

## DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

HELD ON MONDAY 9 FEBRUARY 2026 FROM 7 PM

**Present:** Councillors Sally Kimondo (Town Mayor), Richard Attwell (Deputy Town Mayor), Wendy Bater, Phillip Crawley, Mark Davis, John Gurney, Kenson Gurney, Michelle Henderson, Peter Hollick, Nicholas Kotarski, Matthew Neall and Johnson Tamara

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

**In Attendance:  
(Remotely)** None

**Public:** None

The meeting commenced with a minute's silence to honour the passing of former Councillor Alan Corkhill. Pastor Julian Richards led the council in prayer.

#### **053/26 - Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Trevor Adams, Matthew Brennan, Gregory Alderman and Councillor O'Riordan.

Members were informed that the last meeting attended by Cllr Louise O'Riordan was 18 August 2025. The Mayor read the following reason that had been submitted by Councillor O'Riordan as a request for Members to formally approve her absence.

*"Councillor O'Riordan's absence is due to health impacts arising from unresolved council related safeguarding concerns and bullying, and ongoing recovery following that failure."*

Councillor O'Riordan's request was discussed. It was

**RESOLVED:** Not to accept Councillor O'Riordan's reason for non-attendance.

#### **054/26 - Declarations of Interest**

No specific declarations were made.

#### **055/26 - Public Question Time**

None

**056/26 - To agree as a correct record the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Monday 1 December 2025**

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meeting of the Full Council held on 1 December 2025 be signed as a correct record

**057/26 - Town Mayor's Remarks including Civic Events and Mayoral Activities**

The Mayor expressed gratitude to everyone who had participated in recent civic events and encouraged continued engagement with local residents through these activities. The Mayor highlighted several significant events, including the torchlight procession and the tree planting ceremony celebrating the Council's 40th anniversary.

The Deputy Mayor added remarks about various events he had attended, such as the Christmas shop window judging, the Scouts Christmas concert, and the Hospice at Home Christmas dinner. Both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor emphasised the positive impact these events had had on the community.

**058/26 - To receive reports of the following Committees:**

**058.1/26 - Community Services 12 January 2026**

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the Community Services Committee held on 12 January 2026 be received

**058.2/26 - Grounds and Environmental Services 19 January 2026**

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee held on 19th January 2026 be received

**058.3/26 - Finance and General Purposes 26 January 2026**

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 26th January 2026 be received

**059/26 - Budget Report 2026/27**

Councillor Kotarski, Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, presented the budget report for 2026/27. The report detailed the Council's financial plans, including the introduction of new features to Dunstable, such as the wedding venue at Grove House and expansion of the Town Ranger service. The budget aimed to balance the need for new initiatives with the minimisation of Council tax increases. The proposed budget included a precept upon Central Bedfordshire Council, resulting in a charge of £265.63 per Band D property per year, an increase of 7.92%. The recommendations were supported and seconded, and the motion was carried.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1.1. That the proposed budget and fees and charges for 2026/27 be approved, as presented in enclosed at Appendices 1 and 2

- 1.2. That the proposed ear marked reserves for 2026/27 be approved, as listed in Appendix 3
- 1.3. That, in consequence of the foregoing recommendations, the Town Council issue a precept upon Central Bedfordshire Council of £3,611,546, resulting in a Dunstable Town Council Tax charge of £265.63 for a Band D property per year, being an increase of 7.92%, which equates to an increase of £19.50, or 37.5p per week.
- 1.4. That the proposed four-year budget be adopted for the purpose of forward planning.

### **060/26 - External Audit**

Members were informed that the external audit for the financial year 2024 to 2025 had been completed in December 2025 without any exceptions. The Council expressed gratitude to the officers involved in ensuring the audit's completion.

### **061/26 - To appoint an additional member and Vice Chair of the Personnel Committee**

Following the resignation of Councillor Jones, the Council was asked to appoint an additional member of the Personnel Committee. Councillor Tamara was nominated and seconded for the position.

**RESOLVED:** that Councillor Tamara be appointed as an additional member of the Personnel Committee.

The election of the Vice Chair was deferred to the Personnel Committee's next meeting.

### **062/26 - Representatives To Outside Bodies**

Members discussed the appointment of representatives to outside bodies, specifically Dunstable Pride and Friends of Priory House.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1.1 To appoint a representative to Pride in Dunstable
- 1.2 To appoint Councillor Brennan as the representative for Dunstable Pride.
- 1.3 To appoint a representative to the Friends of Priory House and Gardens.
- 1.4 To appoint Councillor Tamara as the representative for the Friends of Priory House and Gardens.

### **063/26 - Dunstable Charities Representatives**

The Council needed to appoint replacement representatives for two Dunstable charities following the resignation of Councillor Jones.

**RESOLVED:** that Councillor Tamara be appointed as the representative for Dunstable Poor's Charity.

**RESOLVED:** that Councillor Tamara be appointed as the representative for Blandina Marshe/Mary Lockington Charity.

**064/26 - To appoint an additional representative to the Dunstable Joint Committee**

The Council discussed the need for an additional representative to the Dunstable Joint Committee due to Councillor Matthew Neall's dual representation. After consideration, the Council decided to maintain the current representation without appointing an additional member.

**065/26 - To receive the minutes of the Dunstable Joint Committee held on 18 September 2025 and a verbal update from the meeting held on 27 November 2025**

The minutes of the Dunstable Joint Committee held on 18th September 2025 were received. Councillor Attwell gave a verbal update from the meeting held on 27th November 2025, noting that the working group had responded to the CBC budget consultation. No further questions were raised.

**066/26 - To receive reports/updates by Members of Central Bedfordshire Council on matters of interest to the Town Council**

Members of Central Bedfordshire Council provided updates on matters of interest, including the upcoming budget discussions and the introduction of glass collection throughout Central Bedfordshire. The importance of washing glass before recycling was emphasised. Members acknowledged the tight budget constraints faced by Central Bedfordshire Council.

**067/26 - Exclusion of Public and Press**

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

The public and press were asked to leave the meeting, and the live stream was ended

**068/26 - Reference Up Report from Finance & General Purposes Committee**

The recommendation provided was discussed and it was

**RESOLVED:** to defer the matter until it was necessary to do something further

**069/26 - Cemetery Land**

Members discussed a proposal to purchase land at Cottage Bottom Field to enable the development of a new cemetery. It was

**RESOLVED:** to purchase the land outlined from Central Bedfordshire Council for a cost not greater than £102,500.

to delegate to the Town Clerk & Chief Executive to negotiate with CBC and any other interested parties on additional associated costs and timescales for the purchase of the land.

**070/26 - Date of the next meeting Monday 30 March 2026 at 7pm**

**The meeting closed at 9:00 PM**