

Dunstable Town Council
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Paul Hodson, Town Clerk and Chief Executive

Notice of a Meeting of the **Full Council**

Date: **Friday 13 June 2025**

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **Full Council** will be held on **Monday 23 June 2025**, at **Grove House in the Council Chamber** at **7:00 PM**. To view the meeting live or afterwards use this link: [livestream](#). Members of the public and press are also welcome to attend in person. Members of the public may ask a question during the public session, either in person or online via MS Teams. If you would like to ask a question, please contact the Council via democratic@dunstable.gov.uk or 01582 513000 by 4 pm on Friday 20 June 2025.

This meeting will be filmed by the Council and broadcast live and will be capable of repeated viewing. If you are seated in the Council Chamber it is likely that the cameras will capture your image. By your presence you are deemed to consent to be filmed, and to the use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting or training purposes.

If you address the committee in person or via Teams, your contribution will be recorded and broadcast, unless this is during a private session, as permitted by the Access to Information provisions.

Please see the below QR code to access the full agenda:



Yours faithfully

Paul Hodson
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

Members are reminded when making decisions that the Public Sector Equality Duty 2010 requires Members to have due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act, advance equality of opportunity between people who share a characteristic and those who don't, and to foster good relations between people who share a characteristic and those who don't.

AGENDA

161/25 Apologies for Absence

162/25 Declarations of Interest

163/25 Update from the Police and Crime Commissioner, John Tizzard

164/25 Public Question Time

165/25 Town Mayor's Remarks including Civic Events and Mayoral Activities

[Town Mayor's Remarks June 2025.pdf](#)

166/25 Previous Minutes

166.1/25 To agree as a correct record the Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on Monday 19 May 2025

[ACM-Minutes-2025.pdf](#)

166.2/25 To agree as a correct record the Minutes of the Freedom Award Meeting held on Monday 19 May 2025

[Freedom Awards - Minutes 2025.pdf](#)

167/25 To receive reports of the following Committees:

167.1/25 Community Services 2 June 2025

[2025-06-02 - Community Services Committee - Minutes.pdf](#)

167.2/25 Grounds and Environmental Services 9 June 2025

[2025-06-09 - Grounds and Environmental Services Committee - Minutes.pdf](#)

167.3/25 Finance and General Purposes 16 June 2025 - To follow

168/25 Annual Governance Statement and Internal Audit Report

[AGAR Report Council 23 June 2025.pdf](#)

168.1/25 To receive the final internal audit report for 2024/25

[Final Internal Audit Report - Appendix 1.pdf](#)

168.2/25 To approve the Annual Governance Statement and the Accounting Statements in the Annual Governance Return for 2024/25

[AGAR - Appendix 2 \(1\).pdf](#)

168.3/25 Loans and Long Term Liabilities

[Loans and Long Term Liabilities - Appendix 3.pdf](#)

169/25 Governance Review Report

[Governance Review \(1\).pdf](#)

[Appendix 1 Boundary change proposal.pdf](#)

[Appendix 2 Response From Caddington Parish Council.pdf](#)

[Appendix 3 Letter from Totternhoe Parish Council.pdf](#)

[Appendix 4 Proposed Boundary Change Map - Totternhoe Request.pdf](#)

170/25 Appointment of second representative for Dunstable Charities due to Councillor Kenson Gurney standing down because of daytime commitments

1. Chews Foundation
2. Poor's Lands Charity
3. Lockington Charity
4. Marshe Charity

171/25 To receive reports/updates by Members of Central Bedfordshire Council on matters of interest to the Town Council

To: All Members:

John Gurney (Council Member), Liz Jones (Council Member), Wendy Bater (Council Member), Kenson Gurney (Council Member), Matthew Brennan (Council Member), Philip Crawley (Council Member), Matthew Neall (Council Member), Mark Davis (Council Member), Gregory Alderman (Council Member), Richard Attwell (Council Member), Johnson Tamara (Council Member), Nicholas Kotarski (Council Member), Louise O'Riordan (Council Member), Michelle Henderson (Council Member), Peter Hollick (Council Member), Trevor Adams (Council Member), Sally Kimondo (Council Member) and Robert Blennerhassett (Council Member)

Date	Organisation	Event	Venue	Comments
25.05.25	South Beds Dial-A-Ride	BBQ	Toddington Social Club	This was my first event where I had the opportunity to meet the trustees, drivers and office team. Their services help those who need a little extra support to go out and about whether it is a hospital visit or shopping
29.05.25	Mayors Coffee Morning	Coffee Morning	Grove House	This was my first coffee morning where different charities attended to support my chosen charities and it was a place where we all connected and got to know one another more.
04.06.25	Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire	Coffee Morning	Grove View	This was a great meeting to understand how to nominate and shine a light to individuals or charities or communities making an impact in our communities
06.06.25	Three Counties Radio	Interview		An interview where I shared about Dunstable's 40 year celebration and the upcoming events
07.06.25	Hospice at Home Volunteers	Coffee Morning	Grove House	An amazing coffee morning where the charity was raising funds and it was well attended
07.06.25	Dunstable Pride	Pride Event	Grove House Gardens	First Pride event organised by Central Bedfordshire college, which was well attended demonstrating celebration of inclusivity
07.06.25	Country021 Muranga UK	BBQ	Addison Centre, Addison Howard Park, Kempston, Bedford MK42 8PN	A celebration of people who come from a certain town in Kenya but are spread across the country. They have held events in Kent, Hertfordshire and now Bedfordshire, in attendance the MP of Bedford and Mayor of Kempston
11.06.25	St Christophers Academy	Visit with afternoon tea	Gorham Way, Dunstable LU5 4NJ	One of my best experience as I visited each class and met the students. I am still waiting on the photos, the children were very eager to know what is the role of the Mayor. I also had the opportunity to have tea with them
12.06.25	Beds RCC (Dunstable Community Halls)	Wellbeing café	Manchester Place, High Street North, LU6 1HT	I visited DCC with the Deputy mayor- it was their wellbeing day. We had the opportunity to meet people who access the community hall.
12.06.25	Alfred Munhenga	Meeting with Mayor	Grove House	Alfred is a Zimbabwean community leader who holds monthly BBQ events with at least 500 attendees. He wanted the council to be aware of the work he does and to understand how the youth can access youth activities in Dunstable.
13.06.25	Central Beds College	Employer Engagement Event	Central Bedfordshire College	This was an insightful event that highlighted how they empower and work with children who have an EHCP integrate into work.
14.06.25	Dunstable Truck Convoy	Truck Convoy	The Herts Showground in Flamstead	Amazing experience, I felt privileged to be on the truck, met different drivers and interacted with various people. Such an amazing event

14.06.25	Dunstable Town Council	Motor Rally	Priory Gardens	The feedback from this particular group who have attended the DTC event 3 times, said that Dunstable stands out in this event. They tend to visit various classic motor car events, but they wouldn't ever miss Dunstable. The reason is it is well organised, staff are friendly, space is created for them to be able to sit near their cars and have their meals and they feel valued.
15.06.25	Harpenden Town Council	Civic Service	St Nicholas Parish Church	Attended the civic service in Harpenden, hosted by the town Mayor Beth Fisher. It was great to connect with other chain gang.
15.06.25	The PAD	Annual Showcase	Grove Theatre	Well done to the PAD, I loved every performance and they were extremely excited to have the Mayor in attendance.

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

HELD AT DUNSTABLE CONFERENCE CENTRE, HIGH STREET NORTH

ON MONDAY 19 MAY 2025 FROM 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Louise O’Riordan (Retiring Town Mayor), Sally Kimondo (Retiring Deputy Town Mayor), Trevor Adams, Gregory Alderman, Richard Attwell, Wendy Bater, Robert Blennerhassett, Matthew Brennan, Philip Crawley, Mark Davis, John Gurney, Kenson Gurney, Michelle Henderson, Peter Hollick, Liz Jones, Nicholas Kotarski, Matthew Neall and Johnson Tamara with Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive)

Before the commencement of the meeting Reverend Rachel Phillips led the Council in prayer.

118/25 ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR

It was proposed by Councillor Alderman, and seconded by Councillor John Gurney and

RESOLVED: That Councillor Sally Kimondo be elected Town Mayor of Dunstable for the ensuing Municipal Year.

119/25 DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

The newly elected Town Mayor made the statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office and gave a short address to the Council. The Town Mayor signed the Form of Declaration, witnessed by the Town Clerk and Chief Executive.

The Town Mayor was presented with her robes and chain of office whilst Juliah Kimondo was presented with her Mayor’s consort badge.

120/25 VOTE OF THANKS FOR THE RETIRING MAYOR

It was proposed by Councillor Hollick and seconded by Councillor Bater and

RESOLVED: That Councillor Louise O’Riordan be in receipt of the sincere thanks of the Council for the courteous, efficient, and admirable manner in which she had discharged the important and exacting duties of the office of Town Mayor of Dunstable during the Municipal year ended 19 May 2025.

Councillor O’Riordan was presented with her past Mayor’s badge.

121/25 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS

There were no specific declarations of interest.

122/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

There were no apologies for absence.

123/25 ELECTION OF DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR

It was proposed by Councillor Kotarski, seconded by Councillor Adams, and

RESOLVED: That Councillor Richard Attwell be elected Deputy Town Mayor of Dunstable for the ensuing Municipal Year.

124/25 DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

The newly appointed Deputy Town Mayor made the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Councillor Attwell was presented with the Deputy Mayor's chain whilst his consort received the Deputy Mayor's consort badge.

125/25 TOWN MAYOR'S CHAPLAIN

The Town Mayor was pleased to report that Pastor Julian Richards, of Dunstable Com Church had agreed to be the Town Mayor's Chaplain for the ensuing Municipal Year.

126/25 APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS ON STANDING COMMITTEES

And

127/25 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR OF STANDING COMMITTEES

RESOLVED: That the following Committees be appointed for the ensuing Municipal Year 2025/2026.

RESOLVED: By the Members of each Committee in turn that the following Chairs and Vice-Chairs be appointed for the ensuing Municipal Year 2025/2026:

Finance and General Purposes Committee	Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor (ex-officio), Councillors Alderman, Brennan, Crawley, John Gurney, Kenson Gurney, Henderson, Hollick, Jones, Kotarski (Chair), Neall, O'Riordan and Tamara (Vice-Chair)
Community Services Committee	Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor (ex-officio), Councillors Adams, Alderman, Bater, Blennerhassett, Crawley, Davies, Kenson Gurney (Vice-Chair), Kotarski, Neall (Chair) and O'Riordan
Grounds and Environmental Services	Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor (ex-officio), Councillors Adams, Bater, Blennerhassett, Brennan, Davies, John Gurney, Henderson (Vice-Chair), Hollick (Chair), Jones

Committee	and Tamara
Personnel Sub-Committee	Councillors Attwell, Hollick, Jones, Kimondo, Kotarski, Neall and O'Riordan
Dunstable Joint Committee	Town Mayor, Deputy Town Mayor and Chairs of the three Standing Committees (Named substitutes: Vice-Chairs of the three Standing Committees)
Plans Sub-Committee	Councillors Alderman, Attwell, Bater, Kimondo, Kortarski, O'Riordan, and Tamara

128/25 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 7 April 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

129/25 TOWN MAYOR'S REMARKS

None

130/25 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

It was moved by Councillor Neall seconded by Councillor Kenson Gurney, and

RESOLVED: That the representatives to serve on outside organisations be as follows:

<u>Body</u>	<u>Representative</u>
Observer at Development Committee (Central Beds)	Nicholas Kotarski
Dunstable International Town Twinning Assoc.	Louise O'Riordan, Peter Hollick and Kenson Gurney
South Beds Dial-a-Ride Management Cttee	Peter Hollick
Citizens Advice Management Committee	Richard Attwell
Hospice at Home Management Cttee	Wendy Bater
Dunstable Town Band	Robert Blennerhassett
Dunstable District Scouts Trustee Board	Nicholas Kotarski
Ashton Schools Foundation	Gregory Alderman, Peter Hollick
Ashton Almshouses Charity	Louise O'Riordan, Gregory Alderman

Chews Foundation	Kenson Gurney, Matthew Brennan
Poor's Lands Charity	Liz Jones, Kenson Gurney
Lockington Charity	Liz Jones, Kenson Gurney
Marshe Charity	Liz Jones, Kenson Gurney
Dunstable Men in Sheds	Richard Attwell
BATPC	Kenson Gurney

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FREEDOM AWARD MEETING

HELD AT DUNSTABLE CONFERENCE CENTRE, HIGH STREET NORTH

ON MONDAY 19 MAY 2025

Present: Councillors Sally Kimondo (Town Mayor), Richard Attwell (Deputy Town Mayor), Trevor Adams, Gregory Alderman, Wendy Bater, Robert Blennerhassett, Matthew Brennan, Philip Crawley, Mark Davis, John Gurney, Kenson Gurney, Michelle Henderson, Peter Hollick, Liz Jones, Nicholas Kotarski, Matthew Neall, Louise O’Riordan and Johnson Tamara with Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive)

131/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

132/25 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS

There were no specific declarations of interest.

133/25 HONARY FREEDOM NOMINATIONS

Councillor Jones recommended Mr John Buckledee with the following nomination:

The Council asked for nominations for the honour of the Freedom of Dunstable. Many nominations were received for John Buckledee. What follows is a summary of the sentiments submitted, with my wholehearted endorsement:

As the former editor of the Dunstable Gazette, John spent nearly 50 years chronicling the life of our town. Even now his ongoing “Yesteryear” column continues to educate and inspire, preserving our shared heritage for future generations. He has authored and edited numerous books on Dunstable’s history, and his work has become a cornerstone of our town’s cultural identity.

John is also the long-standing Chairman of the Dunstable and District Local History Society. Through this role, he has opened the doors of our past to countless residents, schoolchildren, and visitors. Whether through talks, exhibitions, or personal research assistance, John’s passion for the town’s history is both infectious and invaluable.

But his contributions do not end there. Fondly known as “Mr. Poppy” and “Mr. Dunstable,” John is the driving force behind the town’s annual Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal. From June through November, he coordinates volunteers, delivers merchandise, and personally mans collection stalls—raising over £120,000 in just the past two years. His dedication ensures that the sacrifices of our servicemen and women are never forgotten.

John's work extends to town events, cultural initiatives, and educational outreach. He has helped create historical displays, contributed to the Town Trail plaques, and supported numerous local charities. His kindness, humility, and generosity of spirit have touched the lives of so many. He is always ready with a smile, a story, or a helping hand.

In an age where self-promotion often overshadows substance, John stands apart. He is a quiet force for good—selfless, sincere, and steadfast. His legacy is not only in the pages he has written or the funds he has raised, but in the hearts of those he has inspired.

It was proposed by Councillor Jones, seconded by Councillor Attwell, and

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY BY ALL MEMBERS VOTING:

In pursuance of section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by section 29 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, confers upon John Buckledee the HONORARY FREEDOM of the Ancient Town of Dunstable, and hereby admits the said John Buckledee to be an Honorary Freeman of the Town accordingly

Councillor Hollick recommended Mrs Sally Newton with the following nomination:

As a Council we wanted to bring back the award of Freeman/Freewoman to recognise those who have made a significant contribution in our town.

Sally was a registered nurse and worked across Bedfordshire schools as a school nurse until she retired.

She was first elected to the Town Council after her husband passed away, winning a by-election in Central Ward on 8th October 1987. She was returned on 5th May 1988, again on 7th May 1992, 2nd May 1996, 4th May 2000, 10th June 2004, 4th June 2009 retiring at the election on 5th May 2011. That's a considerable amount of shoe leather over some 24 years.

In 2000 Sally was elected Town Mayor, Chairman of the Council and first citizen. During her time on the Council Sally chaired the Community Services and the Finance and General Purposes Committees. She represented the Council on the Frances Ashton Almshouses and chaired the Trustee Group for several years ensuring continual review and the upkeep of the flats in Bullpond Lane. She continued in this role beyond her retirement as a councillor.

For several years Sally was the Leader of the ruling group on the Council bringing her expertise to help develop the Council and oversee many changes in the town. She also supported new councillors coming into the role.

Sally was a huge part of the community and as a Councillor was widely respected by her fellow councillors, by staff and throughout the town. Sally always represented the interests of Dunstable residents whole heartedly.

The Council minutes from 3 July 2000 record that the Mayor, Councillor Sally Newton, was, along with her Deputy Councillor Mrs Biswell, congratulated for the manner in which they represented the Council at both the Beating Retreat Ceremony by the Royal Anglian Regiment and the Minden Band, and, significantly for today, the granting of Freedom of Entry to the town to local service cadet organisations.

Sally Newton is very much part of a councillor dynasty. Her Father, Stuart Clark, husband Peter Newton and Peter and Sally's daughter, Liz Jones have all taken on the role of Mayor.

Her service of some 24 years on the Council, her work in the community and the respect she was given makes her a worthy recipient for this award. I am pleased to support Sally Newton to receive the award of Freewoman of Dunstable.

It was proposed by Councillor Hollick, seconded by Councillor O'Riordan, and

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY BY ALL MEMBERS VOTING:

In pursuance of section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by section 29 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, confers upon Sally Newton the HONORARY FREEDOM of the Ancient Town of Dunstable, and hereby admits the said Sally Newton to be an Honorary Freewoman of the Town accordingly

Mr Buckledee and Mrs Newton were each presented with a framed scroll, signed by the Town Mayor and Town Clerk and Chief Executive, and sealed in wax with the town's seal.

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee

held on Monday 2 June 2025 from 19.00

Present: Councillors Matthew Neall (Chair), Sally Kimondo (Town Mayor), Richard Attwell (Deputy Town Mayor), Trevor Adams, Robert Blennerhassett, Wendy Bater, Gregory Alderman and Nicholas Kotarski

In Attendance: Councillors Peter Hollick, Liz Jones, Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive, Becky Wisbey (Head of Community Services), Gina Thanky (Events Officer), Jack Adams-Rimmer (Senior Neighbourhood Development Officer).

In Attendance:
(Remotely)

Public: Nil

132/25 - Apologies for Absence

Councillors John Gurney, Kenson Gurney, Mark Davis, Louise O'Riordan, Annette Clynes (Town Centre Manager), Gill Peck (Youth and Community Manager), Lisa Stephens (Cultural Services Manager)

133/25 - Declarations of Interest

134/25 - Public Question Time

135/25 - To agree the minutes of the meeting of 3 March 2025 as an accurate record

136/25 - Town Centre

The discussion on the town centre primarily focused on footfall and the potential impact of a banking hub being sited at Martin's news agent. There was a query about whether any decisions had been made regarding the banking hub, but it was confirmed that no decisions had been made yet. The conversation highlighted the importance of footfall in the area and how the establishment of a banking hub could potentially influence it.

137/25 - Priory House

The discussion on Priory House covered several aspects, including ongoing refurbishments, the functioning of the gift shop, and events. The refurbishment works are progressing, with the gift shop roof being repaired and additional external works recommended. The team is considering whether to undertake these repairs within the budget. The next meeting regarding the refurbishments is scheduled for tomorrow, and members will be updated accordingly.

The exhibition contract has been offered to Creative Core, and officers are working with them to deliver an exhibition in the first-floor space. Due to the historic fabric of the building, traditional exhibition methods are not suitable, and Creative Core is expected to help resolve these issues. The team is also exploring alternative ways to generate income and deliver events at Priory House, such as craft stands for children and quieter areas for carers and parents.

The shop's takings were discussed, with the events showing positive outcomes despite not being

great overall. Concerns were raised about delays in the refurbishment process, attributed to the planning department at Central Bedfordshire. The complexity of the building's listed status and the need for permission were noted, with officers working proactively to get designs in place for approval.

138/25 - Events

The report on events was presented by the Events Officer, detailing the proposed events programme for 2026/27. Saint George's Day and Around the World events were successful, with over 3,000 visitors and positive feedback from various sources. The Dunstable Classic Motor Rally received over 220 vehicle entries and sponsorship from Reg Transfers, featuring live music and children's activities.

Dunstable Live's theme is Live Aid, celebrating artists from 1985, sponsored by Penrose Estate Agents, who will bring a climbing wall to raise funds for the mayor's charity. An accessible viewing platform will be added this year. The Sunday concerts line-up was provided, with tea and coffee concessions by Rotary Club and Friends of Priory House and Gardens.

Party in the Park plans are progressing well, featuring local groups, dance schools, and a young band called the Limestones. Penrose Estate Agents sponsor the event, allowing for a big screen and accessible viewing platform. Middle Row Markets will join the event with over 20 stalls. The soapbox derby has seven registered teams, with hopes for more, featuring stores, rides, catering, and live entertainment.

The 80th anniversary of VE Day was marked with £1,000 allocated for local street parties, with seven events taking place. Members were asked to approve the proposed events programme for 2026/27, with discussions on the need for band introducers, the viability of the Soapbox Derby with seven teams, and the timeline of events.

139/25 - Grove Corner and Community Engagement

The report on Grove Corner and community engagement was presented, highlighting visits and activities from February to May. Grove Corner received 322 visits from young people, and the Pokémon Club had 212 visits. Despite quieter sessions, the detached team delivered additional youth work hours, engaging with 888 young people across Dunstable.

The report noted the need to consider funding for detached youth work beyond March 2026, with discussions planned with Central Beds Council. School engagement included litter picks with Vale Academy and Beecroft Academy. Community engagement activities for those aged 10 and under were planned for the summer holidays.

Bennett Splashside Café and Community Hub hosted eight organised activities, including home education and breakfast clubs. The Splash Park reopened after repairs, with consultations planned for users. Positive feedback was shared about various activities, including the home education services and breakfast club. The Dunstable Community Lottery launched with 16 good causes signed up, generating £2,106 for good causes.

140/25 - Older People's Services

The report on older people's services was presented, detailing activities and changes. The Good Companions Club has 22 members, enjoying various activities such as parties, bowling, and talks. The Lunch Bunch moved to Priory View, facing initial catering issues but now settled with new members joining. Officers are exploring the need for an additional lunch club at Priory View.

The 55+ Breakfast Club continues to be popular, providing a space for socialising and activities. Rock 'n' Roll events are planned before March 2026, with ticket sales pending finalisation. The Big Lunch event sold out quickly, with a waiting list of 36 people. Officers are exploring ways to accommodate the waiting list. A monthly food club is being set up, aiming for volunteers to take over facilitation. Monthly coffee mornings will resume in June, with plans to recruit volunteers to

run the sessions.

141/25 - Beds FA - Peter Newton Pavilion

The report on the Peter Newton Pavilion was presented, showing minimal changes. Bedfordshire FA provided evidence of the building's maintenance and shared information about centre hires. Financially, there is no profit share for this year, with Appendix A showing current income.

142/25 - Date of the next meeting - Monday 8 September 2025 at 19.00

The meeting closed at 21:00

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee

held on Monday 9 June 2025 from 7:00 PM

Present: Councillors Peter Hollick (Chair), Sally Kimondo (Town Mayor), Richard Attwell (Deputy Town Mayor), Robert Blennerhassett, Matthew Brennan, Liz Jones

In Attendance: Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), John Crawley (Head of Grounds and Environmental Services), Jackie Carington (Democratic Services Manager), Mary Dobbs (Cemetery Manager), Katherine Doyle (Parks and Green Spaces Development Officer) and Daniel Mott (Grounds Operations Manager)

In Attendance: Councillors Nicholas Kotarski, Johnson Tamara
(Remotely)

Public: 1

143/25 - Apologies for Absence

Councillors Michelle Henderson, John Gurney, Trevor Adams, Mark Davis and Wendy Bater

144/25 - Declarations of Interest

There were no specific declarations or interest

145/25 - Public Question Time

A member of the public raised concerns to Members and Officers regarding the lack of marketing materials available at the Cemetery.

146/25 - To agree the minutes of the meeting of 10 March 2025 as a true record

The minutes of the meeting of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee held on 10 March 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

147/25 - To receive the minutes of the Meetings of Plans Sub-Committee meetings held on 17 March, 7 April, 28 April, and 12 May 2025.

It was **RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the meetings of the Plans Sub—Committee held on 17 March, 7 April, 28 April and 12 May 2025 be received.

148/25 - Action Tracker – to receive updates on previous actions

Members noted the Action Tracker provided.

The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services informed members that CCTV had not captured any footage of the fire damage being caused at Bennett's Café. This was because the CCTV cameras were intended for internal use and the periphery of the site. The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services also informed members that Bennetts Splash Park now reported to the Community Services Committee, who would receive future updates.

Grounds Information Report

Cemetery

The Cemetery Manager summarised the report

Allotments

The Cemetery Manager summarised the report

Recreation Grounds – Play Areas

The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services summarised the report

Sports Pitches and General Grounds Maintenance

The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services summarised the report.

Officers reported that a SKAG Mower had been purchased; this was a stand on mower which would be mainly used at the Cemetery.

Recreational Ground Management Plans

The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services summarised the report.

The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services reported that some Stress Testing had taken place on some of the larger trees in a couple of locations and following the assessments officers were looking at the options for removing them. It was noted that two of these trees were in a Conservation Area and permission will be needed to remove them from the Local Planning Authority.

Town Gardens and Town Centre

The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services reported that 120 units of baskets, planters and troughs would be delivered on Wednesday evening. All new bedding would be installed in the coming week.

Councillor Brennan asked for an explanation of the Living Pillars on display in High Street North and this was provided by the Head of Grounds and Environmental Services.

Town Rangers

The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services reported that the Town Rangers had received many requests for work and their responses had been welcomed by residents.

Green Spaces Projects

The Parks and Green Spaces Development Officer updated Members that the new pergola had been installed in Priory Gardens and beds were being prepared ready to receive the roses which would ultimately grow over the pergola.

The restoration of the Church St phone box was nearly complete, and the adjacent post box had been repainted by Royal Mail.

The 40th Anniversary seed packets would be distributed at Dunstable Town Councils events over the summer.

Anglia in Bloom

The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services reported that preparations were well under way for Dunstable's entry this year.

150/25 - Cemetery Reserve Spending

The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services summarised the report and asked members to approve the release of all available funds from the Cemetery Building Maintenance Reserve and to recommend to Finance and General Purposes Committee to release funding from the General Reserve.

It was

RESOLVED:

The release of money from the Cemetery Building Maintenance Reserve, totaling £27,281, to undertake the works detailed in the report.

To recommend to Finance and General Purposes Committee the release of £27,492 from the General Reserve.

151/25 - Reports from Outside Organisations:

CBC Development Committee – Cllr Nicholas Kotarski

No update

152/25 - Date of the next meeting – Monday 15 September 2025 at 7.00 pm

The meeting closed at 8.15 PM

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL

MONDAY 23 JUNE 2025

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2024/2025

Purpose of report:	<p>To</p> <p>1.1) Present to Members the final Internal Audit Report for financial year 2024/2025</p> <p>1.2) To approve the Account Governance Statement and Accounting Statements</p> <p>1.3) To authorise the Chair and Clerk to sign the Annual Governance Statement</p> <p>1.4) To authorise the Chair to sign the Accounting Statements</p> <p>1.5) To note the schedule of loans and long-term liabilities</p>
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1. ACTIONS RECOMMENDED

- 1.1. To receive and note the Internal Audit Report (final) for 2024/2025 at Appendix 1, also presented to the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 16 June 2025.
- 1.2. To approve the Annual Governance Statement and the Accounting Statements as part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2025, for submission to the Council's external auditor, in compliance with the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (S1 2015/234).
- 1.3. To authorise the Chair and Clerk to sign the Annual Governance Statement.
- 1.4. To authorise the Chair to sign the Accounting Statements.
- 1.5. To note the Council's loans and long-term liabilities as at 31 March 2025 as presented at Appendix 3.

2. INTERNAL AUDIT

- 2.1 The final Internal Audit for financial year 2024/2025 took place on 5 June 2025 and Members will be pleased to note that the report concludes that the Council maintained an adequate and effective system of internal control throughout the year. The final Internal Audit Report, appended to this report (Appendix 1) was also presented to the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 16 June 2025.

3. ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT REGULATIONS 2015

- 3.1. The Regulations mean that Dunstable Town Council qualifies as a "smaller relevant body" being that its gross income or gross expenditure was not more than £6.5 million and can therefore prepare an income and expenditure account and a

statement of balances in accordance with, and in the form specified in any Annual Return required by proper practices in relation to accounts, rather than a full set of accounts, prepared under FRSSE (Financial Reporting Standards for Smaller Enterprises).

- 3.2. The Regulations state that “A smaller relevant body must, no later than 30th June –
 - a) consider the accounting statements by the members meeting as a whole;
 - b) following that consideration, approve the accounting statements for submission to the auditor by a resolution of the body and
 - c) following approval, ensure that the accounting statements are signed and dated by the person presiding at the meeting at which that approval was given

4. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

- 4.1. The Annual Return comprises:
 - Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/2025
 - Annual Governance Statement 2024/2025 (Section 1)
 - Accounting Statements 2024/25 (Section 2)
 - External Auditor Report and Certificate (Section 3)
- 4.2. The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) is enclosed at Appendix 2 and will be submitted to the External Auditor with the requisite supporting information once approved by the Council

Annual Internal Audit Report

- 4.3. The Council should receive and note the internal audit report prior to approving the annual governance statement before approving the accounts.
- 4.4. The Council’s Internal Auditor has duly completed the relevant part of the Annual Return, assigning positive assurances in all areas. Their full report is included at Appendix 1.

Annual Governance Statement

- 4.5. The Council is required to consider and approve the Annual Governance Statement at Section 1 of the Annual Return, in which members acknowledge their responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control.
- 4.6. The statement can be evidenced by the Internal Audit Reports provided throughout the year and the final Internal Audit Report, from which it will be noted that there are no issues arising which require Member’s attention.
- 4.7. Evidence also includes the quarterly financial reports submitted to Finance and General Purposes Committee.
- 4.8. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive produces a Corporate Risk Log each year which is reviewed by the Council. The Risk Log attempts to identify the main strategic risks facing the Council and what interventions are currently in place in order to contain and minimise the risks. The Risk Log was reviewed by the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 20 January 2025 (Minute no. **040/25**).

- 4.9. The Council has adopted a Corporate Plan detailing the Council's objectives up until 2027.
- 4.10. If approved, the Annual Governance Statement will be signed by the Chair and Town Clerk and Chief Executive.

External Auditor Report and Certificate

- 4.11. Section 3 of the Annual Return is for completion by the External Auditor on completion of the audit.

5. EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS

- 5.1. The Council is required to provide electors with the opportunity to inspect the accounts and other documents for a period of 30 working days which must include the first 10 working days of July.
- 5.2. The exercise of public rights commences on 25 June 2025 and will end on 5 August 2025.
- 5.3. All statements will be published on 25 June 2025 together with a summary of Electors' Rights.

6. SUBMISSION OF ANNUAL RETURN

- 6.1. The Annual Return is to be submitted to the External Auditor by 30 June 2025.
- 6.2. The Council's appointed auditors are Forvis Mazars LLP.

7. FINANCIAL IMPACT – none

- 7.1. These are inherent within the content of this report.

8. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. This aligns with the Council's Financial Regulations.

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS - none

10. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS - none

11. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS- none

12. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1. The report and recommendations have been prepared in compliance with the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (S1 2015/234).

13. ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIODIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS – none

14. APPENDICES

- 14.1. Final Internal Audit Report for financial year 2024/2025 – Appendix 1
- 14.2. Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2024/2025 – Appendix 2
- 14.3. Schedule of loans and long-term liabilities at 31 March 2025 – Appendix 3

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 15.1. https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2015/234/pdfs/ukxi_20150234_en.pdf

16. AUTHOR

Lisa Scheder – Head of Corporate Services and Responsible Financial Officer
lisa.scheder@dunstable.gov.uk



Dunstable Town Council

Internal Audit 2024-25 (Final Update Report)

6th June 2025

Stephen Christopher

***For and on behalf of
Auditing Solutions Ltd***

Background

Town and parish councils are required by statute to make arrangements for an independent internal audit examination of their accounting records and system of internal control, and for the conclusions to be reported each year in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). Auditing Solutions Ltd was appointed to undertake this function on behalf of Dunstable Town Council for the 2024-25 financial year.

This report sets out the results of our final audit visit, which was undertaken on 5th June 2025. It updates the report issued following our interim audits, in November 2024 and March 2025. We wish to thank the Head of Corporate Services (RFO) and her colleagues for providing the documentation and explanations required to enable us to complete our audit work.

Internal Audit Approach

In carrying out our audit, we have had regard to the materiality of transactions and their susceptibility to potential mis-recording or misrepresentation in the year-end Statement of Accounts/AGAR. We have employed a combination of selective sampling techniques (where appropriate) and 100% detailed checks in a number of key areas, in order to gain sufficient assurance that the Council's financial and regulatory systems and controls are appropriate and fit for the purposes intended.

Our audit programme is designed to afford assurance that the Council's financial systems remain robust and operate in a manner to ensure effective probity of transactions and to afford a reasonable probability of identifying any material errors or possible abuse of the Council's own and the national statutory regulatory framework. The programme is also designed to facilitate our completion of the 'Annual Internal Audit Report' in the Council's AGAR, which requires independent assurance over a number of internal control objectives.

Overall Conclusion

On the basis of the programme of audit work we have undertaken for the year, we have concluded that the Council continues to maintain an adequate and effective system of internal control. The records held in support of the accounting transactions continue to be of a high standard and provide an effective audit trail, with clear cross-referencing of all relevant documentation. We have completed and signed the 'Annual Internal Audit Report' on Page 3 of the 2024-25 AGAR, having concluded that the internal control objectives as set out in that report were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of the Council.

In the sections below, we explain the objectives of each area of our audit, summarising the work undertaken to date and our findings. We are pleased to report that there were no matters arising that required a formal comment or recommendation. We ask that Members consider the content of this report.

<p>This report has been prepared for the sole use of Dunstable Town Council. To the fullest extent permitted by law, no responsibility or liability is accepted by Auditing Solutions Ltd to any third party who purports to use or rely, for any reason whatsoever, on this report, its contents or conclusions.</p>

Detailed Report

Accounting records and Banking arrangements

Our objective is to confirm that the accounting records are accurate and up to date, with no anomalous entries in the cashbooks or financial ledgers, and that appropriate banking arrangements are in place.

The Council maintains its accounting records using the RBS Omega software, which is generally acknowledged as one of the market leaders for this tier of local government.

Day-to-day business banking services continue to be provided by NatWest Bank. Two accounts are held, a Current Account and an instant access Business Reserve Account, with an automatic daily transfer between the accounts to retain a balance of £10,000 in the Current Account. In addition to the Business Reserve Account, other funds that are not required for immediate use are held in a Public Sector Deposit Fund account with CCLA Investment Management Ltd. (Until March 2025, two separate CCLA accounts were held, but these were merged just prior to the year-end).

In our audit work for the year, we have:

- Checked and agreed the opening trial balance on Omega for 2024-25 to the closing balances on the 2023-24 AGAR and the detailed accounts;
- Verified that the financial ledgers remained “in balance” throughout the year;
- Confirmed that the accounting code structure remains appropriate for the Council’s budget reporting and control requirements;
- Checked and agreed transactions in the Omega cashbooks for the Current and Business Reserve accounts to the relevant NatWest bank statements for three sample months - June and September 2024, plus February and March 2025;
- Checked the bank reconciliations for all active bank account reconciliations, including the CCLA deposits, as at 31st October 2024, 28th February 2025 and 31st March 2025, confirming that there are no anomalous entries;
- Confirmed that the funds held in the CCLA account closed in March 2025 were transferred correctly to the remaining account
- Confirmed that the bank reconciliations continue to be subject to regular independent review by councillors, as part of the quarterly financial Councillor audit and that the latest investment position is reported at each Finance & General Purposes Committee (F&GP) committee, as part of the RFO’s financial report;
- Noted that the External Auditors issued their ‘report and certificate’ on the Council’s 2023-24 AGAR on 30th September 2024 and that there were no matters arising;
- Confirmed that the overall cash balance has been reported correctly in the draft AGAR (Section 2, Line 8), and
- Confirmed that since the recent change in IT Support provider, all systems are now regularly backed-up to the Cloud.

Conclusion

There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.

Corporate Governance

Our objective is to confirm that the Council has robust corporate governance arrangements in place and that, as far as we may reasonably be expected to ascertain (as we do not attend Council or Committee meetings), all meetings are conducted in accordance with the adopted Standing Orders and no actions of a potentially unlawful nature have been, or are being, considered for implementation.

During the course of our audit work, we confirmed the following:

- Our review of the minutes of the meetings of the Full Council and its standing committees in the year did not identify any issues that we consider might have an adverse effect, through litigation or other causes, on the Council's future financial stability.
- The Council continues to keep its governance arrangements under regular review. Both the Financial Regulations and Standing Orders were updated and approved at the F&GP Committee meeting on 18th March 2024, with a further minor amendment to the Standing Orders agreed at the Council meeting on 24th June 2024. The Financial Regulations were subject to detailed review during 2024-25, to take into account the most recent changes to the NALC model financial regulations and a revised version was approved at the F&GP meeting on 17th March 2025.
- A range of other policies and procedures remain in place and are reviewed on a regular basis. From discussion with the Head of Corporate Services (RFO) we understand that consideration is to be given to the introduction of a formal timetable for the future review of all key policies and procedures.
- The Council continues to exercise the General Power of Competence. This was re-adopted at the first Annual meeting of the new Council on 15th May 2023 and will apply for the 4-year term to May 2027.

Conclusion

There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.

Expenditure

Our objective is to confirm that:

- Council resources are released in accordance with approved procedures and budgets;
- Payments are supported by appropriate documentation, either in the form of an original trade invoice or other appropriate form of document confirming the payment as due and/or an acknowledgement of receipt, where no other form of invoice is available;
- Official orders have been raised for purchases, where appropriate;

- Any discounts due on goods and services supplied are identified and appropriate action taken to secure the discount;
- The correct expense codes have been applied to invoices when processed; and
- VAT has been appropriately identified and coded to the control account for periodic recovery.

We have undertaken a review of the procedures in place in this area. To test compliance with the above criteria, we examined a sample of non-pay related payments from across the financial year. Our test sample included all individual payments in excess of £7,500, together with a more random selection of every 80th payment as recorded in the Omega cashbook. The overall gross value of expenditure items included in our sample amounted to £1,939,555. There were no matters arising.

The Council makes use of a NatWest Commercial Credit Card, with a monthly limit of £8,000, which is used mainly for items such as internet purchases and subscriptions. There are currently four users, each with a monthly expenditure limit of £2,000. The Credit Card is settled monthly by direct debit. We reviewed the statements for three sample months (periods ending 10th October 2024, 10th January 2025 and 10th March 2025, confirming that all purchases were adequately supported by receipts and were appropriate to the Council's business, and that, where appropriate, VAT was accounted for correctly.

We confirmed that VAT Returns continue to be submitted quarterly in electronic format, as required by extant legislation, with the detail being reconciled to the Omega financial ledger. At the time of our final audit, the VAT reclaims for the fall four quarters of the year had been submitted and reimbursement had been received from HMRC.

As part of our testing of expenditure, we also check, on a sample basis, to confirm that the Council is following appropriate national requirements and its own Standing Orders and Financial Regulations when entering into contracts that require to be formally tendered. At our first interim visit, we reviewed documentation relating to the award of the contract for 'Website development, hosting and maintenance'. We confirmed that the national regulatory requirements had been followed, with the tender opportunity advertised on the Government's Contracts Finder website and that, following a clear evaluation process, the award of the contract was formally approved at the F&GP Committee meeting on 16th September 2024 and subsequently minuted.

At our second audit visit, we confirmed that these regulatory requirements had also been followed for the award of a contract for waste management solutions, which was formally approved at the F&GP meeting on 17th March 2025. We also noted that, at that meeting, the F&GP Committee made a decision to allow for urgent repair works to be undertaken to the front of Grove House by extending the existing contract for the firm currently undertaking work on the building, rather than undertaking a further contract exercise. This approach is in accordance with the Financial Regulations.

Conclusion

There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.

Assessment and Management of Risk

Our objective is to confirm that the Council has put in place appropriate arrangements to identify all potential areas of risk of both a financial and health and safety nature, whilst also ensuring that appropriate arrangements exist to monitor and manage those risks in order to minimise the opportunity for their coming to fruition.

There is a requirement for the Council to formally review and approve its risk management arrangements during each financial year. We have confirmed that this was done during 2024-25, with an updated Corporate Risk Log - setting out the Council's strategic risks and the mitigating controls - being reviewed and approved by the F&GP Committee on 20th January 2025.

The Council's primary insurance cover continues to be provided by Zurich Municipal, on a long-term contract ending on 31st March 2026. We have reviewed the schedule for the current policy (to 31st March 2025) to confirm that an appropriate level of cover remains in place. We confirmed that the policy includes Employer's Liability and Public Liability of £10 million, and Fidelity Guarantee cover of £2.0 million, all of which appear to be adequate to meet the current needs of the Council.

As part of its wider health and safety arrangements, a regular programme of reviews of the Council's playgrounds and play equipment is undertaken. This includes daily and weekly inspections by the Council's own staff, with quarterly external inspections by the Play Inspection Company to check compliance with national regulatory standards. The most recent external inspections were completed in February 2025 and, from our review of the inspection reports and discussion with the Head of Grounds & Environmental Services, we have confirmed that no significant risks were identified and that the Grounds Maintenance team is addressing the various matters reported.

Conclusion

There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.

Budget Setting, Budgetary Control and Reserves

Our objective is to confirm that the Council has robust procedures in place for identifying and approving its future budgetary requirements and the level of Precept to be drawn down from Central Bedfordshire Council, and that an effective reporting and monitoring process is in place. We also consider whether the Council retains appropriate funds in earmarked and general reserves to finance its ongoing spending plans, whilst retaining appropriate sums to cover any unplanned expenditure that might arise.

During our audits, we considered the information provided to Members on progress against the 2024-25 budget. We confirmed that the F&GP Committee received financial monitoring reports at each meeting during the year, identifying areas of over/under-spending and also providing details of the movements in earmarked reserves.

In the course of our second interim audit, we reviewed the approach taken by the Council to setting its budget and Precept for 2025-26. As in previous years, the budget process involved detailed consideration by the various committees, in particular F&GP, before the Precept was formally approved by the Full Council at its meeting on 2nd February 2025. The Precept has been set at £3,282,168 (£2,933,469 for 2024-25), which represents a Council Tax charge of £246.13 per annum for a Band D property, an increase of 11.89% from the previous year.

We are satisfied that Members were provided with an appropriate level of information on which to base the budget decision, with comprehensive supporting documentation within the budget pack produced by the Head of Corporate Services (RFO) and the Town Clerk & Chief Executive. This included detailed consideration of future reserve requirements and the level of fees and charges that will apply in 2025-26.

At 31st March 2025, the Council's overall reserves stood at £2,140,531, which was slightly less than at the previous year end (£2,168,306). Of the total reserves, Earmarked Reserves amounted to £1,547,338 compared to £1,410,733 at 31st March 2024. The main movements from the prior year were an increase of just under £150,000 to the High Street Heritage Action Zone project reserve and £110,585 in the new cemetery development reserve, partly offset by the removal of reserves held in relation to Creasey Park, totalling £130,866.

The Council's remaining funds are held in the General Reserve. At 31st March 2025, the balance of this reserve stood at £593,193, compared to £757,573 at the previous year-end. It had initially been anticipated that £192,631 would be required to support the 2024-25 revenue budget. However, the outturn position was significantly better than anticipated, principally as a result of lower than anticipated salary costs and higher than budgeted interest on balances and only approximately £27,000 was required.

During the year, in the light of favourable budget forecasts, the Council agreed to make contributions to the Earmarked Reserves and to bring the General Reserve in line with its stated aim, as set out in the Treasury Management Policy, of maintaining a minimum balance equivalent to 25% of the annual salaries. The final outturn position was in line with this aim.

Conclusion

There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.

Income

During 2024-25, the Council received income from a variety of sources, including, Dunstable Cemetery, Allotments, Specialist Markets, Events, Bennett's Café & Community Hub, and bank and deposit interest. Two significant changes from the previous year were the loss of income from Creasey Park, following Central Bedfordshire Council's decision not to renew the Town Council's management agreement, and from the closure of Priory House for major restoration works, which are not scheduled for completion until June 2026.

Our objective is to confirm that robust procedures are in place to ensure that all income due to the Council is identified and invoiced (where appropriate), with recovery effected within a reasonable time span, and also that it is banked promptly in accordance with the Financial Regulations. In the course of our audits, we undertook the following work in relation to income:

Fees and charges: Fees and charges for 2024-25 were approved by the Council as part of the annual budget setting process, following detailed consideration by the F&GP Committee. We noted that a similar approach has been taken for 2025-26.

Banking of income: As noted earlier in this report, we checked and agreed four sample months' receipts transactions from the Omega cashbook to the relevant bank statements, confirming the timeliness and accuracy of transactions.

Cemetery-related fees and charges: We reviewed the interment applications and other cemetery-related activities for a sample month (September 2024). We confirmed that, in all cases, the correct amounts had been charged and that, with minor exceptions, the income due had been received and banked on a timely basis.

Allotments: At our first interim audit, we reviewed the records for the allotment year which commenced on 1st January 2024, confirming that requests for rental payments were sent to all allotment holders on a timely basis. At the time of our second interim visit, only a very few payments remained outstanding and reminder letters have been sent. We noted that revised allotment agreements have recently been sent out to allotment holders, which will apply from 1st January 2025. Our testing included the review of the documentation relating to a sample of new tenancies, entered into since 1st January 2025. We confirmed that, in all instances, the Council holds signed copies of the tenancy agreements. Work in relation to the allotments year commencing 1st January 2025 will be undertaken at our first interim audit for 2025-26.

Markets: We reviewed the spreadsheet records maintained for one sample market (held on 12th October 2024) to supporting information, to confirm that the correct amounts had been charged to stallholders, that payments were received on a timely basis, and that the details of insurance cover required by the Council had been provided. There were no matters arising

Outstanding debts: At our second interim, we reviewed the Sales Ledger as at 28th February 2025. We were pleased to note that the overall value of long-standing debts was low and we confirmed that effective control arrangements remain in place, with appropriate action being taken in relation to outstanding payments. In particular, we noted the significant efforts that had been made to recover debts owing to the Council following the termination of the Creasey Park management agreement. These were explained in a confidential report to the F&GP Committee on 17th March 2025, at which it was agreed to write off two small debts that were not recoverable. At our final audit, we confirmed that effective debtor control arrangements remained in place.

Conclusion

There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.

Petty Cash

As part of the internal audit certification process on the Council's AGAR, we are required to consider and comment upon the controls in place over the operation of petty cash accounts at the Council. Our objective in this area is, therefore, to ensure that appropriate controls are in place; that expenditure incurred is adequately supported by trade invoices or till receipts; that the expenditure is appropriate for the Council's requirements; that VAT has been separately identified for periodic recovery and that cheque reimbursements from the main cashbooks are properly recorded.

At our first interim audit, we reviewed the procedures in place for the Grove House petty cash account. We checked and agreed the cash balance held to the petty cash ledger, as at the date of our audit visit, and confirmed that there was appropriate supporting information for petty cash payments made since the date of the last reconciliation. We also confirmed the balance of the corporate petty cash float held at Grove House.

At our second interim, we checked and agreed the petty cash float held at the Bennetts Café to the petty cash ledger and reviewed the supporting vouchers for the previous week, which

had recently been submitted to the Finance team following the previous reconciliation. We confirmed that appropriate control arrangements are in place.

At our final audit, we confirmed that the year-end petty cash balances as at 31st March 2025 had been included correctly in the 'cash and bank' figure in Section 2, Line 8 of the AGAR.

Conclusion

There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.

Staff Salaries

In examining the Council's payroll function, our objective is to confirm that extant employment legislation is being adhered to, that the requirements of HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) legislation are satisfied regarding the deduction and payment over of income tax and NI contributions and that the requirements of the local government pension scheme are met.

To meet this objective, we examined the payroll procedures in place and the computations undertaken for the payments to staff in 2024-25, by reference to the October 2024 payroll documentation produced by the Council's external payroll bureau (Payroll Options Ltd, Milton Keynes).

Our audit work involved the following:

- We confirmed that the Council applied the approved employee pay rates for the financial year – noting that the annual pay settlement to apply from 1st April 2024 was agreed during October 2024, with the back-pay due to be included in the November payroll.
- From review of the contracts of employment for a sample of full and part time staff whose employment commenced in 2024-25, we confirmed that appropriate signed contracts of employment are held.
- We checked and agreed the detail of the salary payments made to a sample of staff in October 2024 to the latest schedule of salaries and pay scales.
- We confirmed that tax and NI deductions have been made applying the appropriate tax code and NI Table, also ensuring that appropriate amounts are paid to HMRC.
- We confirmed that the appropriate employee and employer contributions to the pension scheme have been applied in accordance with the current arrangements and confirmed that these have been paid over to the Pension Fund Administrators on a timely basis.
- We confirmed that the monthly net salary payments to staff agreed to the underlying records.
- We also reviewed the calculation of revised pay rates and the schedule of backdated pay which has been provided to the Payroll Bureau with regard to the national pay award for 2024-25.

Conclusion

There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.

Asset Register

The reporting arrangements for assets in the AGAR require councils to include purchase cost of each asset, or at a suitable proxy where that value is not known, and for community assets to be valued at a nominal £1. The value of individual assets should not change from one year to another, with the only amendments being the inclusion of new assets purchased or removal of assets disposed of.

In 2023-24, the Council purchased the RBS ‘Asset Inventory’ software, which is now used to maintain a detailed record of all assets held. The asset register is updated at each year end and at our final audit, we confirmed that the total cost of assets held as at 31st March 2025, £8,415,932, has been reported correctly in the draft AGAR (Section 2, Line 9).

Conclusion

There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.

Investments and Loans

Our objective is to confirm that an appropriate investment/treasury management policy is in place, that any funds not required for immediate use, whether temporarily or on a longer-term basis are invested in line with that strategy and that interest earned is brought to account correctly and appropriately in the accounting records. We also confirm that any loan repayments due to or payable by the Council are transacted in accordance with the relevant loan agreements.

During the course of our audit work, we confirmed the following:

- As required by the ‘Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments’, the Council has a Treasury Management Policy in place. This was last updated and approved at the F&GP meeting on 18th September 2023;
- At present, the Council does not hold any long-term investments. As noted above, surplus funds are held in either the NatWest (instant access) Business Reserve Account or the two CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund accounts, and
- We have checked and agreed the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) loan instalment repayments made during 2024-25 to the third party “demand” notices from the UK Debt Management Office;
- The repayments of principal and interest (the latter reported on an accrual basis) and the overall loan balances outstanding at the year-end have been reported correctly in the draft AGAR (Section 2, Lines 5 and 10, respectively)..

Conclusion

There are no matters arising that require a formal comment or recommendation.

Statement of Accounts and AGAR

We have examined the detailed accounts produced by the RBS Omega system and also the draft of the statutory “Accounting Statements 2024-25” that the Council is required to

complete and approve (Section 2 of the AGAR). We have agreed the detail to the supporting accounting records and other related documentation.

Conclusions

There are no matters arising from this area of our review that require any formal comment or recommendation. We look forward to receiving a copy of the finalised AGAR (Sections 1 and 2), once the document has been approved by the Council.

On the basis of the work undertaken during the course of our review for the year, we have completed and signed the 'Annual Internal Audit Report' on page 3 of the AGAR, assigning positive assurances in all areas of internal control

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25 Form 3

To be completed by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities*:

- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £6.5 million; or
- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:
 - are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or
 - have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices*.
2. **The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:**
 - The **Annual Internal Audit Report** must be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
 - **Sections 1 and 2** must be completed and approved by the authority.
 - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2025**.
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2025**. Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
 - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
 - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2025
 - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
 - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
 - Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

Unless requested, do not send any additional documents to your external auditor. Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed.

Once the external auditor has completed the limited assurance review and is able to give an opinion, the Annual Governance and Accountability **Section 1, Section 2 and Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate** will be returned to the authority by email or post.

Publication Requirements

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities must publish the following information on the authority website/webpage:

Before 1 July 2025 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- **Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2024/25**, approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2024/25**, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2025 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of conclusion of audit
- **Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate**
- **Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR** including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review. It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return constitutes the annual return referred to in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Throughout, the words 'external auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

*for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2024/25

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty) and is properly signed and dated. Any amendments must be approved by the authority and properly initialled.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2025.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved on the same day or before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) must certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority must in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period as soon as practical after the date of the AGAR approval.
- You must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chair, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements (**Section 2, page 5**). An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 5**. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- If the bank reconciliation is incomplete or variances not **fully** explained then additional costs may be incurred.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2024) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2025).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights of 30 consecutive working days which **must** include the first ten working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish on the authority website/webpage the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2025**.

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?	✓	
	Has all additional information requested, including the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights , been provided for the external auditor?	✓	
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?	✓	
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?	✓	
Section 2	Has the Responsible Financial Officer signed the accounting statements before presentation to the authority for approval?	✓	
	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chair of the approval meeting?	✓	
	Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?	✓	
	Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2025 been reconciled to Box 8?	✓	
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?	✓	
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? NB: do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.		✓

**Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices*, can be downloaded from www.nalc.gov.uk or from www.ada.org.uk

Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS www.dunstable.gov.uk

During the financial year ended 31 March 2025, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2024/25 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2023/24, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2023/24 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2024-25 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2023-24 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2023/24 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		

O. (For local councils only)	Yes	No	Not applicable
Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

26/11/2024 25/03/2025 05/06/2025

SF Christopher for Auditing Solutions Ltd

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

SF Christopher

Date

05/06/2025

*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025, that:

	Agreed		
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓		<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A
			✓

***Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

23/06/2025

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE
168/25

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE ADDRESS
www.dunstable.gov.uk

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 £	31 March 2025 £	
1. Balances brought forward	2,860,550	2,168,307	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	2,791,245	2,933,469	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	1,856,248	2,058,695	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	2,200,520	2,184,074	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	125,813	122,376	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	3,013,403	2,713,490	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	2,168,307	2,140,531	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).

8. Total value of cash and short term investments	2,277,012	2,135,048	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	8,207,590	8,406,182	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	920,242	841,714	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)		✓		The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			✓	The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2025 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

13/06/2025

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

23/06/2025

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE 168/25

Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Section 3 – External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2024/25

In respect of

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02 as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/> .

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2025; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2024/25

(Except for the matters reported below)* on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. (*delete as appropriate).

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

3 External auditor certificate 2024/25

We certify/do not certify* that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2025.

*We do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name

ENTER NAME OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

External Auditor Signature

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

DD/MM/YYYY

									APPENDIX 3
	LOANS AND LONG TERM LIABILITIES - AS AT 31 MARCH 2025								
PWLB	Amount	Date of Loan	Term	Type	Annual Principal	Annual Interest	Total payable	Amount Outstanding at 31.03.2025	Final Repayment Due
						2024/25	2024/25		
Luton Road	85,000.00	1987 original	40 years	EIP	£1,062.50	£334.69	£1,397.19	£2,656.25	Nov 2026
	33,468.75	part repaid May 1996							
Performance Area/ (63.55%) Cemetery Extension (36.45%)	99,925.00	March 2000	25 years	annuity	£7,108.09	£294.55	£7,402.64	-£0.03	Nov 2024
Priory House Part 1	500,000.00	March 2004	30 years	EIP	£16,666.68	£7,881.24	£24,547.92	£149,999.72	Nov 2033
Priory House Part 2	131,237.00	September 2004	30 years	EIP	£4,374.58	£2,219.53	£6,594.11	£41,558.11	May 2034
							£31,142.03		
Grove House Part 1	207,000.00	March 2005	30 years	EIP	£6,900.00	£3,671.66	£10,571.66	£69,000.00	Nov 2034
Grove House Part 2	500,000.00	September 2005	30 years	EIP	£16,666.68	£8,343.74	£25,010.42	£174,999.74	May 2035
							£35,582.08		
Cemetery Loan 2008	450,000.00	21 November 2008	30 years	EIP	£15,000.00	£10,575.75	£25,575.75	£210,000.00	Nov 2038
Priory House Part 3	215,000.00	18 October 2022	20 years	EIP	£10,750.00	£11,186.72	£21,936.72	£193,500.00	Oct 2042
				Totals	£78,528.53	£44,507.88	£123,036.41	£841,713.79	

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL

MONDAY 23 JUNE 2025

GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Purpose of Report: For members to consider recommendations to submit to Central Bedfordshire Council for the upcoming Community Governance Review

1. ACTIONS RECOMMENDED

- 1.1. To request that CBC include the proposal to amend Dunstable's parish boundary with Caddington Parish Council by incorporating land forming part of and also adjacent to the Downside Recreation Ground as laid out in Appendix 1
- 1.2. To request that CBC include the proposal to amend the boundary with Caddington Parish Council by incorporating the land occupied by St Mary's and Manshead Schools as laid out in Appendix 1
- 1.3. To oppose the changed suggested by Totternhoe Parish Council to move the land depicted in Appendix 4 into Totterhoe's parish boundary

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Central Bedfordshire Council are conducting a Community Governance Review (CGR) for the whole of the council area starting on 30 June 2025. Town and Parish Councils were given advance warning of the consultation, to enable time to discuss with councillors and residents.
- 2.2. The review will consider:
 - the creation, merger, alteration or abolition of parishes;
 - the naming of parishes and the style of any new or revised parish;
 - electoral arrangements for existing parishes including council size, the number of councillors to be elected to the council, parish warding, and
 - grouping parishes under a new common parish council with any of their surrounding areas.
- 2.3. CBC are using the government's guidance published here: [Guidance on community governance reviews](#) to base their process on. Page 24 of this guidance advises that:

"80. The general rule should be that the parish is based on an area which reflects community identity and interest and which is of a size which is viable as an administrative unit of local government".

- 2.4. Each of the recommendations in this report seek to ensure that land which would be generally understood to be part of Dunstable should be within Dunstable's parish boundary.
- 2.5. CBC have requested that any Councils looking to alter boundaries between neighbouring parishes have had formal discussions with the appropriate council(s)/residents before submitting a response to the consultation.
- 2.6. More information about how a CGR is conducted is provided here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-governance-reviews-guidance

3. WORKING GROUP

- 3.1. The Council decided to set up a Working Group to consider a suitable response. The Working Group met on 28 April and 12 May. The Working Group agreed the proposal shown in Appendix 1 to amend the boundary with Caddington Parish Council by incorporating land forming part of and also adjacent to the Downside Recreation Ground, and separately to amend the boundary to include St Mary's and Manshead Schools within the Dunstable parish boundary.
- 3.2. The proposal described in Appendix 1 was submitted to Caddington Parish Council. Caddington Parish Council's response is included at Appendix 2. Caddington oppose both suggestions. It is however recommended to proceed with asking CBC to advance these proposals on behalf of Dunstable Town Council.

4. BOUNDARY WITH TOTTERNHOE

- 4.1. Totternhoe Parish Council have written to the Town Council proposing to move the boundary line to move the field adjacent to the Badgers Gate estate into Totternhoe. Their letter is included at Appendix 3. It is understood that Totternhoe's intent is to protect it from future development / expansion of Dunstable. Dunstable Town Council has no policy or stated intention that contradicts this; there is no evidence that this land being within the Dunstable parish boundary places it at more risk of development than if the boundary were to be moved. Members may wish to consider that the land does fall naturally as part of Dunstable. Totternhoe has a Neighbourhood Plan which does not include this land. It is recommended to oppose this change.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. Central Bedfordshire Council will be carrying out the Governance Review in accordance with the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006 as amended by the Legislative Reform (Community Governance Reviews) Order 2015.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. Any boundary changes which increased or reduced the number of homes within the parish boundary would affect the Council Tax Base for Dunstable. However, none of the proposals discussed above involve any homes; there would be no financial implications either way for any of the proposals.

7. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. None

8. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. None

9. HEALTH AND SAFETY, LEGAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIODIVERSITY POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. None.

10. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. None

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1. Appendix 1 Proposed changes to Caddington Boundary
- 11.2. Appendix 2 Reply from Caddington Parish Council
- 11.3. Appendix 3 Letter from Totternhoe Parish Council
- 11.4. Appendix 4 Map of Totternhoe's Proposal

12. AUTHOR

Paul Hodson - Town Clerk & Chief Executive
Paul.hodson@dunstable.gov.uk

Proposal 1

To amend the parish boundary to include the land shown.

The land marked in purple is owned by Dunstable Town Council and is provided as part of the Downside Recreation Ground.

The land marked in red is agricultural land known as Cottage Bottom Field. The land is owned by CBC at present. Dunstable Town Council intend to purchase the land and develop a new cemetery on the site.

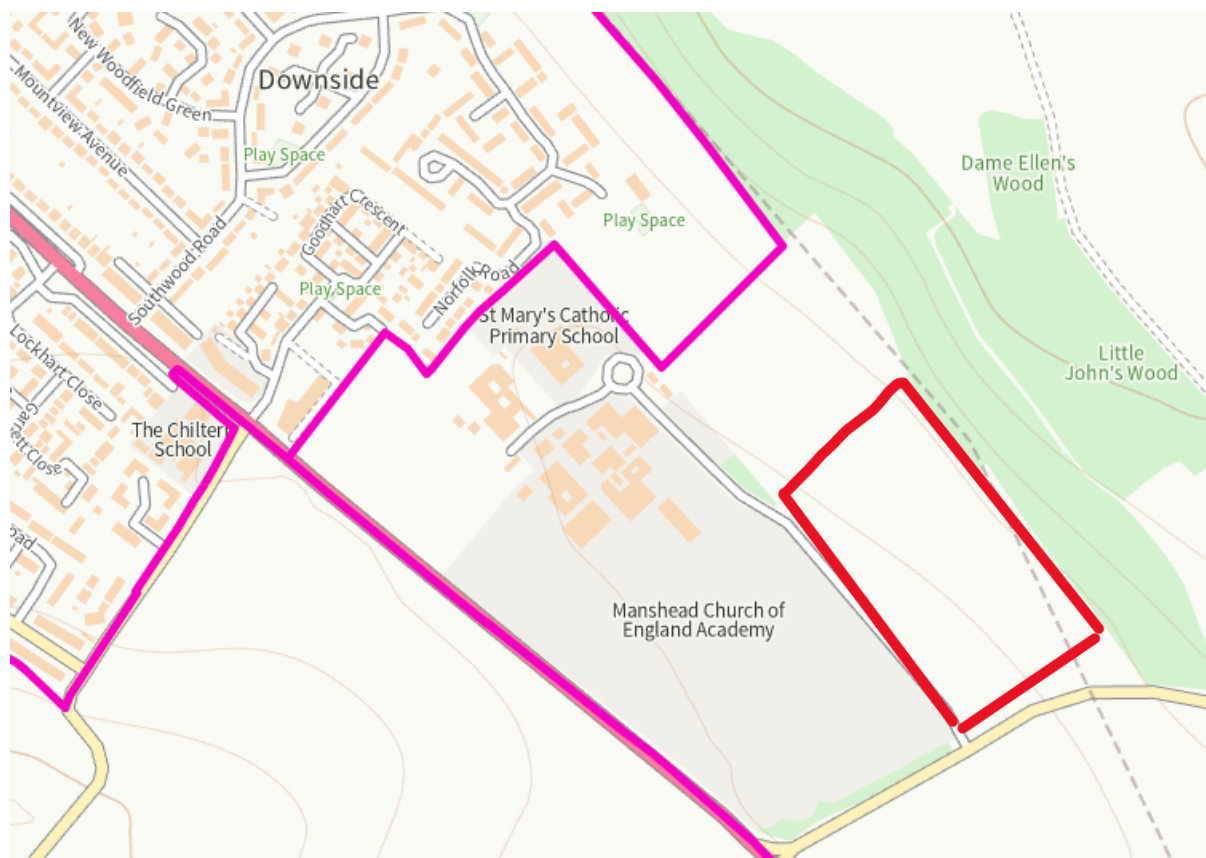
Operating a cemetery outside the parish boundary would not limit or affect the project – this would not change charges for Dunstable residents, for example. However, the Council's Community Governance Review Working Group propose that it would make sense for land being used for a Dunstable facility to be moved to form part of the parish boundary.

None of the land includes any residential properties, nor is it likely to ever be used for residential development.

Satellite View of Option 1

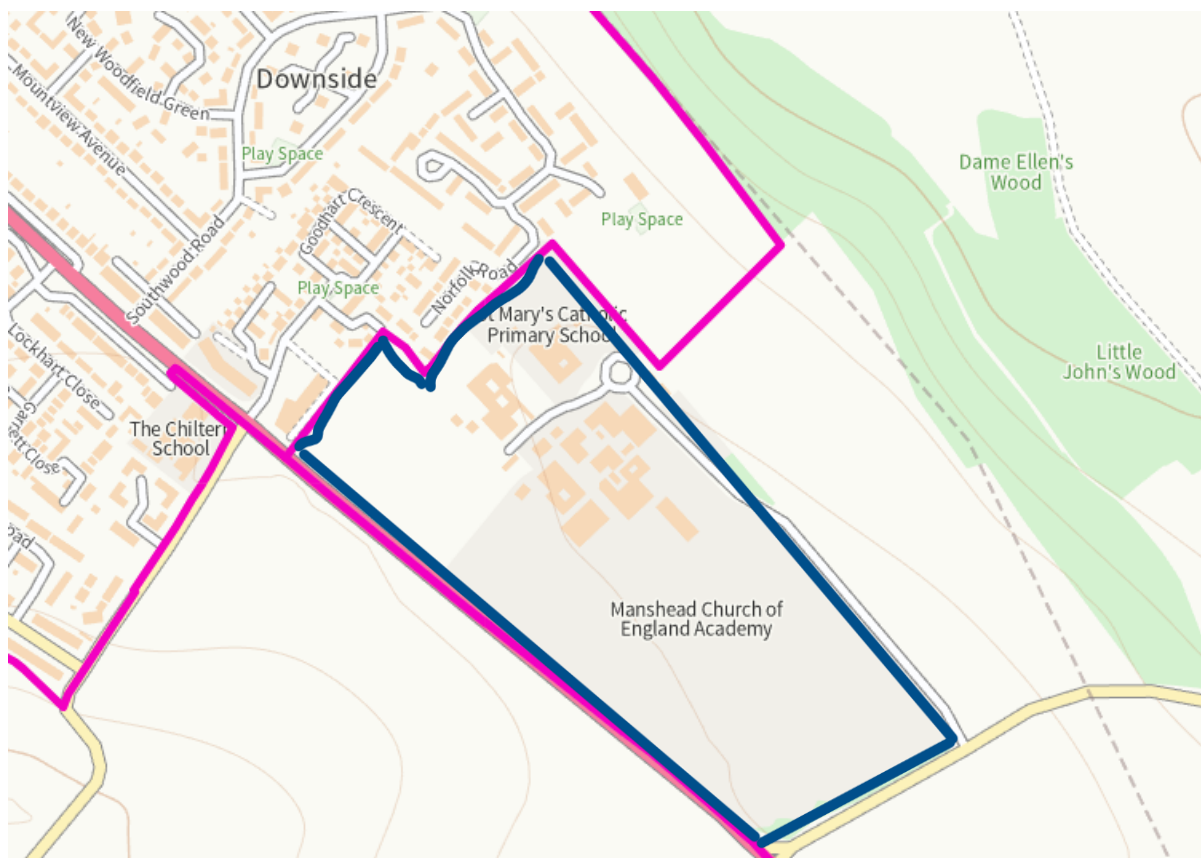


Option 1 showing current parish boundary



Option 2

To amend the parish boundary to include the land shown below in blue:

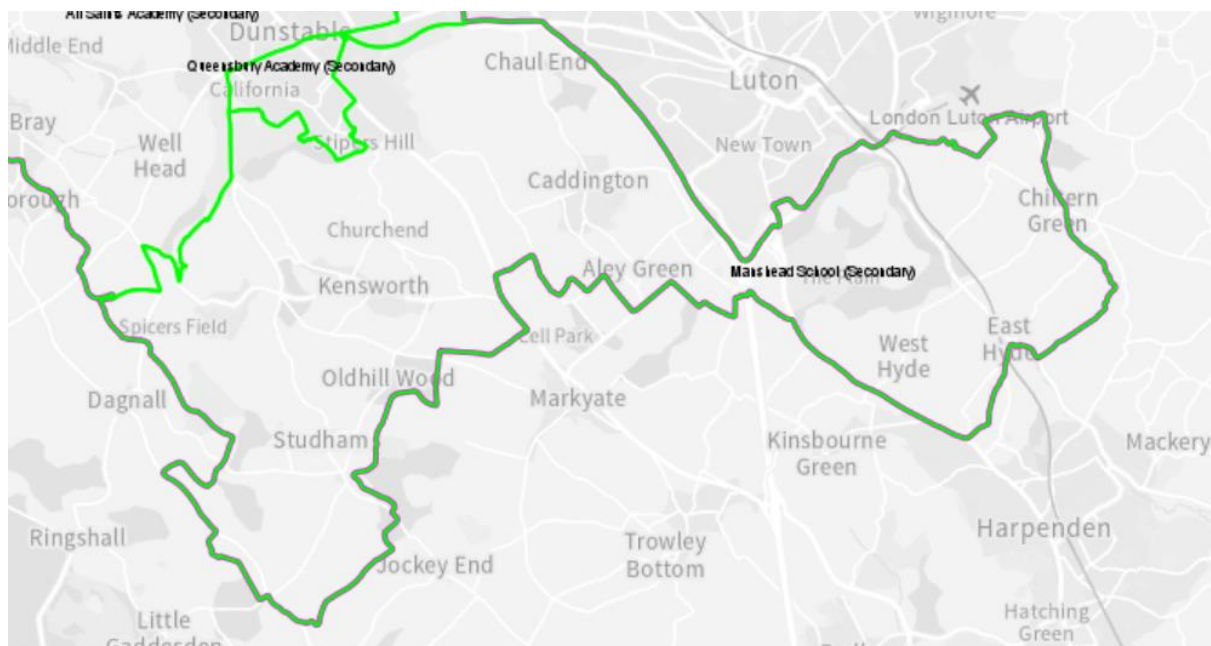


This would mean that the land occupied by Manshead and St Mary's Schools would be inside the Dunstable parish boundary. Dunstable Town Council's Community Governance Review Working Group propose that this appears to be a common-sense change to reflect that the schools are adjacent to Dunstable and some distance from Caddington itself. It would make sense for land being used for a Dunstable facility to be moved to form part of the parish boundary.

None of the land includes any residential properties, nor is it likely to every be used for residential development.

Brian Dunleavy has confirmed that this would not involve a change to CBC ward boundaries, so the remit of CBC Members would be unchanged.

Lydia Braisher, CBC's Admissions Manager, has confirmed that, "*St. Mary's Catholic Primary School does not operate a catchment area as admissions are primarily based on faith criteria. Manshead School's catchment area, covers Dunstable, Caddington and the surrounding villages/hamlets, so any parish boundary change will not impact on the school's catchment area as they should all be included within the catchment anyway. Below is the catchment boundary of Manshead School which depicts the area covered:*



Appendix 2: Response From Caddington Parish Council

Dear Paul,

Thank you for these draft informal proposals, which were discussed at the Full Parish Council last night.

The Council voted unanimously against both proposals on the grounds that part of the Parish has already moved into Dunstable in recent years with the loss of a care home, hotel and houses.

The Council felt that the loss of two schools would be very detrimental to the Parish. especially as losing the High school would mean that there would be no high schools at all within the Parish. Currently Manshead school is seen as a local Caddington School with a Caddington address.

Please do let me know if you require any further information.

Kind Regards

Linda Heartfield

Clerk to Caddington Parish Council



TOTTERNHOE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to the Council

Miss J Todd

6b Higher Rads End

Eversholt

Beds MK17 9ED

Email

parishclerk@totternhoe.com

22 May 2025

Paul Hodson Esq
Town Clerk and Chief Executive
Dunstable Town Council
76 High Street North
Dunstable
Beds LU6 1NF

Dear Mr Hodson

Community Governance Review

Totternhoe Parish Council has undertaken a Governance Review as proposed under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the guidance issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

The Parish Council examined its boundaries and reviewed their relevance in reflecting local identities and considered that in one area the boundary between the Parish and Dunstable had become anomalous.

The existing boundary between the Parish and the Badgers Gate development on the western edge of Dunstable follows the byway open to all traffic which leads from Dunstable Road, Totternhoe to the byway known as Green Lane. The boundary in our view should follow the field boundary adjacent to Badgers Gate houses instead. The field is within the Green Belt that washes over Totternhoe and is in the ownership of a Totternhoe farmer.

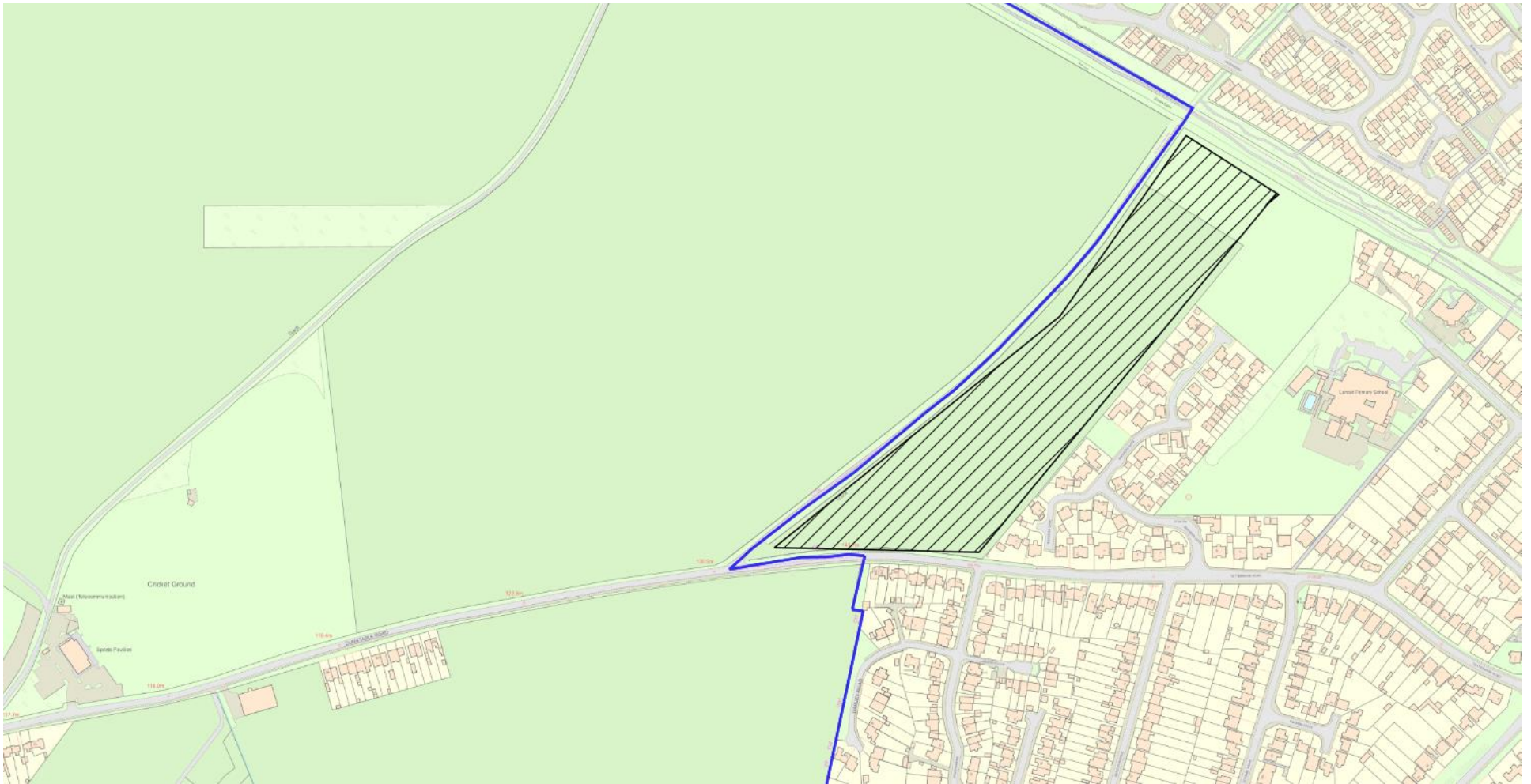
Totternhoe Parish Council therefore considers that this alteration puts in place a strong boundary tied to firm detail on the ground and would be grateful for the support of your Council in achieving its aspirations in this respect.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Julie Todd'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Julie' and the last name 'Todd' clearly distinguishable.

Julie Todd
Clerk to the Council

Appendix 4: Land requested to move into Totternhoe



Blue Line is the current parish boundary

Hatched area is the proposed land to move into Totternhoe