



Minutes of the proceedings of the **CHILTON TOWN COUNCIL MEETING** held at
Hutton House, on Tuesday 11th November 2025

Present: -- Chair - Cllr. S. Reece (Mayor)

Cllrs: - D. Bright, E. Bruce, D. English, P. Herbert, R. Hirst, M. Smith & S. Zapert

Town Clerk (TC) - Mrs. Joanne Dickinson

Member of the public- One who applied for co-option and after being co-opted joined the meeting as a Councillor

County Councillor:- Cllr S. Bowron

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm

113. Apologies for Absence – Cllr Malpas. Cllr Hirst will be in attendance later than 6pm due to work commitments

114. Declarations of Interest- Cllr Bruce for agenda item 13, minute number 124

115. Member Dispensations- None received

116. Public Participation- Cllr Bowron advised he was unable to speak on agenda item 10 due to a conflict of interest. Members agreed to move the agenda item for discussion during the exempt information section.

117. Consider the applications for the Co-option Councillor Vacancy- Members agreed to consider the application from Ms Smith. Ms Smith gave a succinct explanation of the reasons she has applied to be co-opted onto the council and Members were given an opportunity to ask Ms Smith questions.

Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED- Cllr English 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.

Ms Smith and County Councillor Bowron left the meeting at this point

Members approved the co-option of Ms Smith onto Chilton Town Council

Ms Smith was informed of the decision and completed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form and Trustee Form with the Town Clerk and acted in her capacity as a Councillor for the rest of the meeting.

County Councillor Bowron returned to the meeting

118. Mayor's Report – See Appendix 1 for the update from the Mayor, which is attached to the minutes. The Mayor thanked those who stepped in to help at the event today.

The Mayor has been asked by the Junior Town Council if the Town Council could arrange for a clothing bank to be installed between the school and Sainsburys. Town Clerk to look into potential options with the clothing bank company and report back at a future meeting and the outcome to be reported to the Junior Town Council.

Members accepted the report and agreed to add into the report an update on the cemetery, allotments etc to be circulated on the council website and Facebook page.

Cllr Hirst entered the meeting at 6.25pm

119. Approve minutes of the following meeting and recommendations therein-

a. Chilton Town Council Meeting held on 14th October 2025

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

120. County Councillors Report- Cllr Bowron informed Members that the financial forecast for DCC will be agreed the following week. The Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme Consultation has ended. There were 1886 responses. 22% of the population of County Durham including pensioners won't be affected by the changes. Cllr Bowron will arrange for the flags to be taken down prior to the Christmas Lights being installed.

121. Review the Resolution Log- The Town Clerk reviewed the Resolution Log with Members. Members noted the actions from the Resolution Log.

122- Consider a request for an event on Joe's Field in Summer 2026 -

Town Clerk asked to contact the event organiser to ask if they have looked at Joe's Field to see if an event is feasible and then put on the agenda for discussion at a future meeting if it is feasible.

Cllr Bowron left the meeting at 6.45pm

123. Discuss the options for the use for the Cemetery Building including an option to take down the building leaving the toilets in place- Members were provided with the one quote on the cost to demolish the building but retaining the 2 toilets. This was requested follow several meetings where the costs to repair the building were discussed as the building had been derelict for many years. If the building is not used then it will continue to deteriorate over time.

RESOLVED- Cllr English proposed that the council arrange for the demolition of the cemetery building but that the toilets are retained. Seconded by Cllr Hirst. All agreed.

Town Clerk to arrange for 2 further quotes for the work.

124. Consider a request to provide funding of £250 to work in partnership with Chilton Academy on a Christmas Food Initiative

RESOLVED- Cllr English proposed the council donate £250 to work in partnership with Chilton Academy on a Christmas Food Initiative. Seconded by Cllr Hirst. All agreed.

Cllr Bruce took no part in the discussion or decision on this agenda item.

125. To consider if the council has any feedback for the following DCC Consultations

a. Budget proposals for 2026/2027 and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2026/2027-2029/2030

Cllr Reece gave an overview to Members. Members agreed for Cllr Reece to write a statement on behalf of the council which will be circulated to councillors and then submitted to Durham County Council.

b. Exceptions to the Empty and Unfurnished Properties and Second Homes Council Tax Premium- No comments from the council.

126. Inform Members about the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill – Cllr Reece gave Members an overview on the Bill and recommended that the Town Council should keep up to date with the information cascaded which was agreed by Members.

127. Receive an update on the Neighbourhood Plan- Cllr Reece advised that the Advisory Group meeting was postponed and will take place at a later date with the guest speakers that were previously due to attend. The MP hasn't to date provided an update about the transport questions raised in the NP survey. A meeting has been arranged with the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth, Durham County Council and an update will be provided to Members after that meeting.

128. Receive the Charity Report- The Mayor included information within her report. The Trust has had confirmation that they have been successful in the bid for the National Lottery Heritage Funding. The park will need to be closed during the timeframe the work is taking place and the users of the park will be informed of this closure period.

129. Receive an update from the Community & Events Working Group- A date for the next working group meeting was penciled in for 18th November 2025 once Town Clerk has confirmed the date and time with the Chair of the Working Group meeting.

Exempt information- no members of the public present.

130. Review and discuss a Section 106 application for the design and implementation of a sustainably planted roundabout on the A167 Chilton Roundabout- Members discussed the application. The Town Council have reduced the bedding plant costs and the savings have been put towards a defibrillator and Anti Life Vac Choking Devices. The Neighbourhood Plan Survey responses did not have a response asking for the roundabout to be planted. With the current cost of living pressures on residents the monies could be utilised to benefit residents.

Members agreed that they did strongly disagreed with the application. The Town Clerk to send a response on behalf of the Town Council.

131. Receive an update about the disputed land-Town Clerk provided an update to Members following an email that was recently received from the Chartered Surveyor/Solicitor.

131. Staffing Update-

a. Request for reduced working hours from the Finance and Admin Officer

RECOMMENDATION- The Council approve the request in principle. A meeting is to be arranged with the current and new Town Clerk, the Chair of the HR Committee and the Finance and Admin Officer to discuss the request and the working pattern in further detail.

a. Recruitment of new Town Clerk

The Chair gave an update to Members following on from the Interviews that took place.

RESOLVED- Cllr English proposed the council ratify the recommendation of the Interview Panel. Seconded by Cllr Herbert. All agreed.

Meeting Closed at 7.45pm.

Cllr Sue Reece,
Mayor of Chilton Town Council, 20th January 2026