



Minutes of the proceedings of the **CHILTON TOWN COUNCIL MEETING** held at
Hutton House, Chilton, on Tuesday 10 March 2026

Present: Chair: Councillor S. Reece (Mayor)
Councillors: D. Bright, E. Bruce, D. English, R. Hirst, M. Smith (until 7.10pm), S. Zapert
In attendance: C. Llewelyn, Town Clerk
Members of the public: None

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm.

198. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies received from Councillors Herbert and Malpas (Vice Chair).

Resolved: to receive the apologies. All agreed.

Apologies were also noted from County Councillor Bowron.

199. To receive Declarations of Interest

None received.

200. To receive Member Dispensations

Resolved: to note that until the Council's Annual Meeting in May 2026 both Councillors Herbert and Hirst hold the following dispensation: The dispensation will limit both Councillor Herbert and Councillor Hirst from participating in the discussion of and/or vote on the following matters which effect the allotment site on which they hold an allotment to a greater degree than any other allotment size within the parish: a. The eviction of an allotment holder on the West Chilton Allotment site; b. The award of a grant/tender to the West Chilton Allotment site.

201. Public Participation

No members of the public were present.

202. Mayor's Report

Mayor Councillor Reece presented a report. She thanked Members who helped towards the Mayor's Charity Night held on 6th March; advised that Hutton House has been lit in pink for Brain Tumour Awareness, and asked Members to note the event arranged to mark County Durham Day on 20th March 2026.

Resolved: to note the Mayor's Report.

203. To approve minutes of the following meeting and recommendations therein:

a) Chilton Town Council Meeting held on 10 February 2026

Resolved: the minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2026 and the recommendations therein be accepted as a true record, proposed by Councillor Bright, seconded by Cllr Zapert. All agreed.

204. County Councillor's Report

The Clerk gave a report sent by County Councillor Bowron, which included that he had visited four areas in Chilton with the Highways engineering department where there may be improvements to parking in the village. Councillors raised queries about CCTV in the streets known as the Five Rows.

Resolved:

- (1) County Councillor Bowron's report is noted.**
- (2) The Clerk to ask County Councillor Bowron for an update on CCTV.**

205. To review the Resolution Log

a) War Memorial works

The Clerk advised that the Contractor is expected to undertake remedial works around mid-March. The Town Clerk and Councillor Reece reviewed the Resolution Log with Members. Councillor Reece has been elected to the County Durham Association of Local Councils Larger Councils Committee following the nomination by the Town Council.

Resolved: to note the update and the actions from the Resolution Log. All agreed.

206. To consider a response to Durham County Council Open Space Needs Assessment Consultation

Members said that information has already been gathered for a previous response.

Resolved: Councillor Reece and the Clerk to collate and submit a factual response based on existing information.

207. To approve the payment schedule and:

The Clerk had circulated reports.

a) Shildon Community Bus

Resolved: to affiliate if needed in the future.

b) Furniture costs for Hutton House

The Clerk requested direction from Councillors.

Resolved: the Council to consider costs in April for durable wooden tables and chairs similar to existing stacking chairs.

c) Town Council Utilities costs and brokers

Members discussed costs and broker services. Broker services are to be raised with the Miners Welfare Trust.

Resolved:

(1) the Council to engage the broker Troocost to provide utility prices for consideration, and the payment schedule is approved, proposed by Councillor English, seconded by Councillor Bright. All agreed.

208. To note the detailed income and expenditure

The Clerk spoke through the detailed income and expenditure, and the projections for budget areas which are likely to be over spent or underspent.

Resolved: to note the detailed income and expenditure including areas where expenditure is higher and lower than allocated in the budget. All agreed.

209. To review earmarked reserves

The Clerk provided further information to Members on earmarked reserves related to the Neighbourhood Plan as requested at the previous meeting. The Clerk advised that a more detailed report will be presented in future, and the virements agreed in the resolution log are to be made.

Resolved: to note the report on earmarked reserves.

210. To approve the review of audit requirements and appoint the Internal Auditor for 2026 to 27

The Clerk had circulated a report.

Resolved: to approve the review of Audit Requirements, and to approve the appointment of Gordon Fletcher as the Internal Auditor for 2026 to 27, proposed by Councillor English, seconded by Councillor Bruce. All agreed.

211. To consider action and expenditure to meet new Governance Assertion 10 requirements

a) **Website**

The Clerk had sent a report and advised that she is communicating with the website contractor to establish that the website meets the requirements.

Resolved: to note the report.

b) **Approval of IT Policy**

The Clerk had sent a draft IT Policy. Training on cyber security is to be considered.

Resolved: the draft IT Policy is adopted, with the addition of a definition of 'reasonableness' and removing that devices could be taken by the Council, proposed by Councillor English, seconded by Councillor Bright. All agreed.

212. To receive minutes from the following meetings and approve actions therein:

a) **Junior Town Council Meeting held on 19 February 2026**

Resolved: to receive the draft minutes of the Junior Town Council Meeting held on 19 February 2026.

b) **To consider purchase of Junior Town Council chains for Junior Mayor and Deputy Junior Mayors**

Resolved: to agree that Junior Town Council chains will be purchased annually to allow the Junior Town Council Mayors and Deputy Mayors to retain their chains, proposed by Councillor Reece, seconded by Councillor English. All agreed.

213. To receive and consider a valuation of Hutton House for Council and insurance purposes

Councillor Smith left the meeting at this point.

Resolved:

(1) to note the report, and the Clerk to advise the insurer of the valuation and ensure the asset register is updated. All agreed.

(2) under Standing Order 10(a)xi to ask any or all members of the press and public to leave the meeting for the following item of business only in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, proposed by Councillor English, seconded by Councillor Bright. All agreed.

(3) the Council made resolutions relating to the agenda item. All agreed.

The meeting resumed proceedings in public session.

214. To receive an update and consider expenditure regarding health and safety matters and works required at Hutton House

The Clerk had circulated a report providing details of health and safety matters, both completed and in progress.

Resolved:

(1) to note the report.

(2) to approve the expenditure of £127.10 net on fire alarm repairs and expenditure on the accessible toilet alarm repair, proposed by Councillor Reece, seconded by Councillor Zapert. All agreed.

(3) the Clerk to seek quotes for treating damp at Hutton House.

215. To consider the allotments water supply

Resolved: the matter to be considered by the Allotment, Open Space and Cemetery Committee.

216. To receive an update on stress testing arrangements and consider the results if available

The Clerk advised that stress testing results should be received this week.

Resolved:

(1) to note that stress testing results are expected and that this will exceed the allocated budget.

(2) to approve bunting to be erected for County Durham Day.

217. To consider play park inspection results, existing upgrade plans, fencing at school play park and approve any required actions

The Clerk had sent a report. The Clerk will ensure Durham County Council is made aware of the graffiti art painted by local young people.

Resolved: to note the report, and that expenditure on the fencing at the school play park has increased by approximately £670. All agreed.

218. To consider and agree a play park inspection regime and Service Level Agreement for 2026 to 2027

Resolved: to approve the current inspection regime and approve the Clerk to sign the Service Level Agreement for 2026 to 2027 with Durham County Council, and seek to strengthen arrangements with the County Council, proposed by Councillor English, seconded by Councillor Hirst. All agreed.

219. To consider Committees' structure, meeting times and membership

a) Agree structure and usual meeting times of Committees and Working Groups

Resolved: Allotment, Open Space and Cemetery Committee to be moved to 6.00pm from May 2026 and all Committees to be reviewed at the May meeting.

b) Agree membership of the Allotment, Open Spaces and Cemetery Committee

Resolved: membership to be reviewed at the May meeting.

220. Planning

No planning applications were received.

221. To agree any response to a Section 106 application for Construction and ongoing maintenance of a bespoke dog walking area

Members discussed the application and a tabled response from Councillor Reece. Concerns were discussed regarding the location, litter in general, dog fouling, parking, the proposed reduction in Clean and Green services, that planning permission would be required and that on social media residents had identified alternative priorities such as youth clubs and warden patrols.

Resolved: to amend and then submit the tabled response to not support the Section 106 application for a bespoke dog walking area, for the reasons discussed; 5 support the resolution, 1 against.

222. To receive an update on the Neighbourhood Plan

a) to consider an update on the registration of the Church building as a Non Designated Heritage Asset

Councillor Reece advised a report has been submitted regarding the registration of the Church building as a Non Designated Heritage Asset and a response awaited.

Resolved: to note the update.

223. To receive the Miners' Welfare Charity Report

a) To consider the Council receiving and administering Lawn Tennis Association funding for tennis court gate access on behalf of the Charity

The Miners' Welfare Charity requests that the Town Council agree to receive Lawn Tennis Association funding for two digital access gates which must be paid to a local council and would then be paid out to the Association's mandated provider.

Resolved: the Town Council agrees to receive and administer Lawn Tennis Association funding for tennis court gate access on behalf of the Miners' Welfare Charity, proposed by Councillor Bruce, seconded by Councillor Hirst. All agreed.

Councillor Reece advised that the Charity has successfully completed the next stage of the Bikes Boards and Brushes Project, and that Service Level Agreements have been signed by the football, bowls and croquet clubs.

Resolved: to note the Miners' Welfare Charity Report.

224. To approve decisions and expenditure on contractors and events in the Community and Events Working Group action log

Members agreed in principle a minor overspend for the planned budget of Chilton Show.

Resolved: to note the Community and Events Working Group action log and expenditure on events, including potential minor overspend for Chilton Show. All agreed.

225. To receive draft proposals regarding the future of St Aidan's Church building and consider a response to the proposed closure of St Aidan's Church building by the Parochial Church Council

The Clerk advised that no response was expected at this time and that a request is expected for the Town Council to display a public notice.

Resolved: to note the information provided and approve the Clerk to arrange display of a public notice.

226. To consider a request from the Parochial Church Council for Town Council involvement in discussions regarding St Aidan's Church Hall

Councillor Hirst declared an interest as he has joined a Committee for the Church Hall.

The Clerk had circulated a request received from a member of the Parochial Church Council, to be involved in discussions about the Church hall with no commitments on the part of either body.

Resolved: (1) the Town Council is prepared to be involved in discussions with no commitments; Councillors Reece and Bruce will represent, and report back to, the Town Council. All agreed.

Resolved: (2) in accordance with Standing Order 3(w), the meeting time be extended beyond the two-hour limit, proposed by Councillor English, seconded by Councillor Hirst. All agreed.

227. To consider expenditure towards the repair of Chilton Miners' Memorial

The Clerk had sent a report.

Resolved: (1) the Clerk to contact Durham Miners' Association with queries about ownership.

(2) the Clerk to seek an update on the insurance position.

228. To consider a request for an event on Joe's Field in Summer 2026

Consultation has been undertaken with residents near to Joe's Field. 12 responses were received. A special meeting may be required to discuss this matter.

Resolved: to note the consultation responses, and the Clerk to seek advice from the Police and circulate to Members. All agreed.

229. To consider action and expenditure on the gate for the Charlie Wayman Field

Resolved: to note and approve expenditure of £4,670 on the gate for the Charlie Wayman Field.

230. To RESOLVE 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

Resolved: to ask any or all members of the press and public to leave the meeting for the following items of business in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

231. To receive any update about the disputed land

No update had been received.

232. To receive any update about the Livin Garages

The Clerk advised that all documents have been received and circulated to Members. The Clerk has requested confirmation from Livin that they have met the Council's conditions and will request certificates as appropriate. She explained the covenants, wayleaves and benefits in the Solicitor's Property Report. The insurance will need to be updated.

Resolved: to note the reports and update from the Clerk, and that the documents will be signed once confirmation is received that the Council's conditions are met. Proposed by Councillor English, seconded by Councillor Zapert. All agreed.

233. To note pension contribution rates from 1 April 2026

Resolved: to note the report.

Meeting Closed at 8.21pm.

Signed:

Councillor Sue Reece, Mayor of Chilton Town Council

Dated: