

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL

SERVICES COMMITTEE

HELD ON MONDAY 19 JANUARY 2026 FROM 7.00 PM

Present: Councillors Richard Attwell (Deputy Town Mayor), Peter Hollick (Chair), Michelle Henderson (Vice-Chair), Wendy Bater, Robert Blennerhassett, Matthew Brennan and John Gurney

In Attendance: Councillor Kenson Gurney, Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), John Crawley (Head of Grounds and Environmental Services), Kelley Hallam (HR & Payroll Manager), James Stenson (Cemetery Manager) and Daniel Mott (Grounds Operations Manager)

In Attendance: Councillors Sally Kimondo (Town Mayor) and Nicholas Kotarski (Remotely)

Public: None

025/26 - Apologies for Absence

Councillors Trevor Adams, Mark Davies, Louise O’Riordan and Johnson Tamara

026/26 - Declarations of Interest

Cllr Henderson (Non-pecuniary) – Allotment tenant

027/26 - Public Question Time

There were no questions from the public.

028/26 - To agree the minutes of the meeting of 10 November 2025 as a true record

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee held on 10 November 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

029/26 - To receive the minutes of the Meetings of Plans Sub-Committee meetings held on 8 December 2025 and 5 January 2026.

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meetings of the Plans Sub-Committee held 8 December 2025 and 5 January 2026 be received.

030/26 - Action Tracker

Members noted the Action Tracker provided.

In regard to the action to investigate salting and gritting of town centre pathways and public areas, it was:

RESOLVED: that the Council further lobby Central Bedfordshire Council and its members for improved pavement gritting in the Town Centre

031/26 - Grounds Information Report

The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services and the Grounds Operations Manager summarised the report.

Members noted that there were 305 people on the allotment waiting list and that officers were working on a report that would give options on how to tackle the demand for allotment plots.

The quarterly play inspections, which included the gym equipment and the skate park had taken place in November. No high-risk items were identified and the eight medium risk items identified were dealt with as a priority.

Two large mature trees, one in Grove House Gardens and one in Brewers Hill Recreation Ground, would be removed after failing stress testing analysis for stability and safety in the tree management survey.

Dunstable had been chosen to represent the Anglia region in the large town category at the Britain in Bloom 2026 finals. Judging would take place between July and August.

032/26 – Vehicle Replacement Programme and Spending Approval

The Grounds Operations Manager presented a detailed report that sought the approval of a revised vehicle replacement programme and the release of allocated reserves to purchase a new Town Ranger vehicle and the refurbishment of the cemetery digger.

Members suggested that early consideration for secure electric charging infrastructure be investigated before the purchase of additional electric vehicles in future years.

Action: Head of Grounds & Environmental Services

RESOLVED: i) that the revised vehicle replacement programme as set out in the report be approved

ii) that the Committee approve the release of £50,000 from the Vehicle and Equipment Reserve to purchase a new Town Ranger vehicle (including fit out) and to refurbish the cemetery digger

033/26 – Budget Proposal for 2026/2027

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive presented a detailed report on the draft budget proposals and fees and charges for Grounds and Environmental Services for 2026/2027 and requested Members to consider, comment and make recommendations to the

Finance and General Purposes Committee accordingly.

The Committee thanked officers for their hard work in finding savings and amendments enabling the proposed budget increase to be reduced from 12% to 7.92%.

RESOLVED: to recommend the draft Grounds and Environmental services budget 2026/2027 as presented, with no amendments or further recommendations, to the Finance and General Purposes Committee

034/26 – Reports from Outside Organisations

None

035/26 - Date of the next meeting

Monday 9 March 2026 at 7.00 pm

As this was John Crawley's final meeting as Head of Grounds and Environmental Services, the Chair expressed appreciation for his contributions and the achievements attained during his tenure at Dunstable Town Council and extended best wishes for his future endeavours. The Committee Members warmly concurred with the Chair's remarks.

The meeting closed at 7.57pm