

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

HELD ON MONDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2025 FROM 7:00 PM

Present: Councillors Sally Kimondo (Town Mayor), Richard Attwell (Deputy Town Mayor), Nicholas Kotarski (Chair), Johnson Tamara (Vice-Chair), John Gurney, Liz Jones, Matthew Brennan, Matthew Neall, Gregory Alderman and Peter Hollick.

In Attendance: Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), Lisa Scheder (Head of Corporate Services and Responsible Financial Officer), Jackie Carrington (Democratic Services Manager) and Rachel Connor (Corporate Marketing and Communications Officer)

In Attendance: Councillor Michelle Henderson
(Remotely)

Public: None

263/25 - Apologies for Absence

Councillors Kenson Gurney, Philip Crawley and Louise O'Riordan

264/25 - Declarations of Interest

There were no specific declarations of interest

265/25 - Public Question Time

There were no questions from the public

266/25 - To approve as an accurate record the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 22 September 2025.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 22 September 2025 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chair

267/25 - Action Tracker

Members received and noted the Action Tracker.

268/25 - Finance Report

The Head of Corporate Services summarised the report provided to members.

- RESOLVED:**
- i) To note the revenue budget position and year end forecasts for the current financial year
 - ii) To note the Council's earmarked reserves as of 30 September 2025
 - iii) To note the current investments
 - iv) An update on the first Interim Audit Report for the financial year 2025/26 and an update on the External Audit for the financial year 2024/25 was received

269/25 - Compliance and Facilities Report

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive summarised the report and gave details of the repair and maintenance work required at Grove House.

- RESOLVED:**
- i) to disband the Environmental Working Group
 - ii) to adopt the Carbon and Energy Action plan
 - iii) to revise Action 6 of the Corporate Plan to say CP6: To reduce Dunstable Town Council's total climate impact to 40 tCO₂e by 2030

270/25 - Marketing and Communications Report

The Marketing and Communications officer summarised the report. It was noted that there had been a steady increase in followers to the Council's social media pages and the Community Lottery was being promoted on a regular basis with the last video reaching 1,800 views.

271/25 - Reference Up Report

Members received and discussed the report from Personnel Sub-Committee

- RESOLVED:** to approve and adopt the Councillor-Officer Protocol

272/25 - Mayoral Allowance

The Head of Corporate Services presented the report outlining options for amending the Mayoral Handbook at Item 14b - Mayoral Allowance.

- RESOLVED:** to amend the Mayoral Handbook at Item 14b - Mayoral Allowance to say "*all contributions to your chosen charities must come from funds raised during the year (your mayoral allowance must not be used to donate to your chosen charities)*"

273/25 - Artificial Intelligence Use Policy

The report was summarised by The Town Clerk and Chief Executive

RESOLVED: to adopt the AI Use Policy

274/25 - Corporate Services Budget Report 2026/27

The Head of Corporate Services and Responsible Financial Officer outlined report, which members discussed the report in depth.

Members asked Officers to review the current ear-marked reserves to identify any that could be removed or reduced. Members requested that once the forecast underspend has been further clarified, a revised budget proposal be submitted which uses any available underspend to reduce the required precept increase in 2026 where possible.

Action: Head of Corporate Services and Responsible Financial Officer

275/25 - Reports from Outside Organisations:

Citizen's Advice Management Committee – Councillor Attwell had attended the AGM of the Citizen's Advice Bureau and stated that many residents of Dunstable had used the services provided over the last year.

Dunstable International Town Twinning Association – Councillor Hollick stated that the Association was somewhat dormant at the moment.

Hospice at Home Management Committee – Councillor Jones stated Hospice at Home continues to thrive in the community. There are currently 25 volunteers and Hospice at Home is focusing on their 40th Anniversary which it celebrates next May.

Ashton Almshouses Charity – Councillor Alderman was unable to attend meeting and had no update.

Ashton Schools Foundation – Councillor Hollick was unable to attend the meeting and had no update.

Chew's Foundation – Councillor Brennan stated the next meeting was in a couple of weeks and he would update at the next meeting.

Poor's Land Charity – Councillor Jones stated nothing to report

Lockington Charity and Marshe Charity – Councillors Kimondo and Jones had attended the meeting at the beginning of November. Grants have been given to appropriate families of Dunstable and the Charity will continue to do so.

Dunstable and District Scout Council Executive – Councillor Kotarski would be attending the meeting next week.

Councillor Brennan requested that Pride Dunstable and The Rotary Club be included in the Outside Organisations and asked when this could happen. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive stated that members could request that Members be appointed to an outside organisation at any time, as long as they are happy to have a representative from the Council attend. It was also stated that the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chairs of the Committees were attending the Rotary Club as part of the Council's corporate membership, along with the Town Clerk and Chief Executive who was the Council's key contact, and they could report back to committee after attendance. Rotary Club was to be added to the Agenda under Outside Organisations.

276/25 - Motion to exclude public and press

RESOLVED: In terms of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, the following items will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters and it was therefore AGREED that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

277/25 - Bennett's Cafe and Community Hub Staffing Report

RESOLVED:

- I. To amend the role of Manager of Bennetts Café and Community Hub from a fixed-term contract to a permanent contract.
- II. To approve the creation of a 16 hour per week Catering Assistant post using existing budgets within the Bennetts Café and Community Hub

278/25 - Date of the next meeting

Monday 26 January 2026 at 7pm

The meeting closed at 9:01 PM

