Minutes of the proceedings of the **CHILTON TOWN COUNCIL ORDINARY MEETING** held at Hutton House, Chilton, on Tuesday 14 July 2026

Present: **Chair:** Councillor S. Reece (Mayor)

Councillors: P. Malpas (Vice Chair), D. Bright, E. Bruce, D. English, R. Hirst, M. Smith, S. Zapert (part of the meeting).

In attendance: C. Llewelyn, Town Clerk

Members of the public: None

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm.

342. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were noted from County Councillor Bowron.

343. To receive declarations of interest

The Chair read through some guidance prepared by the Clerk.

344. To receive member dispensations

No member dispensations had been received.

345. Public participation

No members of the public were present.

346. Mayor's Report

Mayor Sue Reece gave an update which included: the Junior Town Council's posters and debate, a session with Chilton Scouts towards their Communication badge, Armed Forces Day which had raised approximately £250 for the charity Combat Stress, including a donation of £100 from the Coffin Dodgers. They Mayor is to present last year's fundraising to Durham's Haematology Department and Bikes, Boards and Brushes funding is providing craft and skateboard workshops in Chilton. Mayor Reece has attended Ferryhill and Stockton Mayor At Home events and the Chilton Mayor at Home event is set for 19 September, with the Christmas Civic Carol Service on 3 December.

Resolved: to note the Mayor's Report.

347. To approve minutes of the following meetings and recommendations therein:

a) **Chilton Town Council Annual and Ordinary Meeting held on 9 June 2026**

Resolved: the minutes of the Town Council Annual and Ordinary Meeting held on 9 June 2026 and the recommendations therein be accepted as a true record, proposed by Councillor Malpas, seconded by Cllr Hirst. All agreed.

348. County Councillor's Report

County Councillor Bowron had sent a written report which the Clerk read. Councillor Zapert raised comments regarding gas and electricity and asked that these be passed on to County Councillor Bowron.

Resolved: Town Councillors asked the Clerk to request an update in what is happening in Chilton, and on the CCTV cameras, and to pass on the comments from Councillor Zapert.

349. To review the Resolution Log and Clerk's Report, including an update on the repair of the Miners' Memorial (not owned by Chilton Town Council)

Resolved:

(1) to note that the Miners Memorial (which is not owned by Chilton Town Council) has been repaired at the cost of the Town Council.

(2) The Clerk to add a request for a boot fair to an agenda and provide some further details about the proposal and the risks.

(3) The resolution log including a report from the Clerk is accepted and is to be circulated.

Correspondence

350. To consider correspondence received:

a) County Durham Association of Local Councils Annual General Meeting

Resolved: to note the date of the Annual General Meeting.

b) Durham County Council Selective Licensing Scheme Consultation

Councillor Reece explained the consultation.

Resolved: Councillor Reece to draw up a response to circulate to Councillors and be submitted as a response.

Financial and Governance Matters

351. To approve the payment schedule

The Clerk had circulated the payment report and requested that payments also be approved as follows: asbestos sampling on allotment at £150; asbestos survey at Hutton House at £280, and a doorguard for Hutton House fire protection measures at £120.

Resolved: to approve the payments presented in the report and to approve the payments above for asbestos and fire protection measures, proposed by Councillor Bright, seconded by Councillor Malpas. All agreed.

352. To note the detailed income and expenditure

This had been discussed at last week's Financial, Audit, Risk and Health and Safety Committee, and recommended to the Council.

Resolved: to approve the detailed income and expenditure.

353. To review earmarked reserves

Earmarked reserves had been considered at the Financial, Audit, Risk and Health and Safety Committee meeting last week.

Resolved: to note the report, and that £10,000 has been transferred into the earmarked reserve for the cemetery extension.

354. To consider the Council's Insurance renewal and to approve the insurance arrangements

Insurance renewal documents had been sent to Councillors. A long term agreement is in place until August 2027. The Clerk will undertake a review of insurance cover.

Resolved:

(1) to approve the annual insurance renewal due in August 2026.

(2) the Clerk to look for brokers and insurance cover in advance of the renewal in August 2027.

355. To approve a Solicitor to undertake legal work

The Clerk gave an update.

Resolved: the Clerk to continue to look for and to engage a suitable Solicitor; proposed by Councillor Reece, seconded by Councillor Zapert. All agreed.

356. To approve cyber security measures

Resolved:

(1) to implement multi-factor authentication for all Councillors and Officers.

(2) to upgrade three Officers' licences as discussed during the meeting, accepting that this will go over the allocated budget.

(3) to build into future budgets allocations for Microsoft licences.

(4) to issue information on phishing emails and ransomware.

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

a) Allotment, Open Spaces and Cemetery Committee 18 May 2026

Resolved: to receive the draft minutes of the Allotment, Open Spaces and Cemetery Committee meeting held on 15 June 2026.

b) Junior Town Council meeting held on 5 June 2026

Resolved: to receive the draft minutes of the Junior Town Council meeting held on 5 June 2026.

c) Finance, Audit, Risk and Health and Safety Committee meetings held on 15 June 2026 and 6 July 2026

Resolved: to receive the draft minutes of the Finance, Audit, Risk and Health and Safety Committee meetings held on 15 June and 6 July 2026.

358. To approve a risk assessment on the frequency of asset inspections

The risk assessment had been considered at the Financial, Audit, Risk and Health and Safety Committee meeting held last week, and recommended for approval.

Resolved: to approve the risk assessment on the frequency of asset inspections. All agreed.

359. To consider the Town Council's website arrangements

The Clerk advised that the Council's current website provider is to stop providing websites. The Council will consider the appearance and content as well as costs.

Resolved: costs for a new website provider to be considered by the Council, acknowledging that this will take expenditure significantly over the planned budget.

360. To approve a flag schedule for the flagpole in front of Hutton House

Resolved:

(1) to purchase three flags for Pride, Merchant Navy Day and the RAF Ensign flag, which is likely to go over budget allocation.

(2) the flag schedule and lighting schedule dates are to be checked again and be put into use.

361. To consider options and expenditure for playgrounds and potential funding

Resolved:

(1) the Clerk to respond that the Council wishes to accept the funding proposed by County Councillor Bowron for surfacing.

362. To review and consider the playground inspection regime including the next annual play inspections

Councillor Reece gave feedback of the Miners Welfare Trust discussions on play areas, and that the Trust had agreed it would align with the decisions of the Town Council at this meeting.

Resolved:

(1) the Clerk is to undertake site specific risk assessments on usage on all play areas, to bring to Council for approval.

(2) the Clerk working with Councillor English to check which actions identified in annual inspections are completed and what is still to do, for the Council to consider in September.

(3) the Clerk to approve the existing annual inspection provider to undertake the next inspections, and request that they do so early.

(4) the Clerk to investigate whether the Council has paid for any playground inspection training in the past.

363. DM/26/00510/FPA Clare Lodge, Durham Road, Chilton DL17 0HA

Resolved: to note the planning application.

364. DM/26/01522/FPA 8A Charlotte Terrace, Chilton DL17 0HD

Resolved: the Council has no objections as long as the development is in keeping with the style of neighbouring buildings and does not detract from the appearance of the high street.

365. To receive an update on the Neighbourhood Plan including the registration of the Church building as a Non Designated Heritage Asset

Councillor Reece advised that the Neighbourhood Plan development was awaiting information regarding the County Durham Plan Scoping Exercise.

Resolved:

(1) the Clerk to circulate maps relating to the County Durham Plan Scoping Exercise.

(2) Chilton Town Council is to respond to the technical consultation using evidence collected in public consultations.

366. To receive the Miners' Welfare Charity Report

Councillor Reece advised that the Trustees had discussed cyber training and phishing, and requested that the Council implement multi-factor authentication, and issue information on phishing emails and ransomware to users and the public. Individual Trustees should have Disclosure and Barring checks, which the Clerk is investigating. The work on the dropped kerb had been approved. Insurance was discussed and agreed. An update was noted regarding the Heritage Project and the Bikes, Boards and Brushes Project.

Resolved: the report is received.

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

Resolved:

(1) a coffee morning publicising co-option and the Community Grant Awards Night are to be decided, and an evening meeting of the working group to be held.
(2) the Community and Events Working Group log is to be circulated.

368. To receive any update regarding the future of St Aidan's Church building

Chilton Town Council had submitted a response to the Church Commissioners regarding the proposed closure. Councillor Reece advised that the Council may make representation at a hearing meeting in London. The Church remains open. The Council is prepared to work with the Diocese to explore opportunities.

Resolved: to note the update regarding the future of St Aidan's Church Building, and that further details are awaited.

369. To receive any update regarding the request from the Parochial Church Council for Town Council involvement in discussions regarding St Aidan's Church Hall

There was no update.

370. To consider any initial feedback and regarding the approved event on Joe's Field in July 2026

The Clerk and Councillors gave updates.

Resolved: the Clerk to seek feedback from residents either through a public meeting or in writing.

371. 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, proposed by Councillor Bruce, seconded by Councillor English. All agreed.

Councillor Zapert left the meeting at this point.

372. To consider the applications received for the Community Grants Funding and agree allocation of grants

Town Councillors considered all the grant applications received.

Resolved:

(1) to award £300 to Chilton Excavators; £200 to That's How We Roll; £250 to Chilton Juniors; £500 to Chi Chilton Taekwondo; £500 to Chilton Scouts; £250 to the Sports and Social Gym; £250 to the Sports and Social Club; £250 to the Community Fund, and to place £500 into an earmarked reserve.

(2) all grant recipients to be requested to attend the Community Awards Night for the award and photographs, and to add that Chilton Town Council is to be acknowledged in publicity.

373. To receive any update about the disputed land and consider associated expenditure

The Clerk advised there was no update.

Councillor Malpas declared an interest in the next item and left the meeting at this point.

374. To receive an update about the Livin Garages

The Clerk provided an update.

Resolved: the Clerk to advise Livin that the matters they raised are to be completed before the transfer is completed, proposed by Councillor Reece, seconded by Councillor Hirst. All agreed.

Councillor Malpas returned to the meeting.

375. Staffing: to consider and note recruitment

The current Cleaner is retiring.

Resolved:

(1) The Clerk is to write thanks on behalf of Chilton Town Council for the years of service and the significant contribution to Chilton Town Council of the current Cleaner, and is to invite her to the Grant Awards Evening.

(2) the Cleaner post is to be recruited to, and the Council delegates authority to the panel and the Clerk to agree recruitment to the post.

Meeting Closed at 8.20pm.

Signed:

Councillor Sue Reece, Mayor of Chilton Town Council

Dated: