Chard Town Council

The Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard. TA20 1PP
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Mayor: Cllr Victoria Bates
Chief Executive & Town Clerk David Bell

MINUTES

Chard Town **Full Council** meeting held in the Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard, TA20 1PP on **Monday 23rd June 2025** commencing at 19:00pm.

Councillors Present: Councillors: Baker, Bates, Bulmer, Hussey, O'Brien & Williams.

Officers Present: Chief Executive & Town Clerk, David Bell; Operations Manager, Kevin Dyer; Beverley Newman Democratic Service Officer.

Public Participation Time
There were 8 members of the public present. No questions or comments were received.

Somerset Councillor Reports
Council received updates from Unitary Councillors: Jason Baker

Section 1 Standing Items:

2025/55 **Apologies for Absence**
Council received apologies from the following Councillors;
Crook, Eggins, Hassan, A Kenton, J Kenton, Shortland, Richter, Watson

Proposed: Councillor Bulmer Seconded: Councillor Williams
Unanimous

Resolved: For Council to formerly accept the apologies declared.

2025/56 **Declarations of Interest**
The following declarations were made:

- Councillor Baker declared an interest in agenda items relating to Bath Street Toilets. This building is currently owned by Somerset County Council. Cllr Baker is also a Unitary Cllr.
- Councillor O'Brien declared an interest in agenda items relating to Youth Provision. Cllr O'Brien is currently the Chair for CYAC.

2025/57 **Council Meeting Minutes**
A Cllr stated the minutes 12th May should not be accepted due to a number of things, one was the incorrect wording of agenda item 2025/30: 'Flooding in Chard – Funding Support'

A Cllr stated that council business was being held up due to their untimely completion and suggested that all outstanding minutes be brought to an Extraordinary Full Council meeting so they could be ratified and all recommendations from other Committees could be progressed.

2025/58 **Financial Checks**

i) Reconciliation Of Bank Account

Full Council noted. No proposal to resolve was made.

ii) Payments Check

- To note the payment list for April 25 (Appendix 2) and **resolve** to approve
- To note the payment list for May 25 (Appendix 3) and **resolve** to approve
- To note the petty cash payment list for April 25 (Appendix 4) and **resolved** to approve
- To note the petty cash payment list for May 25 (Appendix 5) and **resolve** to approve
- To note payments and invoices have been checked by Councillors who are Chard Town Council bank signatories
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For all the above: Full Council noted. No proposal to resolve was made

iii) Budget Report

Committee noted the report.

iv) Reserve

This item was deferred. Officers were requested to identify a previous resolution that shows Council agreed to the transfer of £6,000 from Ear Marked Reserves (EMR) for 'Play Equipment'

Section 2 Items To Note

2025/59 **Mayors Updates & Announcements**

The Mayor provided updates on her (and Deputy Mayor) recent engagements and activities.

The Mayor announced the recent resignation of Cllr Webb.

2025/60 **Chief Executive & Town Clerk Updates.**

i. **Youth Provision In Chard - Update**
The Steering Group was formed and usually meets on a weekly basis. An update was given later on this meeting.

ii. **Electoral Review of Somerset Council: Draft Recommendations**
Councillors were asked to note the documents contained, consult with their electorate on this recent communication and comment to Somerset Council if appropriate.

iii. **Councillor Surgeries 2025/26**
A proposed timetable for Councillor Surgeries was provided. Councillors were asked to make alternative arrangements with fellow Councillors should the dates appointed be unsuitable. It was noted Cllr Webb's allotted surgery date would need to be filled and requested the Councillor Surgery Timetable be published as soon as possible.

iv. **Review Of Policies & Associated Documents**
A timetable for review of policies and associated documents is commencing and will continue in coming months with items brought to Committee or working Group if required, and Full Council for approval.

Proposed: Councillor Bates Seconded: Councillor Baker
Unanimous

Resolved: For Council to agree a Working Group at the next Full Council meeting to work in partnership with Officer on this project.

v. **Road Safety In Chard Wider Area**
Several complaints and observations have been made about perceived vehicle and pedestrian conflict along with general speeding in the wider Chard area. Whilst this could be considered a Somerset Council Highway Authority or Police matter, the Town Council can implement some types of schemes to calm traffic. To date, some basic information such as covert radar has been undertaken along with personal injury incident data analysis, discussions with Somerset Road Safety and the Police. When a preliminary overview of the situation has been completed, it is the intention to bring an item to Full Council.

vi. **Complaints Procedure**
A review of the Complaints Procedure has commenced and will be reported to Full Council in due course. There is a need for any organisation to understand the background to and resolve complaints and, since the escalation of social media, this is increasing in importance.

vii. **Bath Street Toilets**
An update on Bath Street toilets was given.

viii. **Review Of The Scheme Of Delegation And Amendments to Standing Orders**
Reviews of these two documents have commenced and will be reported to Full Council for approval in due course.

2025/61 **Confirmation Of Arrangements For Insurance Cover In Respect Of All Insured Risks.**
Committee noted the insurance had been reviewed renewed.

Section 3 – Items For Discussion & Decision

2026/62 **Selection Of The Grants Sub-Committee**
Council ratified the membership of the Finance & Audit Grants Sub-Committee, as agreed at the Finance & Audit meeting (23rd June 2025). Cllr Hussey was invited to the sub-committee and accepted. Finance & Audit Grant sub-committee now comprises:

- Cllr Baker
- Cllr Bates
- Cllr Bulmer
- Cllr Hussey
- Cllr O'Brien
- Cllr Williams

2025/63 **Internal Audit Report**
Proposed: Councillor Baker Seconded: Councillor Hussey
Unanimous

Resolved: Council considered and adopted the Internal Report while noting and acknowledging the areas stipulated for improvement within the report.

2025/64 **Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) 2024/25 & Accounting Statements 2024/25**

i) Annual Governance Statement
Council considered Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement.
The statement was signed by the Mayor and the Chief Executive & Town Clerk.

ii) Accounting Statements
Proposed: Councillor Baker Seconded: Councillor Bulmer
Unanimous

Resolved: Council reviewed and completed Section 2 of the Annual Governance Statement. The statement was signed by the Mayor and the Chief Executive & Town Clerk. (currently acting RFO)

iii) AGAR Internal Audit Section.
Proposed: Councillor Baker Seconded: Councillor Hussey
Unanimous

Resolved: Council reviewed the Internal Audit section of the AGAR

iv) Completion the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) is required to be publicly displayed. By no later than 1st July 2025
Council noted this requirement.

2025/65 **Annual Subscriptions Renewals:**
Proposed: Councillor Bulmer Seconded: Councillor Hussey
Unanimous

Resolved: Council questioned some subscriptions but agreed the following annual subscriptions.

Organisation	Cost
Somerset Association of Local Councils	£1,816.40
Guild of Macebearers & The Ancient and Honourable Guild of Town Criers	£40
Grants Online	£125.00
Rural Market Towns	£172.62
National Association British Market Authorities (NABMA)	£484.00
Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)	£55.00
Zoom	12.99 p.m.

2025/66 **Increasing Concern Over Alleged Lack Of Highway Maintenance On Public Highway Roads In The Chard Area**
Proposed: Councillor Bulmer Seconded: Councillor Baker
Unanimous
Resolved: Council agreed for a letter to be sent to Somerset Council on behalf of Chard Town Council, to include evidence, written by Chief Executive & Town Clerk in collaboration with Cllr Bulmer, inviting a Chard County Councillor to contribute.

2025/67 **Youth Provision In Chard – Reports From The Steering Group**

Proposed: Councillor Baker Seconded: Councillor Bulmer
Unanimous

Resolved: Council agreed to;
a) The balance of the grant be ringfenced for "Youth Provision In Chard"

b) The Chief Executive & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Steering Group, be authorised to spend a maximum of £10,000 (out of the 40k grant), as a partnership contribution to facilitate summer provision – format yet to be decided. This equates to the portion of the original grant that would have been spent over the summer period.

c) Continue negotiations with Somerset Council regarding the youth club building and to bring a recommendation back to Full Council once a suitable agreement has been gained and the surveyors report has been completed.

d) Delegate to the Chair of the Steering Group and Chief Executive & Town Clerk to progress discussions with Holyrood school with a view to employing a Youth Co-ordinator potentially using some of the budget available from the school project and for this person to be line managed by Holyrood School.

2025/68 **Bath Street Toilets**
Council noted the briefing paper provided.
Proposed: Councillor Baker Seconded: Councillor O'Brien
Unanimous

Resolved: Council agreed for the Chief Executive & Town Clerk to;

a) Enter into a Gentleman's Agreement (not a contract as explained in the body of the update), to open these facilities as soon as possible, on behalf of the Town Council, with Somerset Council.

b) To arrange for re-quotations for the opening, closing and cleaning and, if necessary, bring the financial matters back to Committee and/or Full Council where any previous agreed conditions and financial matters are not met.

c) To discuss with Somerset Council Officers the draft Heads of Terms and draft Lease and bring back to Full Council in due course.

d) As a result of further update as of today, (23rd June 2025), having attempted to gain quotations to complete a Deep Clean, 11 separate companies were contacted, only 1 response was received, at a value of £1,950.
Agreed to accept this quotation and proceed with the work.

2025/69 **Date of next Meeting**

Council noted the next Full Chard Town Council meeting is Monday 28th July 2025. Council also noted the additional *Informal* meeting Monday 7th July. Both meetings will be held at The Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard TA20 1PP and commence at 7pm

Proposed: Councillor Baker Seconded: Councillor Williams
Unanimous

Resolved: For Council to hold an Extraordinary Full Council meeting in relation to Youth Council provision and to start at 18.30.

There being no other business, The Mayor thanked all those in attendance for coming and closed the meeting at 21.15 pm

SIGNED:

DATE: 19/10/25