town Council enters into a Gentleman's Agreement with Somerset Council so that it maintains all flowerbeds in Chard, including those currently maintained by Somerset Council.

Unanimous.

2025/35 **Allotments Eviction and Appeals**

Councillors thanked the team for the work that had gone into this document and the discussions with the allotment holders. The document was considered easy to read.

Proposed: Councillor Bulmer Seconded: Councillor Eggins

Resolved:
That the policy be recommended to Full Council for approval.

Unanimous.

2025/20 **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the A&E Committee will be on **Tuesday 14th October 2025 2025** in The Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard TA20 1PP commencing at 7pm.

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Present: Councillors; Baker (Chair), Bulmer, Eggins, Hussey, A Kenton, J Kenton O'Brien and Shortland

In Attendance: Chief Executive & Town Clerk (CE&TC) David Bell,

Public Participation Time

One member of the public spoke about the Bath Street toilets, specifically requesting the council to consider a changing-places facility.

Section 1 – Standing Items

2025/37 **Apologies for Absence**
Apologies were received from Cllrs: Hassan & Williams.
Personal.

2025/38 **Declarations of Interest**
Cllrs Baker & J Kenton declared they don't have an interest on as members of Somerset Council agenda item 2025/45
Cllr Bulmer declared am interest in agenda item 2025/45 as he is an employee for Somerset Council. (Transcript is unclear here!)

2025/39 **Committee Meeting Minutes**
As stated in the agenda the outstanding minutes will be provided subsequent to this meeting. There are currently 2 sets of minutes outstanding 17th June and 9th September that will be submitted for approval at a further Amenities & Events Committee meeting.

Section 2 – Items To Note

2025/40 **Chief Executive & Town Clerk Updates**.

Project Updates:

- Jocelyn Park Changing Rooms. After discussion regarding various aspects of this facility the following recommendation was made.

Proposed: Councillor Baker Seconded: Councillor ??.

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Unanimous.

Resolved:
That Chard the Amenities & Events Committee recommend to Full Council that the Chief Executive & Town Clerk seeks confirmation on the status of the ownership of the building. If the building is owned by Chard that the Chief Executive & Town Clerk pursues quotes to complete the work.

- Halcombe Play Area & Ashcroft Play Area
  Updates were provide and subsequent discussions included best next steps and the use of106 monies for the costs of any future agreed plans.

- Flooding Resilience.
  The Chef Executive & Town Clerk explained a meeting has been arranged with a specialist but in the interim he and the Operations Manager have visited the site and discovered a series of works that have been undertaken (by person/s unknown) that have made the situation slightly worse. However these could be delt with by the Amenities Team. The plan is to get on ad action this work and follow up after the meeting with the specialist.

- Mess room update
  The Chef Executive & Town Clerk stated previous quotes were now out of date in that they would no longer be honoured by the contractors who had submitted them. In addition further consideration was required to obtain a full understanding of requirements for this work before seeking updated quotes, for example the potential length of time for the work to be completed will be in excess of 30 days.

  A proposal was made a Cllr Baker requiring the Chief Executive and Town Clerk to assess the working conditions of the Amenities staff to ensure they abide by any legal requirements and are on ‘par’ with the staff facilities who work inside.

  Proposed: Cllr Baker Seconded Cllr J Kenton
  Resolved: The Chief Executive and Town Clerk will assess the working conditions of the Amenities staff to ensure they abide by any legal requirements and are on ‘par’ with the staff facilities who work inside.

- Guildhall Business Planning.
  The Chief Executive & Town Clerk explained that this piece of work had not been progressed due to sickness and annual leave,

- Banking Hub Experimental Scheme.

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The Chief Executive & Town Clerk outlined an experimental scheme offered by Lloyds Bank which will involve them hiring a room in the Guildhall on alternate Tuesday starting in November for a specific period of time. This to compensate in part for the closure in the High St. branch. A review of the experiment will be undertaken by Lloyds to help decide whether to continue providing the service. Chard Town Council will be promoting this service on our website and FB page.

2025/41 **Current Actions Updates**
An update on current actions was provided by the Chief Executive & Town Clerk & noted by the committee

2025/42 **Events Update**
Committee noted the reason for no Events Report but requested one be provided at the next Amenities & Events meeting.

2025/43 **Bath Street Toilet Facilities.**
A full discussion took place after which the committee agreed to the recommendation as put by the Chief Executive & Town Clerk, stipulated in the agenda for this meeting.

Proposed: Councillor J Kenton Seconded: Councillor Baker

Unanimous.

Resolved:
To recommend Full Council the Chief Executive & Town Clerk be authorised to appoint (within delegated powers) :
a) a designer to progress the Changing Places Facility aspirations, up to £2,000 and
b) legal representation to assist in securing the longer-term lease regarding the main toilet block facilities and any proposals for changing room facilities.
With a budget of £200,000 and for Full council to set up an EMR from the devolution money to find this project.

2025/44 **Park Staff Mess Facilities**

Proposed Cllr Baker Seconded Cllr Bulmer

Resolved: *The CETC to assess the working conditions of the Amenities staff to ensure they abide by any legal requirements and are on 'par' with the staff facilities who work inside.*
A Councillor further recommended asking Full Council to set up an EMR for this work and set the figure at £200,000 to come out of General Reserve.

2025/45 **Somerset Council Discussions Over "Devolution" Matters**
The Chef Executive & Town Clerk explained he had received an e-mail the day before this meeting from Officers at Somerset Council with a list they are going to recommend to the Asset Working Group, so would

suggest this item be deferred when the updated information has been received.
The Chair agreed to defer this item.

2025/46 **Date of next meeting**
The next meeting of the A&E Committee will be on **Tuesday 9th December 2025** in The Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard TA20 1PP commencing at 7pm.

There being no other business the Chair thanked all for attending the meeting. The meeting closed at 19.55

Signed: Date:

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Present: Councillors; Baker (Chair), Bates, Bulmer, Eggins, Hussey, A Kenton, J Kenton O'Brien, Richter and Shortland

In Attendance: Chief Executive & Town Clerk (CE&TC) David Bell and Operations Manager Kevin Dyer

Public Participation Time

Section 1 – Standing Items

2025/47 **Apologies for Absence**
Apologies were received from Cllrs: Hassan & Williams.
Personal
Apologies were unanimously accepted.

2025/48 **Declarations of Interest**
There were no declarations of interest made

2025/49 **Committee Meeting Minutes**
Consideration of minutes was deferred as some councillors stated they hadn't been able to look at them in advance of the meeting.

Section 2 – Items To Note

2025/50 **Chief Executive & Town Clerk Updates**.

a) Budget Planning – Chief Executive & Town Clerk explained that only agreed projects would be taken forward into the budget

b) Staffing Updates – Sickness and vacancies were taken into account by the HR Committee

c) Guildhall Operational Hours – Christmas Opening Hours – Staff leave, statutory days and cover have been taken into account

2025/51 **Operations Updates**
An update on current actions was provided by the Operations Manager & noted by the committee

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2025/52 **Events Update**
Committee noted the Events report

2025/53 **To Resolve To Exclude Members Of The Press And Public**

As certain items are expected to include the consideration of exempt information Full Council is, therefore, recommended to resolve "That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during the discussion of the matters referred to in the items listed below, on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in the respective paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information".

Proposed: Cllr Bulmer Seconded: Cllr Bates

Resolved To Exclude Members Of The Press And Public

Section 3 – Confidential Items For Decision

2025/54 **Guildhall Hire Charges**

Proposed: Cllr Baker Seconded: Cllr Bates
For: 6 Abstain: 1 Against: 1

Resolved: To a) set up a Task & Finish group to review the Guildhall hire charges, b) consider the policy for the hire of the Guildhall.

2025/55 **Date of next meeting**
The next meeting of the A&E Committee will be on **Tuesday 9th December 2025** in The Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard TA20 1PP commencing at 7pm.

The Chair thanked all for attending the meeting. The meeting closed at 21.10.

Signed: Date:

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In Attendance: Chief Executive & Town Clerk (CE&TC) David Bell and Operations Manager Kevin Dyer

Public Participation Time

Section 1 – Standing Items

2025/56 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs: Hassan, Hussey, A Kenton, J Kenton, Richter Shortland and Williams

Apologies were unanimously accepted.

2025/57 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made

2025/58 Committee Meeting Minutes

Committee noted the 11th November Amenities & Events minutes would appear on the January agenda.

The Committee chair did not wish to take decisions despite the meeting being quorate

Section 2 – Items To Note

2025/59 Operations Update.

Committee notes the oral updates received from the Operations Manager on the following:

a) Updates on all projects

i) Jocelyn Park Changing Rooms

ii) Amenities Staff Mess Room

b) There is subsidence at the older part of Zembard Lane Cemetery. This will be kept under surveillance and committee will be provided with updates as necessary

c) Ashcroft Play Park

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i) Maintenance of fencing and provision of a new gateway will be provided as appropriate

ii) Following inspections of the wooden climbing frame Officers are concerned with the integrity of the structure. It was agreed this would be removed as soon as possible.

iii) Maintenance of the pathway around Ashcroft Play Park will take place early in the New Year.

d) Playground Report external Audit

e) Allotment Car Park and security issues – The Operations Manager is progressing these matters.

2025/60 **Events Updates**
Committee noted the Events report

Section 3 –Items For Decision

2025/61 **Removal Of Sandpit At Jocelyn Park**.
Committee were asked to consider the removal of the sandpit at Jocelyn Park due to the level of hazardous waste.

Proposed: Cllr Baker Seconded: Cllr Eggins
Unanimous

Resolved Agree the removal of the sandpit at Jocelyn Park.

2025/62 **Resurfacing Of Skate Park**
Committee asked this be deferred and raised at the December Full Council meeting so that spend could be agreed.

2025/63 **To Resolve To Exclude Members Of The Press And Public**

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Proposed: Cllr Bulmer Seconded: Cllr Eggins
Unanimous

Resolved To Exclude Members Of The Press And Public

2025/64 **Guildhall Hire Charges**

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It was noted that a Task and Finish Group had met and drawn up some proposals which required further work and need to be brought back to this Committee at a future meeting.

2025/65 **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the A&E Committee will be on **Tuesday 13th January 2026** in The Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard TA20 1PP commencing at 7pm.

The Chair thanked all for attending the meeting. The meeting closed at 20.03

Signed: Date:

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