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 19th October** at 19:00 in the Guildhall, Fore Street, Chard TA20 1PP.

Councillors present: Cllr Baker, Cllr Bates, Cllr Crook, Cllr Hussey, Cllr A Kenton, Cllr J Kenton, Cllr O'Brien, Cllr Richter and Cllr Tribble and Cllr Watson.

Also In Attendance: Stephen Hill (Town Clerk and RFO), Ingrid Edgington (Stakeholder Liaison Officer), and Tim Bickham (Events Officer).
There were 7 members of public present.

Section 1 – Standing Items

2026/182 **Apologies for Absence and Acceptance**
Apologies were received from Cllr Shortland and Cllr Bulmer.

2026/183 **Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**
Cllr J. Kenton declared a personal interest in item 2026/196 (Guildhall Free Events)
Cllr Baker declared a personal interest in item 2026/196 (Guildhall Free Events)

Cllr Tribble joined the meeting at 19:02.

2026/184 **Public participation**
A member of public spoke of allegations made regarding Chard Carnival equipment, grant funding and bullying. Concerns raised regards conduct of a Councillor, alleged failures to declare business interests promptly, and past complaints of intimidation, calling for greater accountability and genuine adherence to the Nolan Principles of public life.

2026/185 **Council Meeting Minutes**
Council RESOLVED to approve the minutes of 21st September 2026.
Proposed: Cllr Bates Seconded Cllr Tribble
For: 7 Against: 0 Abstain: 3

2026/186 **Committee Previous Meeting Minutes**

Council **NOTED** the draft minutes of:

- Amenities & Events Committee 15th September 2026
- Planning & Highways Committee 21st September 2026

2026/187 **Accounts**

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

2026/188 **Reports from Somerset Council Councillors**

Council **NOTED** the report from Somerset Council Chard Ward Councillor Baker.

Council **NOTED** the report from Somerset Council Chard Ward Councillor Jenny Kenton.

Council **NOTED** the report Somerset Council Chard Ward Councillor Wale, which included updates on:

- New Finance Officer gave recent presentation and explained Somerset Council go result to entering "special measures", meaning anything other than provision of its statutory duties may stop. It is hoped a balanced budget will be achieved go into next year.
- Changes concerning planning will come into place next month. Any applications coming in under £9,000 will be decided by Officers.
- A new Local Plan Working Group has been established who are requesting more information on the relief road. Residents are urged to get in contact for more information on the local plan.
- Cllr J. Kenton explained that unitary councillors may not express a view on the relief road, as they can't otherwise sit on this group.

2026/189 **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.

Somerset Association of Local Councils

Cllr O'Brien mentioned she attended SALC awards event on 08/10/26 with the Town Clerk and Stakeholder Liaison Officer, which included some interesting workshops.

Chard Town Council Youth Council

Cllr Baker mentioned they are just looking to establish the first meeting of the new school year.

Town Twinning

Cllr Bates mentioned a recent meeting with Holyrood Academy, that the group have established a poetry event for 2027 and that an exchange will take place next year, with Chard being the host town.

The AGM will take place on 29th October at the Town Hall, Guildhall. Helmstedt have recently elected a new Mayor and it was felt that Mayor of Chard should compose a letter to their newly elected Mayor.

Chard Community Hub
Cllr Richter provided the Chard Community Hub Report October 2026

Section 2 – Items to Note

2026/190 **Mayor's Updates and Announcements**
The Mayor had reported she had attended the following since last month's announcements:

- Thorncombe St. Mary's CE Primary Academy to present their OPAL Platinum Award.
- Chard Carnival week, to include;
  - Beacon lighting
  - Opening the Fair with Chard Carnival Royalty
  - Children's Carnival and illuminated Carnival
- Manor Court School were awarded a trophy for the children's entry and Blitz in the evening
- Has Chard Got Talent took place on 17th October. The Mayor acknowledged thanks to all those that helped the success of the event.

2026/191 **Town Clerk & RFO Report**
Council **NOTED** the report.

2026/192 **Town Clerk & RFO Probation**
Council **NOTED** that the Town Clerk & RFO has satisfactorily completed his 3 months' probation period.

Section 3 – Items For Discussion & Decision

2026/193 **IT Policy**
Council RESOLVED to approve the IT Policy.
Proposed: Cllr Bates Seconded: Cllr Tribble
10: 0: 0

2026/194 **Corporate Policies**
Council RESOLVED to approve the following policies:

a) **Code of Conduct**
Proposed: Cllr J. Kenton Seconded: Cllr Hussey
10: 0: 0

b) **Social Media**
Proposed: Cllr Bates Seconded: Cllr Tribble
10: 0: 0

c) **Community Engagement**
Proposed: Cllr J. Kenton Seconded: Cllr Bates
10: 0: 0

d) **Retention and Disposal**
Proposed: Cllr Bates Seconded: Cllr Richter
9: 0: 1

e) **Redundancy**
Proposed: Cllr J. Kenton Seconded: Cllr Bates
10: 0: 0

Council **DEFERRED** the following policies:

f) Communications – Time frame under public questions to change (P.4) and the use of Councillor personal pages and social media to change (P.6).
g) Member and Officer Relations – There are various terms to change that do no apply to the town council.

2026/195 Great Mead Project

The Stakeholder Liaison Officer explained the projects background and benefits to the community. The funds required will be matched by the project.
It was felt amongst councillors present there is a lack of awareness of the project and they would like more information. There was a query as to how the ownership would work. It was also commented that other parks in Chard could benefit from being invested in.
Council **RESOLVED** on this basis they would defer this item to evaluate familiarisation.
Proposed: Cllr J. Kenton Seconded: Cllr Tribble
10: 0: 0

20:00 Cllrs J. Kenton and Baker left the meeting

2026/196 Guildhall Free Events

Council RESOLVED to approve the Recommendation (from the A&E Committee 13 October 2026) to provide free of charge use of the Guildhall for Carnival weekend events and Christmas lights; all other events/hiring of the Guildhall to be charged. Further, that at A&E 13 October 2026, the Mayor authorised for the Royal British Legion to use the foyer for the Poppy Appeal Launch with the cost to come from the Mayoral Allowance.

Proposed: Cllr Watson Seconded: Cllr Bates
8: 0: 0

20:03 Cllrs J. Kenton and Baker rejoined the meeting

2026/197 Exempt Business

Council RESOLVED that under section 1, Paragraph 2 of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for items of business in view of the likely disclosure of confidential matters about, information relating to an individual, and information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person, within the meaning of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (see the Local Government

(Access to Information) Act 1985, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

Proposed: Cllr Hussey Seconded Cllr Bates

10: 0: 0

Section 4: Confidential

2026/198 **Guildhall Stage and Lighting**

Councillors commented on how outdated the equipment was and that it makes the hire of the Guildhall less attractive to groups looking to put on a show/production. Furthermore, it would reduce the carbon footprint.

Council RESOLVED to upgrade the current Guildhall stage lighting at the recommendation of the A&E Committee 15th September 2026, and with budget £15k from the Earmarked Reserve £141k.

Proposed: Cllr Baker Seconded: Cllr Bates

10: 0: 0

2026/199 **Date of next meeting**

The next Full Chard Town Council meeting is **Monday 16th November 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 20:08.

Signed: T Brown Date: 16/11/2026