Chard Town Council

THE GUILDHALL, FORE STREET, CHARD, SOMERSET TA20 1PP
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Mayor: Cllr Victoria Bates **Chief Executive & Town Clerk David Bell**

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held in the Auditorium at the Guildhall, Chard on Tuesday 19th May 2025 commencing at 19:00

Cllr Victoria Bates, Mayor of Chard, chaired the meeting.

PRESENT: 21 members of the public; The Mayor Victoria Bates, 9 other councilors, Chief Executive & Town Clerk, Democratic Services Officer, Events Officer and the Chard Town Cryer were in attendance.

MINUTES:

1. **Welcome and Introduction from the Mayor Cllr Victoria Bates**
   The Mayor welcomed everyone to the 2025 Chard Annual Town's Meeting.

2. **Minutes**
   The minutes from the Annual Town's meeting May 28th 2024 were agreed as an accurate account by a show of hands from members of the public.

3. **Annual Report – A brief overview by the Mayor and Chief Executive & Town Clerk**

a) Mayor's Overview - Summary:

The Mayor acknowledged the last year had not been without challenges however, in the latter part of 2024/25, was pleased to report there have been demonstrable changes for the better both 'upfront and behind the scenes'.

The Mayor noted the significant contributions made by the new Chief Executive & Town Clerk since starting, thanked the staff for 'upping their corporate game and further developing the services' and thanked her fellow councillors for 'pulling together to work for the community'. Finally,

The Mayor thanked those organisations for rising to the challenge of working with Chard Town Council and playing their part part in fostering new relationships, a commitment given by the new Town Clerk and wholeheartedly endorsed by the Council.

Included in Mayors highlights of the year was the fact Card Town Council awarded 10 Community Grant recipients in the last Council year, the highest ever. Representatives of six were in attendance and expressed their thanks for the funds received and provided an overview of how the grants had made a difference.

b) Chief Executive & Town Clerk's Report - Summary:

The Chief Executive Town Clerk's made the following key statement in his report:

We are planning for the future but still dealing with matters from the past. We are breaking new ground, consolidating what is good, focusing down on where improvements are needed and the overall goal is to build a better Chard Town Council. In so doing we are helping our community to build a better Chard. Talk Chard up, not down ***!***

Other core points made by The Chief Executive & Clerk in his report were:

- Acknowledgment of the Public Gallery for their questions and expressing thanks for listening to the answers he provided,
- Confirmation of his style of Leadership being one of providing 'clarity not control',
- An ambitious programme of work for the future that aspires to include;
    - The development of Council Strategy
    - Working with other agencies and organisations to identify needs within Chard
    - Take on non-statutory public facing services
    - Improving our council and community relationship

For details of the Mayor & Chief Executive & Town Clerk's Report see: **Chard Town Council 2024/2025 Annual Town Report**

https://chard.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/Chard-Town-Council-Annual-Towns-Report-2024-2025.pdf

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4. Presentation: Local Neighbourhood Policing

Beatrice Gane Neighborhood Police Officer explained the geographical area they cover and gave an overview of the Neighbourhood Police Teams role by providing the following information:

The work of the Local Neighbourhood Policing directed by 6 'core pillars':

The current Government is committed to neighbourhood policing work which means this year instead of the Neighbourhood Policing Team being disbanded over the Summer months to support other police work, this year they will remain in their core role.

Key 'highlights' achievements from the last year;

- Two drug warrants were issued – this being a large piece of work working with CID and the courts,
- Responsible for the closure of three properties known for illicit use of drugs and anti-social behavior. This work was undertaken in partnership with Abri and Stonewater Housing,
- Successful imprisonment of three prolific shoplifters who were stealing significant amounts,
- Injunction on another identified shoplifter specifically to prevent entering shops, preventing financial loss to the shop keepers.

Current areas of focus are:

- Drugs
- Youth provision

To conclude, Beatrice empahsised that reporting incidents to the police is key. If it was an incident unfolding then call 101 (unless it was an emergency) however, the majority of could be reported via the online facility which was very easy to use. The data from reported incidents help the police to understand the gravity and regularity of offences and this will influence priorities and use of resources. Reporting helps build intelligence. Please report multiple times as many times as witnessed. Reporting can be anonymous.

5. Presentation: Chard Community Plan Steering Group

A lively and informative presentation was delivered by members of Community Plan Steering Group highlighting the developments since the Chard Town Community Plan formerly came to end in June 2023 and the aspirations for future developments.

CTC Town & Parish Annual Meeting 202

Public Questions

A member of the public asked the following question:

Why were there no Award celebrations as there have been in previous years?

The Mayor replied this was due to some of the challenges experienced towards the later part of the year and apologized, assuring those in attendance that next year the award ceremonies would be re-instated.

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Cllr Bulmer expressed thanks from himself and on behalf of his fellow Councillors and staff for the Mayor's contribution during her tenure as Mayor.

The Mayor thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 20:15 and light refreshments were served.

MAYOR: **DATE:**

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