Chard Town Council

The Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard. TA20 1PP
01460 239567 chard.gov.uk
Mayor: Cllr Victoria Bates 2025/26 Cllr Tricia O'Brien 2026/27
Chief Executive & Town Clerk: David Bell

MINUTES

Chard Town Council Annual Council Meeting held in Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard, TA20 1PP on **Monday 18th May 2026** commencing at 19:00.

Councillors Present: Cllr Baker, Cllr Bates, Cllr Bulmer, Cllr Eggins, Cllr Hussey, Cllr A Kenton, Cllr J Kenton, Cllr O'Brien, Cllr Richter, Cllr Shortland, Cllr Tribble, Cllr Williams.

Officers Present:
David Bell (Chief Executive & Town Clerk), Tim Bickham (Events Officer)

Public Participation
26 members of the public attended

Report from Outgoing Mayor
The Mayor reflected on the previous two years, acknowledging the support of her Mace Bearer and Town Crier. She also commented on the funds raised for her charities – the Scouting Movement and Newsline Chard & Ilminster – which she was pleased to be able to support.

2026/72 **Election of Mayor for 2026/27**
Proposed: Cllr J Kenton Seconded: Cllr V Bates
For: 12 Abstain: 0
Unanimous

Resolved: For Council to appoint Cllr O'Brien as Mayor for 2026/27

2026/73 **The Mayor made the following appointments**
The Mayor announced her Consorts as David O'Brien and her daughter, Paige.

2026/74 **Mayor's Announcements**
The Mayor announced she will be supporting The Hive Young People's Centre and Chard Men's Shed as her charities.
A discussion with a Chaplin is to follow at a later date.

2026/75 **Election of Deputy Mayor**
Proposed: Cllr O'Brien Seconded: Cllr Baker
For: 12 Abstain: 0
Unanimous
Resolved: For Council to appoint Cllr Hussey as Deputy Mayor for 2026/27

Section 1 Standing Items:

2026/76 **Apologies for Absence**

Council received apologies from the following Councillors: Cllr Crook, Cllr Watson and Cllr Hassan.

Unanimous

Resolved: For Council to accept the apologies received.

2026/77 **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations were made

2026/78 **Full Council Meeting Minutes**

Council noted the Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting 2025.

Section 3 – Items For Decision

2026/79 **Standing Committees and Sub Committees – Committee Structure**

To consider and adopt a committee structure in accordance with Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation:

Proposed: Cllr J Kenton Seconded: Cllr Baker
For: 12 Abstain: 0
Unanimous

Resolved: To adopt a committee structure in accordance with Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation and further review after start of the new Town Clerk.

2026/80 **Appointment of Members to Standing Committees in the Agreed Structure**

To appoint the following Members to the Committees as shown below:

- Finance & Audit Committee (minimum of 4 Councillors);
  Cllr Bulmer, Cllr Tribble, Cllr Baker, Cllr Williams, Cllr Kenton, Cllr J Kenton, Cllr Eggins
- Amenities and Events Committee (minimum of 5 Councillors);
  Cllr Richter, Cllr Bulmer, Cllr Tribble, Cllr Eggins, Cllr Bates, Cllr Shortland, Cllr Baker, Cllr Kenton, Cllr J Kenton
- HR Committee (maximum of 5 Councillors);
  Cllr Richter, Cllr Bulmer, Cllr Shortland, Cllr J Kenton, Cllr Bates,
- Planning & Highways Committee (minimum of 5 Councillors);
  Cllr Richter, Cllr Bulmer, Cllr Eggins, Cllr Tribble, Cllr Bates
- Appeals Committee (minimum of 4 Councillors):
  Cllr Baker, Cllr Williams, Cllr Kenton, Cllr Eggins

Proposed: Cllr J Kenton Seconded: Cllr Baker

TOB

Unanimous

Resolved: To appoint the above Councillors to the listed Committees.

2026/81 Appointment of Chairs to Standing Committees in the Agreed Structure

- Finance & Audit Committee; Cllr Williams
- Amenities and Events Committee; Cllr Baker
- HR Committee; Cllr Bates
- Planning & Highways Committee; Cllr Bulmer
- Appeals Committee; Cllr Williams

Proposed: Cllr J Kenton Seconded: Cllr Baker
Unanimous

Resolved: To appoint the Chairs to the agreed Committees.

2026/82 Appointment of Vice Chairs to Standing Committees in The Agreed Structure

- Finance & Audit Committee; Cllr A Kenton
- Amenities and Events Committee; Cllr Shortland
- HR Committee; Cllr J Kenton
- Planning & Highways Committee; Cllr Eggins
- Appeals Committee; Cllr Baker

Proposed: Cllr Eggins Seconded: Cllr Bates
Unanimous

Resolved: To appoint the Vice-Chairs to the listed Committees.

2026/83 Appointment of New Committees
To consider whether any new Committees need to be to set up to carry out Council business.

It was suggested that no new committees should be considered at this point on account of a new Clerk commencing post in July and settling in to the role.
A question was asked with regard to the setup of the Grants subcommittee and how members are appointed. The Clerk confirmed this to be appointed by Finance and Audit Committee and taken back to Full Council.

Proposed: Cllr Baker Seconded: Cllr Williams

Unanimous

Resolved: To operate the existing structure pending review by the new Town Clerk and Full Council in due course.

2026/84 Representatives on External Bodies

To review Council representation on or work with external bodies, including number of representatives, and to agree arrangements/frequency for reporting back:

Organisation	2025/26	2026/27
Chard Museum	Councillors: Hassan & J. Kenton	Cllr J Kenton
Somerset Association of Local Councils	Cllr Bates	Cllr O'Brien
Town Team	Councillors: A Kenton & Hassan	Withdrawn
Clare House	Councillor O'Brien	Cllr Shortland
Allotment Association Forum	Councillors Baker & Hassan	Cllr Baker, Cllr Eggins
Chard Area Resilience Group (CARG)	Councillor Hussey	Cllr Hussey, Cllr Eggins
Youth Council	Councillors: Baker, Hussey & Richter	Cllr Baker, Cllr Hussey, Cllr Richter, Cllr Tribble
The Hive, Youth Provision	Councillor O'Brien, Town Clerk	Cllr O'Brien, Town Clerk
Chard-Helmstedt Friendship Association	Cllr Bates (in her role as Mayor)	Cllr Bates

2026/85 Schedule of Meetings

Noted a schedule of meetings for the next Council year will be drafted, circulated and bought to the next Full Council meeting proposed for June 2026.

2026/86 Start Date of The New Town Clerk

The new Town Clerk (Stephen Hill) is to start at the Guildhall on 6th July 2026. The fixed term contract for the current Chief Executive & Town Clerk (David Bell) ends on 23rd June 2026.

Recommended:
That the Mayor be authorised to seek, by mutual agreement, an extension of the contract with the existing Town Clerk to run until 5th July 2026 inclusive for continuity.

Proposed : Cllr J Kenton Seconded: Cllr Bulmer
Unanimous

Resolved: Mayor and Chair of HR to negotiate agreement re the extension of the contract for the current Town Clerk to 5th July 2026 inclusive.

2026/87 Changing Facilities – Jocelyn Park

Resolved: Council APPROVED a) the transfer of £15,000 from the EMR to enable repairs to be carried out and supervised. The Chief Executive & Town Clerk to seek quotations and, if within budget, to progress the repairs without delay. b) the transfer of £3,000 from the EMR to the budget line to enable the Chief Executive & Town Clerk to

seek written Tender Documents as soon as possible; and c) to start completed enquires for section 6 money, subject to obtaining 3 tenders.

Proposed: Cllr J. Kenton Seconded: Cllr Baker
Unanimous

2026/88 Annual Governance Accounting Return
Resolved: To consider and agree the response to Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement (signatures required from the Chairman and the Chief Executive & Town Clerk).

Proposed: Cllr Bates Seconded: Cllr Baker
For: 11 Abstained: 1

Resolved: To approve Section 2 of the Accounting Statements (signatures required from the Chairman and the Responsible Financial Officer).

Proposed: Cllr J. Kenton Seconded: Cllr Bates
Unanimous

2026/89 Date of Next Meeting
Council noted the next Full Chard Town Council meeting is Monday 22nd June 2026. To be held at The Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard TA20 1PP and commence at 7pm

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

Date: 21/9/2026 **Signed:**