



Minutes of the proceedings of the **CHILTON TOWN COUNCIL MEETING** held at
Hutton House, Chilton at 6pm on Tuesday 14th January 2025

Present: -- **Chair** - Cllr. S. Sutherland (Mayor)

Cllrs: - D. Bright after agenda item 5, minute number FC118.0/24, E. Bruce,
V. Collinson, D. English, P. Herbert, J. Houlihan, K. Hornsby, S. Reece and M. Young

Town Clerk (TC) - Mrs. Joanne Dickinson

Member of the public- None

FC114.0/24- Apologies for Absence –County Councillor J. Cairns and Cllr P. Malpas

FC115.0/24- Declarations of Interest- Cllr Houlihan for agenda item 10, minute number FC123.0/24. All Councillors in their capacity as Trustees to the Miners Welfare Trust as part of the budget discussions for agenda item 12b, minute number FC125b.0/24. Cllr Sutherland for agenda item 11b, minute number FC124b.0/24.

FC116.0/24 - Member Dispensations- None received

FC117.0/24- Public Participation-

FC118.0/24 – Consider a Co-option Application for a Town Councillor Vacancy-

Mrs. Diane Bright had provided a completed application form which had been circulated to the councillors prior to the meeting. Mrs. Bright was given the opportunity to provide information about herself and reasons why she would like to be a Town Councillor. Members were given the opportunity to ask any questions.

Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED- Cllr Young resolved that under Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. Seconded by Cllr Herbert. All agreed.

RESOLVED- Cllr Reece proposed that the council accept the application from Mrs Diane Bright to be coopted onto the council. Seconded by Cllr Herbert. All agreed except Cllr Collinson, Cllr English and Cllr Young who abstained from the vote.

Mrs. Bright and the Town Clerk completed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form and Cllr Bright continued the rest of the meeting as a councillor.

FC119.0/24- Mayors Report- The following update was provided by the Mayor-

- Since we last met, I have attended the Christmas Tree light switch on. I'd like to thank staff, volunteers, local businesses, Chilton Academy, and the Junior Council. I'd like to make special thanks to those volunteers that dressed up to make the event more special for children.

- I've attended Bulb planting with junior council members in the Rushyford Drive area.
- Thank you to everyone that attended and made the Civic Carol service so special.
- I was proud to open the Scouts fair where I delivered the £115 to the Scouts group.
- The same day we opened Hutton House due to the storm and electricity cut. Thank you to Cllrs who supported through the weekend as we were able to support care home residents with hot water.
- I was welcomed to attend the School concert at Chilton Academy. The show was excellent.
- Christmas card competition was a difficult choice to make as there were so many incredible entries. Prizes for winners were presented at the School.
- Cllr Houlihan and I supported delivery of armoury Stones at Joes' Field to help protect the site from vehicular vandalism. I'd like to thank Alex Summerly the Quarry Manager at Thompsons of Prudhoe for arranging the 15 stones. The stones were delivered for free by Harry & Wayne from M Spence Surfacing in their grab wagons which was kindly received.
- Through the winter break I continued volunteering at Joes' Field with hope of promoting efforts. Litter remains an issue with 9 bags removed and evidence of several fires were discovered which I hope the Council will discuss.
- I attended Chilton First community litter pick of 2025. The volunteers braved the cold and hope to meet first Saturday of February at 10am.
- I'm seeking to give Friends of Chilton Academy monies from the mayor's charity. This will support children accessing events and hope members would support this.
- Thank you for your ongoing support and efforts.

Members accepted the report

FC120.0/24-

- a. **Minutes of Special Council Meeting held on 24th September 2024-**

RESOLVED- Cllr Bruce proposed the minutes be accepted as a true record. Seconded by Cllr Herbert. All agreed.

- b. **Chilton Town Council Meeting held on 12th November 2024-**

RESOLVED- Cllr Reece proposed the minutes be accepted as a true record. Seconded by Cllr English. All agreed.

- c. **Special Council Meeting held on 17th December 2024**

RESOLVED- Cllr Collinson proposed the minutes be accepted as a true record. Seconded by Cllr Bruce. All agreed.

FC121.0/24- Receive minutes of the following committee meetings-

- Allotments Committee Meeting held on 21st October 2024
- Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 22nd October 2024
- Community Committee Meeting held on 22nd October 2024
- Cemetery Committee Meeting held on 22nd October 2024

Members received the aforementioned minutes and Town Clerk was asked to include HR Committee Minutes

FC122.0/24-County Councillors Report- Councillor Cairns submitted apologies for the meeting due to illness and advised that she would try to send a report through by the end of this week/early next week.

FC123.0/24- Consider a request from a resident to ask permission to start Rhyme Time Sessions in Hutton House from February 2025 onwards-

Cllr Houlihan left the meeting during the discussions for this agenda item.

Members agreed that this would be a good addition to Chilton but expressed concerns about the damp within the room and how that may affect a group with children.

RESOLVED- Cllr Reece proposed the council agree to the group taking place in Hutton House in principle. Mrs. Houlihan to meet with Town Clerk and assess the room and see if suitable for the group in its current state. Seconded by Cllr Bright. All agreed.

Town Clerk to follow up on quotes for damp work in the room.

Cllr Houlihan came back into the meeting after the decision was agreed and was updated on what was agreed by Members.

FC124a.0/24- Consider a request from a resident for the council to write to Morrisons regarding a recent incident with a delivery van and a parked car- Members discussed this request and the closeness of the Pentlands Play Park to the shop but that this would be an issue for the Police to deal with.

RESOLVED- Cllr Collinson proposed the council write to Morrisons asking them to consider that the roads are close to a play park and for delivery drivers to be considerate when carrying out deliveries. Seconded by Cllr Herbert. All agreed.

FC124b.0/24- This item was added to the agenda after publication- Consider a request to write to Housing Solutions regarding issues residents are having to contact the Team.

Following on from a meeting with Nigel Jones from the Ferryhill Ladder Centre to discuss the requirements of the drop in sessions going forward it was identified that there are multiple examples of residents not being kept up to date by Housing Solutions. This is affecting the time that Nigel is dealing with the same unresolved issues for residents as he tries to contact Housing Solutions on their behalf.

RESOLVED- Cllr Young proposed the council write to Housing Solutions regarding the aforementioned issues. Seconded by Cllr Reece. All agreed. Cllr Sutherland abstained due to an aforementioned declaration of interest.

FC125a.0/24- Review and approve the Grounds Maintenance Contractor for 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2028 following the request for references agreed at the Special Council Meeting on 17.12.24-

Members were reminded of what was agreed at the Special Council Meeting held on 17.12.24. 2 references have been received for company 1 and company 2 and one reference for company 3. Members discussed this matter taking into account the pros and cons of choosing company 1 or company 2. Company 3 was agreed to be too expensive.

RESOLVED- Cllr Young proposed the council accept the tender for company 2 subject to the quality of the reporting being greatly improved and that there is a break clause in the contract. Seconded by Cllr Herbert. 6 for and 4 abstentions.

FC125b.0/24- Set the precept for Chilton Town Council for April 2025 to March 2026-

Members reviewed the draft budget after the Town Clerk had added in the updates from the Special Council Meeting held on 7.1.25. Following on from the ground maintenance contract discussions the budget amount of £50k for grounds maintenance was reduced to £49k. A Member proposed that the council reduce the amount by £5k to the Miners Welfare Trust. There was no seconder to this proposal. A Member reminded Councillors that as they are all Trustees that the budget for the Trust will need to be balanced. Further discussion took place regarding the budget headings and it was agreed to reduce the amount allocated on the A167 Street Lighting amounts due to correspondence received from a Durham County Council Officer that they would cover the costs. The amount is unknown but may be lower than anticipated. Members reviewed the aims and objectives in the Annual Report from 24/25 as part of this process. Members discussed the pros and cons of types of fencing for the allotments.

RESOLVED- Cllr Young proposed the council approve the budget to include an amount to the Miners Welfare Trust that is the same as last year and the amount for the street lighting to be altered accordingly to provide a precept increase of 3% for 2025-2026. Seconded by Cllr Reece. All agreed.

FC126.0/24- Monthly Financial Reconciliation and Budget Review of year to date spend/available funds for each committee- Town Clerk advised that this had been reviewed at the Special Council Meeting held on 7.1.25 and there was no further update.

Members accepted the report

FC127.0/24. Receive the Interim Internal Audit Report- Members accepted this report.

FC128.0/24- Consider options for the land use at Joes Field that has been reclaimed by the council- Members discussed this matter and Cllr Sutherland provided background on the request. The area may benefit from rewilding and/or tree planting etc.

Members agreed in principle for Cllr Reece to identify if the land can be used as a biodiversity net gain as part of the Neighbourhood Planning Process.

FC129.0/24- Agree the Annual Town Council Meeting date, time and venue- Members agreed for the Annual Town Council Meeting to take place on 13th May 2025 at the Church Hall at 6pm. The Annual Meeting of the Council on the 6th May 2025 in Hutton House at 6pm.

FC130.0/24- Adopt the Code of Conduct Policy – this policy was reviewed and recommended by the Human Resources Committee at a meeting held on 22.10.24.

Members agreed to adopt the policy.

FC131.0/24- Adopt the Officer/Member Protocol – this policy was reviewed and recommended by the Human Resources Policy Committee at a meeting held on 22.10.24.

Members agreed to adopt the policy.

FC132.0/24- Consider a quotation for a new Security System in Hutton House (if information received prior to meeting)- This will be carried out on Saturday 18th January 2025 and discussed at a future meeting.

FC133.0/24- Nominate a Councillor to be entered into the ballot for the Royal Garden Party 2025-
RESOLVED- Cllr Young proposed that the council nominate Cllr Sutherland. Seconded by Cllr Hornsby. All agreed.

FC134.0/24- Neighbourhood Plan (NP)- Cllr Reece informed Members that Residents Survey has been extended to the end of January. Advisory Group Members have been asked to sponsor a prize draw for completed entries. Ideas had been provided on prizes by the Junior Town Council. There is a joint public meeting and advisory group meeting on 22.1.25 at 6pm in Chilton Academy. Brian Harris from Durham County Council will be in attendance. Rachel Ward and Rachel Tyndall to attend to answer questions about ASB. A meeting had taken place with Andy Coulthard and Steven McDonald regarding Biodiversity and Net Gains. The feedback will start being analysed by the end of January and publishing of the results will start by end of March.

Members accepted the report

FC135.0/24- Charity Report- Cllr Reece advised that following on from tonight's council meeting there are key items that will need to be discussed at the Trust Meeting. A meeting had taken place with the

Croquet Club and there is a meeting arranged with the Football Club and the Tennis Club. A Community Use Agreement has been requested by Sport England as part of the planning application.

Members accepted the report

FC136.0/24- Website- The website contractor had carried out a training session on how best to utilise the website. There are a couple of items to add into the Miners Welfare Trust website page which will be completed soon.

Members accepted the report

FC137.0/24- Playground Reports- TC liaising with a DCC Officer regarding the playground reports received for January 2025

Members accepted the information

Exclusion of Press and Public- No public present.

FC138.0/24- Disputed Land- Town Clerk advised the Solicitor is pulling together a report. Member advised that the fencing has been put at least 2 metres from the council land. Clerk to take pictures and send to the Solicitor.

FC139.0/24- Staffing updates- the Chair of the HR Committee gave an update as follows-

- Member of staff who recently resigned has been paid the accrued annual leave. As discussed in the budget discussions on 7.1.25 the post is to be vacant whilst we assess the level of enquiries and the need over a 6 month period.

Members accepted the report

Meeting Closed at 7.57pm.

Cllr S. Sutherland,
Mayor of Chilton Town Council,
11th February 2025