

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF DUNSTABLE
TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 1
DECEMBER 2025 FROM 7:00PM

Present: Councillors Sally Kimondo (Town Mayor), Richard Attwell (Deputy Town Mayor), Matthew Neall, Matthew Brennan, Michelle Henderson, Peter Hollick, Nicholas Kotarski, Johnson Tamara, Trevor Adams and Wendy Bater

In Attendance: Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), John Crawley (Head of Grounds and Environmental Services), Lisa Scheder (Head of Corporate Services and Responsible Finance Officer) and Jackie Carrington (Democratic Services Manager)

In Attendance: Councillor John Gurney
(Remotely)

Public: No public present

The meeting commenced with a minute's silence to honour the passing of Sylvia Powdrill, a former Mayor of Dunstable. Pastor Julian Richards led the council in prayers.

279/25 - Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jones, Kenson Gurney, O'Riordan, Davis, Crawley, and Alderman.

280/25 - Declarations of Interest

No specific declarations were made.

281/25 - Public Question Time

No members of the public were present.

282/25 - To agree as a correct record the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 6 October 2025

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Full Council held on 6 October 2025 be signed as a correct record

283/25 - Town Mayor's Remarks including Civic Events and Mayoral Activities

The Town Mayor expressed gratitude for the support received from council officers and members of the public. The Mayor highlighted the torchlight event held on Friday, which was well-received, and noted the progress observed at Priory House. The Mayor encouraged council members to participate in local community events without needing formal invitations.

The Deputy Mayor provided an update on events attended on behalf of the Mayor, including the Ampthill Town Council civic reception, Signpost 40-year anniversary event, Royal British Legion poppy prom, and a circus fundraising event.

284/25 - To receive reports of the following Committees:

284/25.1 – Community Services 3 November 2025

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 3 November 2025 be received

284/25.2 – Grounds and Environmental Services 10 November 2025

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee held on 10 November 2025 be received

284/25.3 – Finance and General Purposes 17 November 2025

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 17 November 2025 be received

285/25 - Community Governance Review

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive provided an update on the Community Governance Review being carried out by Central Bedfordshire Council.

RESOLVED:

- 1.1. To strongly oppose the arbitrary and unevidenced recommendation to reduce the number of Councillors in East Ward by one and to insist that Dunstable's democratic representation be maintained at its current level.
- 1.2. That the Council confirms its endorsement of the draft recommendation to move the parish boundary incorporating the land forming part of and also adjacent to the Downside

Recreation Ground together with the land occupied by St Mary's and Manshead Schools from the parish of Caddington into the parish of Dunstable Town Council.

1.3. To continue to oppose the changes suggested by Totternhoe Parish Council to move the proposed land into Totternhoe's parish boundary

1.4. That the Mayor arrange for the Council to send a representative to the appropriate meeting of CBC to present the Town Council's position. (Cllr Kotarski indicated his willingness to represent the Town Council)

286/25 - Budget 2026/27

The Head of Corporate Services and Responsible Finance Officer presented the draft budget for the financial year 2026/27, noting that officers were working to reduce the proposed 12% increase. Changes to business rates, pension contributions, council tax base, and forecast underspends were being reviewed. The council agreed to adopt a balanced budget, pending further reviews and final figures.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive gave a verbal update on Central Bedfordshire Council's proposed changes to Council Tax relief. It was noted that the proposed changes would impact Dunstable residents on low incomes and would also change the Town Council's Council Tax base, which would change the precept. A working group was suggested to review and respond to the consultation.

ACTION: Set up Working Group to review and respond to the consultation on CBC's proposed changes to Council Tax relief.

Democratic Services Manager

287/25 - Internal Audit

The council received and noted the first interim internal audit report for 2025/26. The report indicated that the council maintained an adequate and effective system of internal controls, with no matters arising.

RESOLVED: to note and receive the first interim internal audit report for 2025/2

288/25 - Events Budget

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive presented the report following The Events Budget Working Group meeting to discuss potential savings by removing one or more events from the events programme for 2026. The group recommended cancelling Priory Pictures, which would save approximately £5,000, representing 0.17% of the budget. The council agreed

that this would be the best option for cost savings while still providing film screenings at other events like the Soapbox Derby and Proms. The working group emphasised the importance of maintaining popular events and adjusting the budget accordingly.

RESOLVED: to remove Priory Pictures from the Events Programme for 2026.

289/25 - Town Meeting 2026 - Verbal Update

The Chief Executive provided an early update on the planning for the town meeting scheduled for 23 March 2026. The meeting will be held at the college, as previous meetings there have been well attended. The proposed theme for the next town meeting is "Volunteering in Dunstable," with a particular focus on Dunstable in Bloom but also volunteering generally. Members expressed support for the theme, highlighting the importance of recognising and supporting local volunteers.

290/25 - Dunstable Joint Committee

The Chair of the Dunstable Joint Committee provided an update on the recent meeting. Contributions from local business groups and the police were discussed, with an emphasis on improving communication with the police to better review their reports. A working group has been established to discuss a joint response to Central Bedfordshire's upcoming budget by CBC.

291/25 - To receive reports/updates by Members of Central Bedfordshire Council on matters of interest to the Town Council

A member of Central Bedfordshire Council provided updates on several matters.

292/25 - Date of Next Meeting Monday 9 February 2026 at 7pm

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Monday, 9 February 2026 at 7pm.

The meeting closed at 8.05 PM