Chard Town Council
The Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard, Somerset TA20 1PP
01460 239567 www.chard.gov.uk
Mayor: Cllr Tricia O'Brien | Town Clerk: Stephen Hill

Full Council

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the **Full Council** held on **Monday 21st September 2026** at 19:00 in the Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard TA20 1PP.

Councillors present: Cllr Baker, Cllr Bates, Cllr Bulmer, Cllr Eggins, Cllr Hussey, Cllr A Kenton, Cllr J Kenton, Cllr O'Brien, Cllr Richter and Cllr Tribble

Also In Attendance: Stephen Hill (Town Clerk and RFO), Ingrid Edgington (Stakeholder Liaison Officer), Beverely Newman (Democratic Services Officer) and Tim Bickham (Events Officer). There were 8 members of public present.

Section 1 – Standing Items

2026/146 **Apologies for Absence and Acceptance**
Apologies were received from Cllr Shortland.

2026/147 **Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**
Cllr J. Kenton declared a pecuniary interest in item 2026/173 (Bar Franchise)
Cllr A. Kenton declared a pecuniary interest in item 2026/173 (Bar Franchise)
Cllr O'Brien declared a pecuniary interest in item 2026/173 (Bar Franchise)
Cllr Baker declared a personal interest in item 2026/157 (Report from The Hive) and item 2026/173 (Bar Franchise)

2026/148 **Public participation**
Questions were asked on item 2026/157 (Report from The Hive) finances and emails were received re item 2026/165 (Vexatious Complainant Policy).

2026/149 **Council Meeting Minutes**
Council RESOLVED to approve the minutes of 18th May 2026 (amended) and 17th August 2026
Proposed: Cllr Bates Seconded Cllr Eggins
For: 10 Against: 0 Abstain: 0

2026/150 **Committee Previous Meeting Minutes**
Council **NOTED** the draft minutes of:

- Amenities & Events Committee 11th August 2026
- Planning & Highways Committee 17th August 2026
- HR Committee 7th September 2026

2026/151 **Accounts**

Council **NOTED** the August 2026 payments list.

2026/152 **Reports from Somerset Council Councillors**

Council **NOTED** the report from Somerset Council Chard Ward Councillor Baker (as included in the agenda).
No other reports were given.

2026/153 **Reports from Chard Town Council Members on Outside Bodies**

Council **NOTED** reports from Town Councillors on Outside Bodies. Reports were provided only where there were matters to report since the previous Full Council Meeting.

Allotment Association Forum – There had been reports of minor thefts and issues with water supply. Hedgerows are beginning to make a recovery from the dry spell. A recent meeting was attended with 9 members present, as well as Cllr Baker and a representative of Wessex Water.

The Hive Youth Centre – Cllr O'Brien had attended their recent meeting. A full report will follow.

Town Twinning – Cllr Bates reported that an arts project is currently being created with local artist Vera Courinha Marques. The AGM takes place 29th October. Anyone is welcome.

Chard Community Hub – Informal drop-ins have been hosted, school. summer holiday activities have been well attended. Wellbeing support workshops have taken place. Funding for food has been secured for 2026/2027. New Directors have joined, as have new volunteers. An emergency briefing has taken place.

Section 2 – Items to Note

2026/154 **Mayor's Updates and Announcements**

Council **NOTED** the Mayor's Update and Announcements. The Mayor mentioned some of her recent engagements, during a busy period:

- Meeting with the Community Hub
- Meeting with the new Manager of Weatherspoon's
- The League of Friends of Chard Hospital AGM
- Meeting with Jubilee Homes
- The official opening of the Street Fair

- The annual McMillan Coffee morning at the Guildhall
- Heritage Day at the Guildhall
- Forefront Community Centre's 20th Anniversary Celebration
- The launch of Chard.Info

While the Deputy Mayor had also attended the opening of a new gym – OJ Gyms.

The Mayor read out an apology on behalf of the council to the Democratic Services Officer, who then provided a response to the apology.

Council **NOTED** the apology.

2026/155 **Town Clerk & RFO Report**

Council **NOTED** the report.

2026/156 **Grants**

Council **NOTED** the grants policy 26/27.

Section 3 – Items For Discussion & Decision

2026/157 **Report from the Hive**

Mr Baker gave an update and presented the report included in the agenda. A video of the Hive's recent achievements was shown.
There were no comments. This report is required by and to demonstrate compliance with the Council/Hive Service Level Agreement.

Council RESOLVED to accept the report.

Proposed: Cllr Bates Seconded Cllr A. Kenton
9: 0: 1

2026/158 **Young People Working Group**

Council RESOLVED to approve establishing a Young People Working Group to include members of Chard Town Council Youth Council: Cllrs Baker, Hussey, Richter & Tribble

Proposed: Cllr J. Kenton Seconded Cllr Bates
10: 0: 0

2026/159 **Chard Partnership: Memorandum of Understanding**

Council RESOLVED (on the Recommendation of A&E Committee), to;

a. be part of the Chard Partnership; and
b. sign the Memorandum of Understanding.

Proposed: Cllr Bates Seconded Cllr Eggins
10: 0: 0

2026/160 **Chard Community Safety Strategy and Action Plan**

Council RESOLVED (on the Recommendation of A&E Committee) to approve the Chard Community Safety Strategy and Action Plan.

Proposed: Cllr Baker Seconded Cllr Eggins
10: 0:0

2026/161 Council Strategy

The Town Clerk and RFO answered questions and highlighted key sections of the strategy.

Council RESOLVED to approve the Council Strategy to May 2027

Proposed: Cllr Bates Seconded Cllr Bulmer

10: 0: 0

2026/162 Elections May 2027 Campaign

Council RESOLVED to approve the launch of a campaign promoting the "all out" Elections May 2027, specifically to encourage candidates through advertisements, promotions and preparatory meetings.

Proposed: Cllr J. Kenton Seconded Cllr Richter

10: 0: 0

2026/163 HR Policies

Council RESOLVED (on the Recommendation of HR Committee) to approve the following policies:

- **Recruitment & Selection**
- **Training and Development**
- **Lone Working**
- **Home Working**

Proposed: Cllr Bates Seconded: Cllr Eggins

10: 0: 0

2026/164 Corporate Policies

Council RESOLVED (on the recommendation from the Policy Review Working Group) to approve the following policies:

- **Standing Orders**
- **Financial Regulations**
- **Scheme of Delegation**
- **Corporate Risk Management**
- **Publication Scheme**
- **Corporate Risk Assessments, to include:**
    - **a) Assets and Liabilities Internal Audit**
    - **b) Finance & Audit**
    - **c) Governance Audit**
    - **d) People Management**

Proposed: Cllr Baker Seconded: Cllr Eggins

10: 0: 0

2026/165 Vexatious Complainant Policy

A motion to defer this item was put forward.

Proposed: Cllr Eggins Seconded: Cllr Bulmer

3: 6: 1

This motion failed. Members then voted on the original proposal.

Council RESOLVED to adopt the Vexatious Complainant Policy.
Proposed: Cllr Bates Seconded Cllr J. Kenton
6: 3: 1

2026/166 Representatives on Outside Bodies
Council RESOLVED to approve the role of Council representative on Outside Bodies.
Proposed: Cllr Baker Seconded Cllr Bates
10: 0: 0

2026/167 Devolution
Council RESOLVED (on the Recommendation of A&E Committee) to:

a. **Delegate implementation of Devolution to the Amenities and Events Committee; and**
b. **that advance preparatory work (for asset Devolution) is undertaken now with Somerset Council eg due diligence and legal work.**

Proposed: Cllr Eggins Seconded Cllr Bulmer
8: 1: 1

2026/168 Risk Management
a. **Council RESOLVED to appoint a Risk Management Working Group**
Proposed: Cllr Bates Seconded Cllr Bulmer
10: 0: 0

b. **Council RESOLVED to appoint Cllrs Bulmer, Bates and Eggins to be on the Working Group**
Proposed: Cllr J. Kenton Seconded Cllr Bulmer
8: 0: 2

2026/169 Exempt Business
Council RESOLVED to exclude the press and public in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 as certain items may include the consideration of exempt information as defined in the respective paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.
Proposed: Cllr Bates Seconded Cllr J. Kenton
10: 0: 0

Section 4: Confidential

2026/170 **Draft Staff Re-organisation Proposal**

Cllr Bates summarised the discussions that took place at the recent Extraordinary HR Committee meeting held 7th September 2026.

Cllr Tribble left the meeting at 20:36

Council RESOLVED (On the Recommendation of HR Committee), to implement option B of the staff structure document

Proposed: Cllr J. Kenton Seconded Cllr Bates

6: 3: 0

Cllr Tribble re-joined the meeting at 20:40

Council RESOLVED (On the Recommendation of HR Committee), to:

a. **approve the proposed staff re-organisation and;**
b. **Delegate implementation to the Town Clerk & RFO (in consultation with the Chairman & Deputy of HR Committee and Chairman & Deputy of Council); with a report back to Full Council once alignment of people to post is completed.**

Proposed: Cllr J. Kenton Seconded Cllr Bates

9: 0: 1

2026/171 **Health & Safety and Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)**

Council RESOLVED (on the Recommendation of HR Committee), to appoint a consultant to be commissioned to provide H&S advice and an EAP.

Proposed: Cllr J. Kenton Seconded Cllr Baker

10: 0: 0

2026/172 **Website Accessibility**

Council RESOLVED to appoint a consultant to be commissioned to undertake website accessibility compliance report and undertake revisions.

Proposed: Cllr Baker Seconded Cllr Richter

10: 0: 0

2026/173 **Bar Franchise**

Council **NOTED** an update from the Town Clerk & RFO that an agreement with the current franchisee was signed on 19th September 2026, which will take effect until 31st December 2026, with a new franchise to commence 1st January 2027. Members thanked the Clerk for making these arrangements.

2026/174 **Date of next meeting**

The next Full Chard Town Council meeting is **Monday 19th October 2026**. Town Hall, Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard TA20 1PP and at 19:00.

The Chair thanked all for attending the meeting. The meeting closed at 20:45.

Signed: Tricia O'Brien Date: 19/12/2006