Dunstable Town Council

Grove House, 76 High Street North, Dunstable, Beds, LU6 1NF

PUBLIC NOTICE OF MEETING

Dunstable Town Council

Tuesday, 29 September 2026

Dear All,

Notice is hereby given of a public meeting of the Dunstable Town Council to be held at 7:00 PM on Monday, 5 October 2026 in the Council Chamber, Grove House, 76 High Street North.

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. To submit a question, please contact the Council at democratic@dunstable.gov.uk or call 01582 513000 by 4 pm on the Friday immediately before the meeting.

This meeting will be filmed, livestreamed and will be made available for repeated public 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.

Paul Hodson

Town Clerk and Chief Executive to Dunstable Town Council

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

3. Public Question Time

4. To agree the minutes of the meeting of the meeting of 22 June 2026 as an accurate record

5. To Receive reports from the following committees

5.1 Community Services 7 September 2026

5.2 Grounds and Environmental Services 14 September 2026

5.3 Finance and General Purposes 21 September 2026

6. To receive a verbal update from the Dunstable Joint Committee held on 17 September 2026

7. Town Mayor's Remarks including Civic Events and Mayoral Activities

8. External Audit - Conclusion 2025-2026

9. Redecoration Decision Report

10. Annual Report 2025 / 26

To receive the Annual Report

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

12. Reports from Outside Organisations

Dunstable Rotary - Town Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Chairs of Community Services, Grounds and Environmental services and Finance and General Purposes
Bedfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils - Councillor Kenson Gurney

13. Exclusion of Public and Press

To RESOLVE that, under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s.1(2), the public and press be excluded from the remainder of the meeting by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

14. Cemetery Matters - verbal update *(Exempt)*

APPENDIX I — Public Documents

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4. To agree the minutes of the meeting of the meeting of 22 June 2026 as an accurate record

22.06.26 Full Council minutes.pdf

5.1 Community Services 7 September 2026

Minutes - CS Meeting 7 September 2026 Updated (1).pdf

5.2 Grounds and Environmental Services 14 September 2026

Grounds and Environmental Services Committee-Minutes (9) (1).pdf

5.3 Finance and General Purposes 21 September 2026

Finance and General Purposes Committee-Minutes (6).pdf

7. Town Mayor's Remarks including Civic Events and Mayoral Activities

Town Mayors Remarks October 26 (2).pdf

8. External Audit - Conclusion 2025-2026

Dunstable Town Council - Completion Letter (ID 3224830).pdf
Dunstable Town Council - REVIEWED AGAR 2025_26 (ID 3221064).pdf

9. Redecoration Decision Report

Painting Sept 26 Decision Report.pdf

10. Annual Report 2025 / 26

Annual Report 2025-2026 for Council 05.10.26.pdf
Appendix 1 - Annual Report 2025 - 2026 (A4).pdf

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

HELD ON MONDAY 22 JUNE 2026 FROM 7 PM

Present: Councillors Richard Attwell (Town Mayor), Gregory Alderman, Wendy Bater, Matthew Brennan, Steve Collins, Phillip Crawley, John Gurney, Kenson Gurney, Michelle Henderson, Peter Hollick, Sally Kimondo, Nicholas Kotarski, Shaun Moulster, Matthew Neall and Johnson Tamara

In Attendance: Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive) and Lisa Scheder (Head of Corporate Services and Responsible Finance Officer)

In Attendance: (Remotely) None

Public: None

The Town Mayor's Chaplain, Reverend Ricky Turner led the council in prayer.

202/26 - Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Robert Blennerhassett

203/26 - Declarations of Interest

No specific declarations were made.

204/26 - Public Question Time

None

205/26 - To agree as a correct record the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Monday 18 May 2026

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Full Council held on Monday 18 May 2026 be signed as a correct record

206/26 - To receive reports of the following Committees:

206.1/26 - Community Services 1 June 2026

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Community Services Committee held on 1 June 2026 be received

206.2/26 - Grounds and Environmental Services 8 June 2026

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee held on 8 June 2026 be received

206.3/26 - Finance and General Purposes 15 June 2026

Councillor Hollick informed Members that he had been part of a group from the Dunstable Twinning Association who recently attended a celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Porz Twinning Association.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 15 June 2026 be received

207/26 - To receive a verbal update from the Dunstable Joint Committee held on 4 June 2026

Councillor Brennan informed Members that he had been elected as Chair just for the previous meeting, and the next meeting would elect a chair for the remainder of the year. The Joint Committee had allocated the remaining funding of £38,000 to be match funding for the Town Council's bid to Anglia Water to provide an attenuation tank in Bennett's Recreation Ground to help divert flood waters from the town centre. The Committee had received a presentation on the Dunstable Community Emergency Response Plan (CERT) and Councillor Brennan encouraged Members to join the WhatsApp group.

208/26 - Town Mayor's Remarks including Civic Events and Mayoral Activities

The Town Mayor, Councillor Richard Attwell summarised the Civic Events and Mayoral Activities he had attended since becoming Mayor in May 2026.

209/26 - Proposed Motion from Councillor Richard Attwell (Town Mayor)

Councillor Attwell Proposed, it was seconded and

RESOLVED:

"That the Mayoral Handbook be amended to clarify that the Deputy Mayor is not required to seek the Mayor's approval before wearing the Deputy Mayor's Chain of Office when undertaking official civic duties.

Specifically, the guidance should now read:

8. *a) The Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayoress/Consort will be expected to attend all the annual civic functions and chains/badge of Office should be worn as appropriate. As a general rule the Deputy Mayor's chain/badge of Office should be worn at all the major annual civic events and for all full Council meetings and when the Deputy represents the Mayor at official engagements and at all other events/receptions attended by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor together in an official capacity."*

210/26 - Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26

The Head of Corporate Services and Responsible Financial Officer presented the report.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: 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 2026, 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) as presented at Appendix 2.

210.1/26 - To receive the final internal audit report for 2025/26

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: To authorise the Chair and Clerk to sign the Annual Governance Statement.

210.2/26 - To approve the Annual Governance Statement and the Accounting Statements in the Annual Governance Return for 2025/26

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: To authorise the Chair to sign the Accounting Statements

211/26 - To review membership of the New Cemetery Working Group

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: that Councillors Tamara, Kenson Gurney, Attwell, Henderson and Brennan form the new cemetery working group.

Members also expressed willingness to co-opt other interested individuals to the Group. All Members were asked to submit suggestions for consideration before the next meeting of the Council.

ACTION: All Members

212/26 - Reference up from Finance and General Purposes

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: to approve the updated Health and Safety Policy

213/26 - To receive reports/updates by Members of Central Bedfordshire Council on

matters of interest to the Town Council

Councillor Brennan updated Members that Central Bedfordshire Council had agreed that High Street Rental Auctions can go forward. This would enable CBC to force a landlord to auction a property for rental in certain circumstances.

Councillor John Gurney updated Members that CBC had emailed all CBC Councillors today informing them that the government had offered CBC just £250,000 to enter into a combined authority with Luton, Milton Keynes and Bedford Councils. Planning arrangements were being changed by the government to reduce the powers of Central Bedfordshire Council in certain circumstances. An initial briefing would be provided CBC's development Control Committee, at which Councillor John Gurney undertook to ask whether the Town Council could be provided with the information given.

214/26 - Reports from Outside Organisations

Dunstable Rotary
Councillor Kotarski updated Members that the Rotary Club were supporting band concerts during the summer.

BATPC
Councillor Kenson Gurney informed Members that the Council may be offered to sign up to a parish charter by CBC. No details were available.
Councillor Gurney updated Members that the Council had three places available at the Association's AGM and encouraged Members to attend.

215/26 - Exclusion of the 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, that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to meetings) Act 1960 the public and the press be excluded

216/26 - Reference up from Grounds and Environmental Services

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive updated Members on matters relating to Dunstable Cemetery. Members expressed support for the approach taken.

217/26 - Date of the next meeting Monday 5 October 2026 at 7pm

The meeting closed at 8:08 pm

Dunstable Town Council

Minutes of the Community Services Committee

Held at the Council Chamber, Grove House, 76 High Street North, Dunstable, Beds, LU6 1NF

On Monday, 7 September 2026

Attendance

Present: Councillors K Gurney (Chair), Adams, Bater, Collins, Hollick (substitute for Blennerhassett), Tamara (substitute for Kimondo)

Apologies: Councillors Alderman, Attwell, Blennerhassett (substituted by Hollick), Davis, Kimondo (substituted by Tamara), Kotarski

Also present: Paul Hodson, Georgia Pearson, Becky Wisbey, Annette Clynes, Gill Peck, Kelley Hallam, Lisa Stephens

Public: None

Apologies for Absence

Councillors, Alderman, Attwell, Blennerhassett (substituted by Hollick), Davis, Kimondo (substituted by Tamara), Kotarski

223/26 Declarations of Interest

There were no specific declarations of interest.

224/26 Public Question Time

There were no questions from the public.

225/26 To agree the minutes of the meeting of the meeting of 1 June 2026 as an accurate record

It was raised that an amendment was required to minute 157/26, to read Bennetts Cafe in place of Priory House.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 1 June 2026 were approved, subject to that amendment, and signed by the Chair.

226/26 Gateway Christmas Lighting Scheme Decision Report

The Town Centre Manager provided an update to members and outlined the options set out in the report for the town Gateway Christmas Lighting Scheme. Members discussed the options in detail.
It was proposed, seconded and,

RESOLVED: To extend the lighting scheme within the existing budget by relocating the additional lights to the entrances to the town centre.

227/26 Town Centre Services

Members were provided with the report and discussed all points in detail.

An update was provided on the Soapbox Derby market held on Saturday. Approximately 21 stalls attended, with traders remaining in the square throughout the event. The event was well attended and successful, with traders experiencing strong sales. Members noted the current booking numbers for forthcoming markets as follows:

Heritage Open Day: approximately 26 stalls booked.
United Charities Day: over 37 stalls booked.
10 October Market: approximately 20 stalls booked.
17 October Market: approximately 18 stalls booked.
24 October Halloween Market: approximately 37 stalls booked to date,

Members noted that the Town Ranger Team had undertaken extensive cleaning of the ceilings in the Ashton Square public toilets. Judging for the Loo of the Year was expected to take place before the end of September, with the final grading anticipated by the end of October.

An update was provided on the Young Traders Market. Skye of Country House Treats was recognised as the overall East of England winner.

The Committee noted a slight increase in town centre vacancy rates. Officers advised that this reflected ongoing work with landlords through the Premises of Concern Tasking Group to encourage suitable long-term tenants that would positively contribute to the town centre.

Members congratulated the team on the positivity and inclusivity of market events.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: To give a vote of thanks to Becky, Annette and the team for all they do.

228/26 Service Level Agreement Decision Report

The Youth and Community Manager provided the report to members in detail, highlighting the reasons for supporting the Foodbank via a four year SLA Agreement.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: To enter into a four year Service Level Agreement from budget 4321/303 with Dunstable Foodbank; for £2,000 per year, totalling £8,000 over the four years.

229/26 Grove Corner and Community Engagement

The Youth and Community Manager summarised the report to members.

It was noted that Grove Corner recorded 252 visits by young people between May and August. Attendance at Pokémon and SEND-friendly sessions remained strong, generating 156 visits and six new registrations. The summer activities programme for children was reported to have been highly successful, with attendance exceeding previous years at several events. SENDfriendly sessions were introduced and received particularly positive feedback from families, highlighting the value of accessible provision.

Bennetts Splash Café and Community Hub's summer season was reported to be successful, with income between May and July exceeding the previous year by approximately £6,500, supported by favourable weather and strong social media promotion. Members noted ongoing efforts to increase community use of the café during the off-season, including discussions with local groups and potential new hirers.

Members were advised that the Action and Adventure Day had attracted 350 attendees, compared with 220 attendees in the previous year and the Art and STEM Day attracted 254 attendees.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: To give a vote of thanks to Gill and the team for all they do for the young people of Dunstable.

230/26 Older People's Services

The Youth and Community Manager summarised the report to members.

It was noted that the Good Companions Club currently had 20 registered members, with approximately 15 attending regularly. Due to the nature of the group and the impact of ill health and bereavements, attendance levels fluctuated. To support future membership and reduce social isolation among older residents, officers had discussed lowering the minimum age for attendance from 75 to 70 years with Central Bedfordshire Council. Members were advised that this change would not affect existing funding arrangements.

An update was provided on the Rock and Roll event held in July, which featured live music from a local performer. Members were advised that the next event was scheduled for later in the month and ticket sales were progressing well.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: To change the age for the Good Companions Club to 70+

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: To give a vote of thanks to Gill and the team for the events put on for the older community

231/26 Events The Cultural Services Manager summarised the report to members.

Members received a verbal update on the Soapbox Derby, which had taken place the previous weekend. The event attracted a larger audience than in the previous year and featured participation from local charities, schools, scouts and businesses. Feedback had been exceptionally positive and officers hoped to expand participation further in future years. 12 teams had entered, but unfortunately one kart failed scrutineering and could not participate.

The Classic Motor Rally was reported to have been extremely successful, attracting the highest number of vehicle applications to date and an estimated 6,000 attendees. Dunstable Live and Party in the Park were both very well attended despite hot weather conditions. Attendance at the Sunday Band Concerts exceeded expectations despite periods of exceptionally hot weather.

Councillor Bater advised members that the truck convoy would be returning next year with the hope that it would again coincide with the Classic Motor Rally.

It was further noted that consultation regarding the theme for Dunstable Live 2027 had been undertaken, with "Through the Decades" receiving the highest number of votes and therefore being adopted as the event theme.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: To give a vote of thanks to Gina and the team for a fantastic summer of events with more to come.

232/26 Priory House

The Cultural Services Manager summarised the key points of the report.

Members and officers discussed updates regarding Priory House and the ongoing works currently being undertaken.

Visitor numbers and food and drink sales had increased over the summer period, with officers reporting growth in both repeat and new customers. Members heard that public interest in the refurbishment works had generated positive engagement and increased awareness of the venue.

An update was provided on recruitment for the reopening of Priory House. Key posts, including the Catering Manager, were being recruited, with remaining positions scheduled to

be advertised later in the year. The aim was for all staff to be in post and trained by December.

Weddings at Grove House continue to perform strongly, with 21 bookings secured.

An update was provided on archaeological discoveries and historic wall paintings uncovered during the project. Members were advised that some features would need to be conserved and protected rather than placed on permanent display. However, opportunities are being explored to interpret and showcase these discoveries through exhibitions, audio-visual displays and guided heritage tours. It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: To give a vote of thanks to Lisa and the team for continuing efforts and success for Priory House.

233/26 Corporate Plan Update

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive summarised the report. Members acknowledged and accepted the information provided against the corporate plan as well as the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) provided within appendix 2 of the report.

Members noted that, with just over a year remaining in the current Corporate Plan, progress had been reviewed on projects within the Committee's remit. A number of objectives had already been delivered, including weddings at Grove House, improvements to events infrastructure, and additional services for older residents. Other projects remained on track, while some had not progressed due to factors outside the Council's control.

Members were reminded that KPIs are used to monitor and understand service performance and trends rather than as strict targets, with services continuing to be delivered according to community need.

Members noted that response rates to public surveys, particularly those promoted through social media, had fallen and that officers were exploring alternative ways of gathering resident feedback. Members also received an update on Bennetts Splash Park and Café. Although income had been lower than originally anticipated, the facility continued to provide significant benefits to the community through year-round opening and support for local groups. Officers advised that further opportunities to increase income would be explored while maintaining these community benefits.

234/26 Reports from Outside Bodies

South Beds Dial-a-Ride Management Committee:
Members noted the ongoing issue of Blue Badge eligibility for community transport vehicles. It was noted that differing interpretations exist between local authorities, with some councils permitting the use of Blue Badges on community transport vehicles while others do not. Concerns were raised regarding the practical implications for Dial-a-Ride users,

particularly when transporting passengers with mobility issues to appointments, including hospitals outside the area.

Dunstable Town
Band: No update

Men In Sheds:
Dunstable Men In Sheds continued to do well as a group with healthy membership numbers and even a few new recruits. They had been very busy making and selling their items throughout the summer markets, shows and events and had also benefited from a few new commissions. They are extremely grateful to Dunstable Town Council for providing the vital outlet on their market stall to sell their items and promote the group, this had been especially helpful when various major Town Council events had brought them good footfall not only in their sale of goods but also in raising interest and recruiting new members.

Dunstable
Pride: No
update

235/26 Date of the Next Meeting

Monday 9 November 2026 at 7pm

The meeting closed at 20:57.

Signed: _____

Chair of the Community Services Committee

Dunstable Town Council

Minutes of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee

Held at the Council Chamber, Grove House, 76 High Street North, Dunstable, Beds, LU6 1NF

On Monday, 14 September 2026

Attendance

Present: Councillors Henderson (Chair), Attwell, Bater, Blennerhassett, Brennan, Hollick, Kimondo, Moulster, Tamara

Apologies: Councillors Adams, Gurney, Kotarski

Also present: Daniel Mott, Georgia Pearson, James Stenson, Jane Conway, Gregory Alderman — Cllr, Lisa Scheder

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

243/26 Declarations of Interest

Councillor John Gurney attended the meeting via Teams.

Councillor Henderson declared an interest in Agenda Item 6, by reason of being an allotment holder.

244/26 Public Question Time

There were no questions from the public.

245/26 To agree the minutes of the meeting of 8 June and 17 August 2026 as an accurate record

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of 8 June and 17 August 2026, with the addition of apologies from Cllr Hollick recorded against the minutes of 17 August 2026, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

246/26 To receive the minutes of the Meetings of Plans Sub-Committee meetings held on 8 June, 29 June, 20 July and 10 August 2026

RESOLVED: that the minutes from the Plans Sub-Committee meetings held on 8 June, 29 June, 20 July and 10 August 2026 be received.

247/26 Action Tracker

The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services highlighted the key points of the tracker to Members.

Members received an update on investigations into pavement cleaning. Officers advised that quotations received from external contractors were significantly higher than anticipated and were not considered affordable within the current budget. The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services was looking to introduce a programme known as "Footway Fridays", under which the Town Rangers would undertake chewing gum removal and jet washing of sections of the High Street for approximately two hours each Friday morning.

ACTION: To trial and feedback on the "Footway Fridays" initiative and establish a baseline for cleaning productivity once hosepipe restrictions are lifted - Head of Grounds and Environmental Services

Members received an update on the search for additional allotment land. No suitable sites had been identified within existing recreation grounds. However, an area within the proposed new cemetery land had been identified as a potential location for temporary allotments.

248/26 Parks and Recreation Grounds, Cemetery, Allotments, Town Centre Gardens and Rangers Services

Parks and Recreation Grounds

The Grounds Operations Manager summarised the report to members. Members praised officers for retaining all four Green Flag Awards and thanked them for all of their hard work. A replacement triple mower had been purchased in line with the machinery replacement programme and staff were undertaking appropriate training. Recent play area inspections identified eight medium-risk maintenance issues, with no high risk concerns recorded.

Cemetery

The Cemetery Manager updated members on the key points within the report. Members noted that the cemetery path audit had been completed and quotations for repair works would be obtained. A review of cemetery rules, regulations and burial documentation were underway to improve understanding and compliance among Exclusive Right of Burial owners and funeral directors. The work of the Friends of Dunstable Cemetery volunteer group was noted and commended, particularly their efforts in clearing overgrown graves and enhancing the appearance of the cemetery.

Allotments

The Cemetery Manager advised members of the key points of the report. July allotment inspections resulted in 28 cultivation notices and five notices to quit were issued. Thirteen plots were currently available for reletting at the time of the report, the waiting list had 328 applicants. Officers confirmed that any newly available plots would be subdivided where possible into smaller plots to maximise capacity.

Town Centre Gardens

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

The Grounds Operations Manager summarised the key points of the report to Members. It was reported that discussions were ongoing with Central Bedfordshire Council regarding damaged town centre planters that require removal or replacement.

ACTION: Continue discussions with Central Bedfordshire Council regarding damaged town centre planters and replacement options and report back to committee - The Grounds Operations Manager

Town Ranger Services

The Grounds Operations Manager highlighted the key points of the report. It was noted that demand for the Town Ranger service remained high. Recent work had included the cleaning of bus shelters, jet washing of play areas and the removal of graffiti across the town.

249/26 Corporate Plan Update Report

The Head of Corporate Services and RFO summarised the report to members.

Members sought an update on the progress relating to the Dunstable Bowls Club project and the Kingsbury Pavilion. Officers explained that delays to the associated land sale had affected the wider project, preventing progression of the full scheme as originally planned. Members expressed concern regarding the length of time the project had been ongoing and requested further information regarding future options for the site.

ACTION: To investigate and provide a further update on the Dunstable Bowls Club and Kingsbury Pavilion project, including available options for progressing improvements - The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services

250/26 Play Area Refurbishment Prioritisation Programme Overview Report

The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services highlighted the key parts of the report to members.

Members were asked to identify which option they would like officers to investigate further, and report back through the 2027/2028 budget-setting process. Members discussed this in detail and acknowledged the need for a planned and sustainable approach to refurbishment rather than responding only when facilities reach the end of their lifespan. Discussion highlighted the importance of considering condition, accessibility, play value, community need and health outcomes when prioritising future investment.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: To establish an annual budget and rolling, priority-led play area replacement programme, as modelled in Appendix 1, aiming to fund at least one project each year and allow additional work where external funding becomes available.

251/26 Reports from Outside Organisations

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

CBC Developmental Committee
No update

Friends of Priory House and Gardens
The Head of Corporate Services and RFO mentioned the group were working on raising funds for the knee rail in Priory Gardens and had committed to contribute £1,000.

252/26 Exclusion of Public and Press

It was proposed, seconded and

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

253/26 Removal of Unauthorised Memorial at Dunstable Cemetery

The committee received an update and discussed the matter in detail.

254/26 Date of the Next Meeting

Monday 16 November 2026 at 19:00.

The meeting closed at 20:27.

Signed: _____

Chair of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee

Date: _____

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

Dunstable Town Council

Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee

Held at the Council Chamber, Grove House, 76 High Street North, Dunstable, Beds, LU6 1NF

On Monday, 21 September 2026

Attendance

Present: Councillors Tamara (Chair), Alderman, Attwell, Brennan, Davis, J Gurney, K Gurney, Henderson, Hollick, Moulster, Neall

Apologies: Councillor Collins

Also present: Paul Hodson, Katie Williams, Lisa Scheder, Georgia Pearson

Public: 1

253/26 Declarations of Interest

There were no specific declarations of interest

254/26 Public Question Time

Nick James of Greensand Community Energy attended and addressed the Committee in connection with a motion submitted by Councillor Brennan. Mr James explained that Greensand Community Energy is a non-profit volunteer organisation working to assist communities and organisations in the mid-Bedfordshire area to reduce their reliance on fossil fuels. He outlined the organisation's ambitions to support local bodies in making that transition.

255/26 To agree the minutes of the meeting of 15 June 2026 as an accurate record

The Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 15 June 2026 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

256/26 Action Tracker

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive summarised the Action Tracker items to members.

Councillor Hollick informed members that initial discussions had taken place regarding a potential visit of six representatives from Germany, following an invitation received earlier in the year. Formal invitations had not yet been issued but would be sent before the end of the calendar year.

An update was provided regarding the delivery of Talk of the Town. Members were advised that the previously reported delivery issues had been resolved. However, residents and Members

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

were encouraged to report any future concerns, including non-delivery or duplicate deliveries, to enable officers to investigate these with the distribution contractor.

257/26 Motion from Councillor Brennan

Councillor Brennan presented the motion to members.

In presenting the motion, Councillor Brennan advised that no specific decisions were being sought at this stage. The purpose of the motion was to authorise officers to enter into discussions with Greensand Community Energy to explore opportunities for supporting energy generation initiatives within the town. Any proposals arising from those discussions would be reported back to Council for consideration and decision at a future meeting.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: that officers engage with the voluntary group Greensand Community Energy, and explore any possible opportunities for community owned energy generation projects using council owned facilities or land, to help realise the Council's ambitions around renewable energies in line with the corporate plan objective

258/26 Marketing and Communications Report

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive outlined the key aspects of the report for Members.

Members were advised that the Council's social media presence continued to grow, with Facebook followers exceeding 17,000. It was noted that the Council remained the only Town Council with the highest number of Facebook followers.

259/26 Corporate Compliance and Facilities Report

The Corporate Performance and Compliance Manager summarised the report to members.

Since writing the report, an update was provided to members advising that a meeting had been booked for 28 September, where CBC would attend Grove House in person as a part of the pre application process for Grove House Building works. It was considered encouraging that the meeting would take place on site, and Members were advised that a further update would be provided at the next meeting.

Members were advised that consideration was being given to holding a further wedding venue open day event later in the year to promote twilight wedding packages available.

260/26 Corporate Plan Update Report

The Corporate Performance and Compliance Manager updated members, which detailed progress against those objectives, falling within the remit of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Members queried the KPI relating to income generated from sources other than Council Tax. Officers explained that the original target had been set when the Council operated Creasey

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

Park Community Football Centre and included income from football bookings, catering and bar sales. Since the Council's management contract ceased for these premises, the target was no longer achievable. However, Members were advised that the original target would remain within the Corporate Plan for comparison purposes.

Members discussed the staff retention KPI and noted that the reported figure had been affected by the retirement of two long-serving employees. Concern was expressed that retirements should not necessarily be viewed negatively within staff retention statistics. Officers agreed to review the calculation methodology and confirm whether the measure had been reported correctly.

ACTION - To review and amend the staff retention KPI - The Head of Corporate Services and RFO

261/26 Finance Report

The Head of Corporate Services and RFO highlighted the key parts of the report to members.

Members were updated that, since writing the report, officers had been in communication with the External Auditors, and further information had been submitted. Officers are hopeful that it will be completed by the deadline of 30 September.

Members noted that the annual pay award had been agreed for 2026/7 at 3.3%.

It was proposed, seconded and:

RESOLVED:

1.1) To note the revenue budget position and year end forecasts for the current financial year, to 31 July 2026

1.2) To note the Council's earmarked reserves as at 31 July 2026

1.3) To note current investments as at 31 August 2026

1.4) To note the financial governance update

1.5) To note and confirm the current Direct Debits as at September 2026

1.6) To note the pay award for 2026/2027

1.7) To note the current position of the Internal and External Audits

262/26 Reference up from Personnel Sub-Committee

The Head of Corporate Services and RFO summarised the report to members.

The Committee was asked to adopt the Violence and Aggression at Work Policy and approve the amendments to the reviewed policies as detailed within the referral report.

It was proposed, seconded and:

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

RESOLVED: i)that the adoption of the Violence and Aggression at Work Policy be approved
ii)that the acceptance of the reviewed policy amendments be approved

263/26 Reports from Outside Organisations

Citizen's Advice Management Committee – Councillor Attwell

Councillor Attwell advised members that the demand for the service remained high, with increasing numbers of residents seeking support. Members were advised that many clients faced digital exclusion and required significant assistance to access online services and benefit applications. As a result, advisers were often required to spend considerable time supporting individual clients through the process. It was noted that Ian Porter had retired as Chair and that John Kane had taken over the role.

Dunstable International Town Twinning Association – Town Mayor and Councillors Hollick and Kenson Gurney

It was noted that there was no further information to add beyond the update provided earlier under the Action Tracker item.

Hospice at Home Management Committee – Councillor Wendy Bater

No Update

Ashton Almshouses Charity – Councillors Hollick and Alderman

A meeting was scheduled for November, and an update would be provided following that meeting.

Ashton Schools Foundation – Councillors Hollick and Alderman

Councillor Hollick advised that an extraordinary meeting had recently been held to amend the number of representatives serving on the committee. The change had been agreed without issue.

Chew's Foundation – Councillors Brennan and Kenson Gurney

Councillor Kenson Gurney reported that the most recent meeting had been particularly well attended, with approximately twelve people present compared to lower attendance levels in previous years. It was advised that Dunstable Little Theatre had delivered a presentation on its youth work programme and the work being undertaken to encourage greater participation by young people.

It was also reported that 179 donations had been made for School Uniforms.

Poor's Land Charity – Councillors Tamara and Bater

No Update

Lockington Charity and Marshe Charity – Councillors Tamara and Kimondo

No Update

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

Dunstable and District Scout Council Executive – Councillor Kotarski

No Update

264/26 Exclusion of Public and Press

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

265/26 Cemetery Matters - Verbal Update

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive Provided members with a verbal update

266/26 Date of the Next Meeting

23 November 2026 at 7pm

The meeting closed at 20:30.

Signed: _____

Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee

Date: _____

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

21.05.26	Dunstable F.C. Walking Football Club	Dementia Walking Football Event	Dunstable Leisure Centre	A wonderful first event for me to attend as Mayor. So inspiring to see Dunstable FC along with many other support organisations run such a fabulous event for people with special needs. Walking football helps in so many different ways by nerturing friendships, preventing loneliness, and keeping fit all whilst improving dexterity and mental health. It meant so much to those in attendance and gave me a chance to get involved, pull on my shirt and play with them. A very powerful, humbling and rewarding event.
22.05.26	Dunstable Sea Cadets	Awards Night	The Old Mill, West Street, Dunstable	A very proud moment in support of the Sea Cadets and to present their well deserved awards, along with an extremely professional drill formation display. A wonderful opportunity to celebrate the successes of young people in our town and for me to show my support and appreciation.
28.05.26	UK Curry Connect	UK Curry Championships	Central Beds College, Dunstable	A unique experience to attend this National championship with Master Chef's from all over the country competing to become the 'National Chef of the year'. It was such a priviledge to see the chef's battling it out against the clock in the kitchen to produce some amazing dishes with presentation and taste all being judged by Michelin awarded cheff's. A truly inspiring culnery experience.
01.06.26	Dunstable Town Council	Good Companions Club	The Beecroft Community Centre	A wonderful opportunity to attend the Good Companions Club and thank the volunteers who do such amazing work for the elderly residents that attend during volunteering week. It was such a pleasure to talk to all those in attendance and see how much the club means to them. It was clearly very much appreciated and equally as rewarding for me.
01.06.26	Dunstable Town Council	1st Anniversary of Community Lottery	Grove House	A great occassion to support and celebrate the 1st Anniversary of the Community Lottery, to hear how it has grown and the difference such support has already made to the charities concerned.
04.06.26	Dunstable Town Council	Visit By Group From Our Twin Town of Porz	Grove House	A rewarding opportunity to welcome a contingent of guests from one of our twin towns, to give them an insight into the history of our town and my role as Mayor along with a tour of Grove House and a tour around town to see the sights of our historic buildings and wonderful award winning gardens.

05.06.26	Nevilles Funeral Service	5th Anniversary	High Street South	It was a real pleasure to attend and show my support to a business who has provided a vital service to our town, to see the facilities, learn the history of the company and the sympathetic extent of the respectful services they provided to our community.
05.06.26	Luton & South Beds Samaritans	60th Anniversary	33 Cardiff Road, Luton	A very humbling event to celebrate the wonderful volunteers and vital work carried out by the Luton & Beds Samaritans along with some wonderful stories and memories from long standing staff regarding the work that they do.
06.06.26	Dunstable Quadrant	Anniversary Celebration	The Quadrant, Dunstable	A proud moment to officially open the Quadrant Shopping Centres 60th anniversary celebrations and the contribution it has made to serving our town. To cut the fabulous cake, take part in all the celebration activities and to personally visit some of the shops to thank them for their contribution to our town, especially Hind's The Jewellers and Boots who are the only 2 founding member shops still left from when Bob Monkhouse opened the Quadrant Shopping Centre 60 years ago.
06.06.26	Newport Pagnell Town Council	Vintage Event	Bury Common, Newport Pagnell	A fabulous fun event which was vintage themed to D-Day along with characters in period consume, performers, solo singers and an incredible children's choir who were absolutely amazing. There was even a chance to meet a very convincing double of Winston Churchill with personality, voice and even the legendary cigar to match.
07.06.26	Harpenden Town Council	Civic Service	St Nicholas' Parish Church, Harpenden	A highly enjoyable civic service attended in support of the Mayor of Harpenden as one of our local towns. The choir of St Nicolas Parish Church were particularly notable with the power and angelic nature of their wonderful singing and harmony, a true joy to behold.
09.06.26	Dunstable Town Council	Planting Event In The Quadrant Shopping Centre	The Quadrant, Dunstable	A great opportunity to assist Dunstable Town Council and Dunstable in Bloom with planting up 20 containers with an array of colourful bedding plants to enhance our town and make a small contribution towards the floral displays in readiness for the Anglia and Britain in bloom competitions.

13.06.26	Dunstable Town Council	Car Rally	Priory Gardens, Dunstable	An absolutely incredible day. The day started with the wonderful opportunity to ride in one of the lead lorries of the truck convoy into town which was an amazing experience, to see the size of the crowds lining both sides of the road and the joy it brought to the faces of young and old alike will long live in my memory and was a very powerful emotional experience. The Car Rally itself was an incredibly successful event with the most amazing array of cars to the highest standard which left the judging along with my Deputy Mayor a very difficult task. With many side events and attractions for children to enjoy along with a full market and wonderful weather to match this really was a incredible event for all to enjoy which was reflected in the record number of people in attendance. An event run with exceptional organisation and one that will long be remembered.
13.06.26	High Sherrif of Bedfordshire	Garden Party	Tudor House, Ravensden, Milton Keynes	A wonderful opportunity to attend such a magnificent event held by the High Sherrif of Bedfordshire in thanks and appreciation to those in public service within county.
14.06.26	School of Performing Arts Dunstable (PAD Centre)	Talents Showcase	Grove Theatre	An excellent showcase of the wonderful talents of young people in our town. The levels of professionalism and performances were literally outstanding. A very proud moment and very memorable event.
15.06.26	The Beds College Group	FE Student Awards Ceremony	Central Bedfordshire Colledge	Yet another celebration of the talents and skills of young people in our town. A chance to reward the outstanding achievents of the students who have excelled with their education and skills and who have gone above and beyond in their attitude, dedication and hard work. A very inspiring and proud moment in celebrating our students and the talents of the college teaching staff.
16.06.26	Dunstable Town Council	The Big Lunch	Grove House Gardens	This was such a rewarding event to attend. To see all our more elderly residents enjoying the wonderful party atmosphere and singing and dancing along to tunes of the era whilst reminiscing over fond memories and lunch was such a heartwarming and uplifting experience. A real fun event which was thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated by so many - A brilliant success!!
17.06.26	Ardley Hill School	Community Connections Event	Ardley Hill School, Dunstable	It was great to support my local school with their community connections event which was all about showcasing help and support available to families covering all sorts of topics.

17.06.26	Oaklands College	Creative Arts Fashion Show & Art Exhibition	Oaklands College, St Albans	A fabulous event which showcased the young talent of the future. The designs created by the students and fashion show production itself was entirely organised and produced by the students of the college themselves and was both very impressive and professional. Wow - What a future some of these bright stars have ahead of them!!
20.06.26	Octave Music	Octave Music World Music Day	High Street North, Dunstable	It was great to support one of our long standing shops in town who have been supplying musical equipment and services to our town for 40 years. Russel the owner is such a great guy and friend. The music on the day at the front of the shop was performed by many different fabulous local musical talents and was thoroughly enjoyed by so many who gathered to listen and enjoy.
20.06.26	Army Benevolent Fund	Army Benevolent Fund - Sunset Ceremony	Howbury Hall, Bedford	A lovely opportunity to support the Army Benevolent Fund, the cadets who performed the musical parade were a joy to watch in such a beautiful setting and put on a fabulous display, especially considering the very hot and challenging weather conditions.
23.06.26	3rd Dunstable Scout Group	AGM	Ardley Heights Scout Hut, Dunstable	It is always nice to support our local Scouts group, to see what valuable work they do with children and the wonderful life skills learnt by so many. The passion of the group leaders who run it were very inspirational and it was so nice to thank them for all the incredible work they do as volunteers.
25.06.26	Quadrant Shopping Centre	Opening Dunstable Banking Hub	Banking Hub, Quadrant Shopping Centre	It was truly a joyous occassion to open our long awaited new Banking Hub in Dunstable. This will be such a wonderful asset to so many in our town and being so centrally located in the Quadrant Shopping Centre is absolutely ideal and essential in supporting the needs of our community and town.
25.06.26	South Beds Dial-A-Ride	Bingo Fund Raising Event	Mecca Bingo, Luton	A great fun evening of bingo all whilst supporting and raising essential funds for such a vital service in our town. It was good to see it was well attended and enjoyed by so many.
27.06.26	Dunstable Town Council	Dunstable Live Event	Grove House Gardens	Wow - What an incredible event. The talent and professionalism of the acts on stage were amazing and soon had the whole park rocking with such a brilliant atmosphere. Along with Middle Row Markets, the fabulous (albeit very hot weather), and all the free children's activities on offer the whole day was an outstanding success and enjoyed by so many. Superbly run and organised yet again.

30.06.26	Town Mayor of Leighton-Linslade	Charity Carvery Meal	The Ship Inn, Leighton Buzzard	A well attended charity event in aid of the Town Mayor of Leighton-Linslades nominated charities. Good community spirit and a great way to support local venues.
02.07.26	Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire	Coffee Morning	Central Bedfordshire Council, Chicksands	A very interesting presentation by the Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire giving an insight into her role, how that fits with the community of Bedfordshire and a great opportunity to share ideas and collaborate on initiatives.
04.07.26	Dunstable Town Council	Young Traders Market	Ashton Square, Dunstable	I was very inspired and impressed by the young talent on display at out young traders market. Their professionalism and artistic flair to present their stalls and entrepreneurial business skills was excellent and it was a real hard but pleasurable experience to judge their talents and present awards to the winning stall holders who will now go on to the National level of competing young market traders.
07.07.26	Bedfordshire Games Committee	Bedfordshire Games 2026	Bedford International Athletics Stadium, Bedford	This was a truly rewarding and inspiring event to attend. To see the determination and effort of all those with learning and physical disabilities competing in their own events was a very humbling and heart wrenching experience. To see the joy on the faces of so many as they crossed the finish line of their respective events and the effort they put in was absolutely incredible. It was such a pleasure to help present the medals and to see just what it meant to all the competitors. We clapped and cheered every one with emotional pride and the memory of such a brilliant day will long live in my memory and heart as such a brilliant and very special day.
07.07.26	Hospice at Home	Hospice at Home 40th Anniversary	Houghton Regis Memorial Hall	It was a great pleasure to attend and support such a fantastic organisation who have done so much in our community. It was very interesting hearing about how the group first formed, the history and photographs along with speaking to a few of the founder members. A truly wonderful group of volunteers who over the years have done so much to support the families in need and provide such a vital service to our community. The dedication by all the volunteers involved is something we can all be very proud of.

08.07.26	Dunstable Town Council	Mayor of Dunstable Charity Theatre Show	The Little Theatre, Dunstable	A great first event in aid of my Mayoral charities working with the wonderful Little Theatre in Dunstable. It was a real pleasure to work with the organisers in organising such a memorable evening. The performance of "Sheila's Island" was excellent and it was such a pleasure to support this little gem of a theatre in our town whilst raising valuable funds for my charities. The event was most appreciated as being something different and very much enjoyed by the Mayors from other towns and other guests who attended.
10.07.26	Dunstable History Society	What Lies Beneath Exhibition	Grove House	It was a real pleasure to open this exhibition and learn about the fascinating history and artifacts found beneath our feet in various parts of Dunstable. It will always make me wonder what may be beneath my feet when walking around Dunstable in future.
10.07.26	Penrose Estate Agents	Penrose 10th Anniversary	The Conservatory, Luton Hoo	It was a lovely opportunity and pleasure to support the 10th Anniversary of Penrose Estate Agents who have provided a vital and popular service within our town and who have so generously supported many of our events in Dunstable as mains sponsors.
11.07.26	Dunstable History Society	What Lies Beneath Exhibition	Grove House	The second installment of this exhibition, this time in the presence of so many of the original former members of the Manshead Archaelogical Society, some who had travelled long distances to attend. It was a lovely opportunity to thank all the wonderful people who had volunteered so many years of dedication and entusiasm to bring this important part of our towns history to life and for those treasures and history to be so beautifully presented and preserved for future generations to come.
17.07.26	Dunstable Town Cricket Club	Presidents Day Cricket Match	Dunstable Town Cricket Club	It was a great pleasure to attend the Annual Presidents Day Cricket Match and show my support for a vital sports club in our town. The game was well attended and hotly contested in fabulous weather and beautiful picturesque surroundings.

18.07.26	Dunstable Town Council	Party In The Park	Grove House Gardens	Yet another incredible event which is now legendary as our prime summer event. The acts on stage were brilliant, the park was packed with what must have been a record crowd and the weather was absolutely perfect. The Headline acts of Black Lace, N-Trance and Leigh Francis record club got everyone in the party spirit with people dancing along to everything from the Agadoo to the Conga!! The addition of Middle Row Markets to the event this year along with all the free children's activities and side shows was a huge hit. The accessibility platform was also full and the facilities were well received and I was very appreciative to Penrose estate agents for donating the proceeds from their popular climbing wall to my Mayoral charities. I tried to get around the crowd to see and talk to as many people as possible and was absolutely overwhelmed with the response of thanks and appreciation from so many on such a fabulous day and event, some who had even purposely driven up from London and even Surrey to attend. I was so proud to see so many people, children and families from every age range possible having such a fabulous fun and enjoyable day - The smiles on their faces said it all!! This was Dunstable's fun community spirit and party atmosphere showcased at it's very best and as a town we can be so proud of this event being such an outstanding success.
22.07.26	Dunstable Town Council / Dunstable in Bloom	Host the post judging tour lunch for the Anglia in Bloom judges and tour participants	Grove House	It was my pleasure to host the judges and other participants for Anglia in Bloom over light lunch along with a good attendance by other support groups and town council staff.
24.07.26	Hospice at Home Volunteers	Choral Nova Concert	Priory Church	An absolutely incredible concert - To hear the voices of the choir and that of Lizzie Deane in the fabulous acoustics of Priory church was an amazing experience, and topped by being presented by Pam Rhodes from the BBC made for a very memorable and entertaining evening whilst raising funds for such a great charity who do so much to support our town and residents.

25.07.26	Dunstable Town Council and the Quadrant Shopping Centre	Rum Reggae & ska Music Event	Ashton Square, Dunstable	It was an absolute pleasure to attend and open this event and to hear the incredible personal emotional and very inspirational story of Eroll (founding member of the Eroll McKellar Foundation) about his battles and experiences with prostate cancer and his inspiration to now help others. The event was very well supported with lots of great entertainment and stalls and it was especially poinient given it's connections with my own Mayoral nominated charities.
26.07.26	Dunstable Truck Convoy	Charity Cheque Presentations	16 Appenine Way	Having had the incredible experience of riding in the lead truck in the Dunstable Truck Convoy on 13.06.26 (see above) it was an honour and priviledge to be invited to present the cheques to the charities concerned which this year totalled an incredible amount of £19,000. The organiser of this event - Graham Munt - has raised some truly amazing sums of money for charity over the years and I applaud his passion and enthusiasm for all his dedication and efforts - A truly inspiring and caring individual who deserves the upmost recognition.
27.07.26	University of Bedfordshire Graduation Ceremonies	Summer Graduation Ceremony	Puttering Bury Campus	It was a real privilege to attend this graduation ceremony, to support young people in their achievements and to also acknowledge the efforts of the university staff in their outstanding achievements in educating the next generation of young talent.
28.07.26	Dunstable Town Council	Summer Window Judging	Town Centre	Judging the summer window competition was most enjoyable, I was most impressed by the inventive ideas and inspiration behind some of the designs. The standard was most impressive and there were some outstanding creative, artistic and fun presentations.
29.07.26	Dunstable Town Council	Mayor of Dunstable Charity Coffee Morning	Grove House	This was my second Mayoral event in aid on my nominated Mayors charities. It was a pleasure to introduce the representatives from both of my charities and for them to present exactly what each of the respective charities do and the key role they play in Dunstable for our residents and town. It was also a great opportunity to meet new people and make some great contacts.

31.07.26	Flores Boutique	Flores Boutique Visit	Flores Boutique, 3 Longbrooke, Houghton Regis, LU5 5QX	It was an absolute pleasure to be invited by Betty to visit her wonderful florist business “Flores Boutique”, which she has so creatively established and operates from her own home. Betty’s passion for flowers is truly remarkable, and this is reflected in the exceptional dedication, care, and quality that shines through in everything she does. I was genuinely amazed by the freshness and beauty of her flowers, as well as the ingenuity with which she has transformed every available space in her home to support her thriving business. The attention to detail and craftsmanship evident in each of her floral creations is nothing short of outstanding. The creativity and innovation behind her designs and displays were both inspiring and a true reflection of her hard work, determination, and commitment to excellence. I was especially moved to hear Betty’s personal story and the challenges she has overcome throughout her life. It is a tremendous credit to her resilience and strength that she has not only faced such adversity with courage but has transformed those experiences into the motivation and determination to build something so positive and successful. Her enthusiasm, warmth, and infectious energy are a true testament to her character.
31.07.26	Dunstable FC	Opening Game Of The Season	Creasey Park, Brewers Hill Road	It was a real priviledge to be invited to the opening game of the season for the first match of newly formed Dunstable FC. The match itself was a very entertaining hard fought game which ended in a draw. It was great to enjoy the atmosphere and to meet the team and manager after the match.
3.08.26	Dunstable Town Council / Dunstable in Bloom	Host the post judging tour lunch for the Britain in Bloom judges and tour participants	Grove House	It was my pleasure to host the judges and other participants for Britain in Bloom over light lunch along with a good attendance by other support groups and town council staff. The honour of participating in this competition at national level was a very proud moment for Dunstable which was equally reflected in my welcome speech.
7.08.26	Houghton Regis Town Council	Town Mayor's Summer Afternoon Tea	All Saints View, Houghton Regis	This was a great opportunity to support the Mayor of one of our neighbouring towns in raising funds for his own nominated charities and to meet people from all over Dunstable and Houghton Regis who benefit from them.

08.08.26	Dunstable Town Council	Surgery Stall	Middle Row Markets	It is always a pleasure to take the opportunity to meet our residents at these surgery's. Most of those I met on the day were very positive about the town and council, especially the events programmme. The feedback suggestions we did receive were captured and shared as appropraite for follow-up.
08.08.26	Army Benevolent Fund	Army Benevolent Fund - Summer Concert	The Rufus Centre, Steppingly Road, Flitwick, MK45 1AH	To hear a full size military band like this play was an amazing experience. The evening was thoroughly entertaining with a full range of classic favourites to enjoy all whilst raising vital funds for such a worthy cause.
14.08.26 & 15.08.26	Dunstable Town Council	Ashton Square Day	Ashton Square, Dunstable	It was a pleasure to open the event on 14.08.26 and attend again the next day in support. The entertainment on stage was excellent along with many stalls, food and many free events such as face painting, games and other activities available to play all whilst relaxing in a deckchair. With the wonderful weather also playing it's part this was yet another huge success enjoyed by so many.
25.08.26	Dunstable Connect Club	1st Birthday Celebrations	Dunstable Community Hub, Manchester Place	It was fabulous to attend in support of this wonderful club who do so much for our community in preventing loneliness and inspiring friendships of all ages. It was so nice to hear about peoples wonderful experiences and day trips they had taken and to see how far they have come in being such a well supported and popular club within their first 12 months - A real achievement.
27.08.26	Dunstable Citizens Advice	AGM	Activities Room, The Dunstable Centre, LU5 4JD	It is always great to attend in support of one of our key organisations in town who do so much for our residents and to acknowledge their ever increasing and extremely popular diverse range of help and support on offer.
05.09.26	Dunstable Town Council	Soapbox Derby	Priory Gardens, Dunstable	This fantastic event is now becoming one of our most popular and well loved. To see the amazing teams and the time and effort involved in creating and racing their carts with such detail and enthusiasm was very inspirational. No other event can produce the thrills and spills as this does and it was wonderful to see how well attended it was with so many families and children of all ages enjoying the fun in such lovely surroundings, the organisation and atmosphere was incredible and along with the lovely weather made for a fantastic day.

12.09.26	Dunstable Consortium	Heritage Open Day	Grove House	It was a real pleasure to open this event and show people around Grove House, especially the Mayors Parlour and to explain our history around the role of the Mayor, the general function of the council and its various committees. All 9 venues involved in the heritage open day experienced between 150-200 people visiting each site on the day. People enjoyed the priviledge of seeing behind the scenes of buildings that are not generally open to the public and the whole day was a tremendous success.
17.09.26	World Leaders Summit	World Leaders Summit	Oxford University	I was incredibly proud and honoured to have been invited to the 18th World Leaders Summit at Oxford University as a Chief Guest and Keynote Speaker. Representing Dunstable and speaking to more than 200 global leaders, including Members of the House of Lords, entrepreneurs, innovators and delegates from more than 30 countries, was a truly memorable and humbling experience. My speech drew on my experience as Mayor and focused on civic leadership, stronger and more inclusive communities, local government, sustainability and social impact. I shared a belief that is very close to my heart:- That Strong local communities are the foundation of a stronger world. Many of the solutions to global challenges can begin locally — through people, communities, organisations and local government working together to create positive and lasting change. It was a fantastic opportunity to exchange ideas, build international connections and contribute to important conversations about creating a more inclusive, responsible and sustainable future. As Mayor of Dunstable, I felt extremely proud to represent our town on such an international platform and to help showcase the positive contribution that local civic leadership and strong communities can make. I am incredibly grateful for the invitation and for the opportunity to have shared my experiences and perspectives. A truly inspirational privilege and experience that I will remember with great pride for many years to come.

20.09.26	High Sherrif of Bedfordshire	High Sherrif's Justice Service	St Paul's Church, St Paul's Square, Bedford, MK40 1SQ	It was a privilege to attend this very importaint civic service with my Deputy Mayor and other guests. The service is a 1000 year old tradition which was once again honoured by the presence of an array of distinguished guests throughout Bedfordshire and was a fantastic experience to attend and witness.
23.09.26	Westfield Nursery School	50th Anniversary Tree Planting and Plaque Reveal	Westfield Nursery School, Westfield Road, Dunstable, LU6 1DL	This was such a rewarding event to attend, to witness how excited the children were and eager to wave their own handmade flags, some who had only been in nursery for two days, was so wonderful and heart warming. The planting of the tree and plaque reveal for the 50th anniversary of the nursery school was a lovely symbolic initiative as the children will be able to care for it and watch it grow as they do.

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Date: 29 September 2026

Dear Mrs Scheder

Completion of the limited assurance review for the year ended 31 March 2026

We have completed our review for the year ended 31 March 2026 and I have pleasure in enclosing the certified Annual Governance and Accountability Return. The External Auditor's Certificate and Report is given in Section 3.

If there are any significant matters arising from the review, they are summarised in the External Auditor's certificate in Section 3. If we have identified minor scope for improvement we have recorded this on page 2 of this letter. The Council should consider these matters and decide what action is required. In most cases this will be self-evident. In some instances we have referred to further guidance available, such as the Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel Practitioners' Guide (England) 2026/27. This can be obtained via your NALC or SLCC branch, or downloaded free of charge at the following website: **https://www.nalc.gov.uk/resource/practitioners-guide-2025.html**.

Please also note that a copy of the 2026/27 Practitioner's Guide has now been released and is available, alongside a summary of the summary of changes from the 2025 version, at the following website: **https://www.nalc.gov.uk/resource/practitioners-guide-2026-27.html**. We would encourage all authorities to become familiar with this document ahead of preparing their 2026/27 Annual Governance and Accountability Returns.

Action you are required to take:

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 set out what you must do at the conclusion of the review. In summary, you are required to:

Publish (which must include publication on the authority's website) a statement **on or before 30 September to confirm:**

- that the review has been concluded and that the statement of accounts has been published;
- of the rights of inspection conferred on local government electors by section 25 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014; and
- the address at which, and the hours during which, those rights may be exercised.

- Keep copies of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for purchase by any person on payment of a reasonable sum.
- Ensure that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return remains available for public access for a period of not less than five years beginning with the date on which the Annual Governance and Accountability Return was first published.

Forvis Mazars LLP
Forvis Mazars LLP is the UK firm of Forvis Mazars Global, a leading global professional services network. Forvis Mazars LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales with registered number OC308299 and with its registered office at 30 Old Bailey, London, EC4M 7AU. Registered to carry on audit work in the UK by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. Details about our audit registration can be viewed at www.auditregister.org.uk under reference number C001139861. VAT number: GB 839 8356 73

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 do not specify the period the Completion Notice needs to be on the council's website, but this period must be reasonable.

Amendment to the Practitioners' Guide 2026/27 in respect of Section 2 Box 11 Trust Fund Transactions

As part of the Accounting Statements (Section 2), the authority is asked to confirm whether there are any trust fund transactions included in the figures. Box 11 has been amended to state the authority should answer based on whether trust fund transactions have been excluded from the AGAR.

We wish to draw attention to a change within the 2026/27 Practitioner's Guide (point 2.32) which confirms the authority will need to respond 'Yes' where the figures include trust fund transactions. We would encourage all authorities to familiarise themselves with the 2026/27 Practitioner's Guide (available on the NALC website) ahead of completing their 2026/27 AGAR.

Accessibility Regulations

We are aware that the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 requirement for a physical 'wet ink' signature on the original AGAR, does not allow parish council's to fully comply with the Accessibility Regulations. The National Audit Office are aware that the two pieces of legislation are not compatible, therefore smaller authorities are advised to make it clear on their website that the document is a scan and will not be fully compliant with the Accessibility Regulations.

Audit fee

Our fee note for the audit, which is in accordance with the audit fee scales set by SAAA, and available at **Audit Fees | Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments (saaa.co.uk)** will follow.

If your invoice is not as expected, please check the audit fee scales via the link above as your fee band may have changed.

We would be grateful if you could arrange for this to be paid at the earliest opportunity.

Commitment to achieving net zero

We've made an important change to how we handle post - and sustainability is driving it.

In line with our net zero targets, we encourage digital communication wherever possible. However, should it be necessary for you to communicate with us by post, our correspondence address is **30 Old Bailey, London, EC4M 7AU**.

Yours sincerely



James Collins
Director
For and on behalf of Forvis Mazars LLP

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26 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 £15 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 2025/26

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 2026.**
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 2026** 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 2026
   - 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 2025/26

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 Return **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 2026 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 2025/26** approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2025/26** approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2026 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) 2025/26

- 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 2026
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) **must** be approved before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references, even where approved on the same day.
- 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 which **must** be a single period of 30 working days for inspection (this excludes weekends and public holidays) which **must** include the first 10 working days of July.
- **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.
- Additional costs may be incurred if additional audit work is required.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2025) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2026).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights which **must** be a single period of 30 working days for inspection (this excludes weekends and public holidays) which **must** include the first 10 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 2026**

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 2026** 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 2025/26

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

www.dunstable.gov.uk

During the financial year ended 31 March 2026, 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 2025/26 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. Cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all 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 2024/25, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. *(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2024/25 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 2025/26 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2024-25 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 2024/25 AGAR *(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).*	✔		
O. The authority has complied with laws, regulations & proper practices relating to digital and data compliance.	✔		
P. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	Yes	No	Not applicable ✔

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: 14/11/2025 04/03/2026 29/05/2026

Name of person who carried out the internal audit: SF Christopher for Auditing Solutions Ltd

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit: S.M. Christopher

Date: 29/05/2026

***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 next planned, or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report **must** explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2025/26

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 2026, that:

	Agreed		'Yes' means that this authority:
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		*prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.*
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		*made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.*
3. We have assured 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.	✓		*has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.*
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.	✓		*during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.*
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.	✓		*considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.*
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		*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.*
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		*responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.*
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.	✓		*disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.*
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 — *has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.*
			✓
10. We have put in place arrangements for the effective IT and data management in accordance with proper practices during the year under review.	✓		*has made suitable arrangements for its IT and data management and has complied with proper practices in doing so.*

***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:

22/06/2026

and recorded as minute reference:

209/26

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

Chair

Clerk

www.dunstable.gov.uk

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2025/26 for

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2025 £	31 March 2026 £	*Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures **must** agree to underlying financial records.*
1. Balances brought forward	2,168,307	2,140,531	*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	2,933,469	3,282,168	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	2,058,695	1,847,735	*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	2,184,074	2,260,638	*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	122,376	121,151	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	2,713,490	2,770,226	*Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).*
7. (=) Balances carried forward	2,140,531	2,118,420	*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	2,135,048	1,983,821	*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	8,406,182	8,423,801	*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	841,714	770,293	*The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).*

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	
11 Do the figures in the accounting statements above exclude any trust transactions?	✓		*For guidance refer to the Practitioners' Guide sections 2.31 to 2.33.*

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2026 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 16/06/2026

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

22/06/2026

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE 209/26

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED R. M. Hotwell

Section 3 – External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2025/26

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 2026 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 2025/26

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.

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

Not applicable

3 External auditor certificate 2025/26

We 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 2026

*We do not certify completion because:

Not applicable

External Auditor Name

Forvis Mazars LLP, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE1 1DF

External Auditor Signature Forvis Mazars LLP Date **29 September 2026**

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL COMMITTEE

MONDAY 5 OCTOBER 2026

REDECORATING DECISION REPORT

Purpose of report:	To agree expenditure from reserves for both Grove Corner and Bennett's Splash Cafe and Community Hub for the purpose of repainting both buildings and constructing a new worktop counter at Bennett's Splash Cafe and Community Hub, with an access flap, cupboard and timber classing to match the existing counter.

1. RECOMMENDATION

1.1. To spend £5,140 from the Outdoor Leisure (non-play) reserve and £9,870 from the Grove Corner reserve, for the purpose of repainting both buildings and fitting a counter in Bennett's Splash Cafe and Community Hub.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. Every few years, the buildings managed by Dunstable Town Council require internal and external decoration to keep them presentable and to help maintain the condition of the exterior.

2.2. It has been several years since Grove Corner and Bennett's Splash Cafe and Community Hub were last decorated, and both buildings now require internal and external repainting.

3. MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

3.1. Members are being asked to approve spending from the reserves for both Grove Corner and Bennett's Splash Cafe and Community Hub to allow the redecoration of both buildings to take place.

3.2. As Bennett's Splash Cafe and Community Hub is now in the Community Engagement off-season, officers consider this the best time to complete the redecorating works. DJ Russell has advised that, if both jobs can run consecutively as one programme of works, a 5% discount could be applied to the total cost. Officers are therefore keen to programme the jobs at the same time. However, the requested amount from reserves is based on the full cost of the works, in case unforeseen circumstances prevent the jobs from being undertaken consecutively.

3.3. There should be limited disruption to the services delivered at Bennett's Splash Cafe and Community Hub. Grove Corner may need to close for one or two days to allow the paint to dry; however, officers will try to arrange the works on days when the least disruption will be caused.

3.4. Both buildings are currently looking worn and tired. The redecorating works will make them feel more welcoming and refreshed, helping to ensure they are ready for the season ahead.

3.5. The new counter at Bennett's Cafe and Community Hub will provide a safer space for staff, removing the current gap, which is then accessible, should someone try to access it.

4. FINANCIAL IMPACT

4.1. The works are proposed now because both buildings require internal and external redecoration, Bennett's Splash Cafe and Community Hub is entering its quieter operating period, and completing both jobs together may allow the council to receive a 5% discount. The requested reserve funding is based on the full cost of the works, so that the programme can still proceed if the two jobs cannot run consecutively.

4.2. Grove Corner currently has £46,565 in reserve 316, and members are therefore being requested to approve £9,870 of this to be spent.

4.3. Bennett's Splash Cafe and Community Hub is included in the Outdoor Leisure (non-play) reserve 341, which also covers the Skatepark. There is currently £39,052 in the reserve, and Members are requested to approve £5,140 of this to be spent.

5. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

The proposals support the Council's objectives to "*Continue to improve the organisational management, efficiency and environmental sustainability of the town council*" and to "*Continue to improve services targeted to all community sectors in the town".*

6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS - none

7. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

7.1. The Council's contractor will be required to follow its health and safety procedures and officers will request a copy of the relevant documentation before the works begin.

8. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS – none

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS – none

10. ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIODIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

10.1. The contractor will be responsible for the safe and appropriate disposal of any waste materials arising from the works.

11. APPENDICES - none

12. AUTHOR

12.1. Gill Peck, Youth and Community Manager - gill.peck@dunstable.gov.uk

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL

MONDAY 5 OCTOBER 2026

ANNUAL REPORT

Purpose of report: For information

1. BACKGROUND

1.1. The Annual Report provides residents, partners and stakeholders with an overview of the Council's activities and achievements. The report is now produced internally by the Marketing and Communications Officer.

1.2. The report includes:

- A review of key projects and services delivered during 2025/26
- Progress against the Council's Corporate Plan objectives
- Performance indicator results
- Governance information
- Financial information, including reserves and accountability arrangements

1.3. The Annual Report demonstrates the work undertaken by the Council during the financial year 2025/2026 and provides transparency and accountability to residents. The report summarises progress made against the Council's strategic objectives and highlights areas where further work is required. It also includes details of the Council's performance monitoring framework and governance arrangements.

2. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

2.1. The Annual Report supports the Council's commitment to transparency, accountability and performance management and reports progress against the Corporate Plan 2024-2027. It also aligns to the corporate plan objective to "Continue to improve the organisational management, efficiency and environmental sustainability of the Town Council."

3. APPENDICES AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

3.1. Appendix 1 – Annual report 2025-2026
3.2. Prior year's Annual Report - Annual Report 2024 - 2025

4. AUTHOR

Lisa Scheder – Head of Corporate Services and RFO
lisa.scheder@dunstable.gov.uk

Dunstable Town Council

Annual Report

2025 - 2026















40 DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

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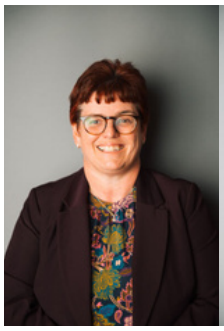
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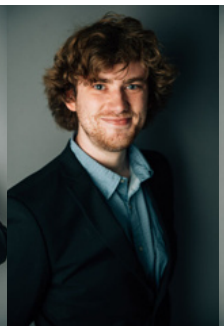
Council Members for the Financial Year 2025 to 2026



Councillor Liz Jones
until 03/12/25



Councillor Trevor Adams



Councillor Greg Alderman



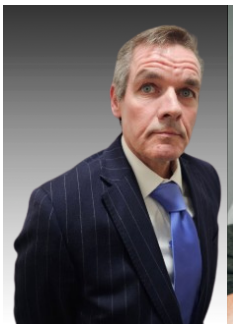
Councillor Michelle Henderson



Councillor Matthew Neall



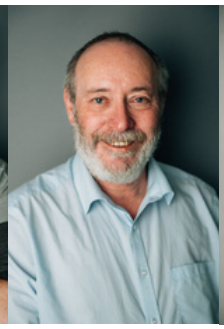
Councillor Louise O'Riordan
until 16/02/26



Councillor Shaun Moulster
from 26/03/26



Councillor John Gurney



Councillor Kenson Gurney



Councillor Philip Crawley



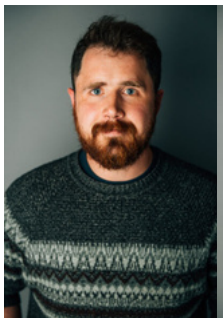
Councillor Peter Hollick



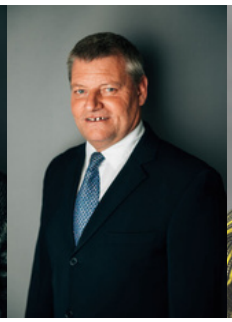
Councillor Nicholas Kotarski



Councillor Johnson Tamara



Councillor Matthew Brennan



Councillor Richard Attwell



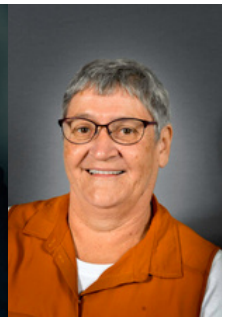
Councillor Sally Kimondo



Councillor Mark Davis



Councillor Robert Blennerhassett



Councillor Wendy Bater

Paul Hodson - Town Clerk and Chief Executive
Lisa Scheder - Head of Corporate Services (RFO)
Becky Wisbey - Head of Community Services
John Crawley - Head of Grounds and Environmental Services until February 2026

Forvis Mazars LLP - External Auditors
Internal Audit Solutions Ltd - Internal Auditors

Foreword



Town Clerk
and Chief Executive
Paul Hodson

I am pleased to present Dunstable Town Council's Annual Report for 2025–2026. This report reflects the wide range of services and facilities provided by the councillors, staff, and volunteers who work so hard to make Dunstable a better place.

Our programme of 2025/26 events continued to grow, including Around the World on 16 May, Dunstable Live on 27 June and Party in the Park on 18 July. The St George's Day celebrations also continued to increase in attendance and reach. The Dunstable Big Lunch welcomed 175 residents for a memorable 'Back to the 80s' celebration, while our first under-18s night at Dunstable Conference Centre brought together 170 young people and generated strong interest in making it a regular event.

I am particularly proud of the activities that took place to mark the Council's 40th anniversary year. These included Dunstable's first-ever Soapbox Derby, which proved so successful that it has been included in the 2026 events programme in response to demand. To mark the anniversary, 40 trees and 40,000 bulbs were planted, a special 40-year logo was created, and the High Street was dressed to commemorate the anniversary. The Council also awarded Honorary Freedom of the Town for the first time in 65 years; Sally Newton and John Buckledee were worthy recipients of this honour.

We were delighted that Dunstable was named the 2025 Anglia in Bloom Overall Winner for the first time. Bennett Memorial Recreation Ground, Dunstable Cemetery, Grove House Gardens and Priory Gardens also retained their Green Flag Awards. Restoration work at Priory House continued, and the scaffolding and hoarding were removed by the end of the year to reveal the restored exterior. Middle Row Markets continued to thrive, attracting more traders than ever, and weddings returned to Grove House.

We also launched the Dunstable Community Lottery to help local charities and community groups raise funds.

With support from the High Street Heritage Action Zone scheme, we unveiled six wooden sculptures reflecting the town's history.

The Council continued to manage its finances carefully, with councillors ensuring that sufficient reserves are in place to maintain our assets in the years ahead. On behalf of Dunstable Town Council, I would like to thank our councillors, staff, partners, volunteers, businesses and residents for their continued support.

Town Clerk & Chief Executive

Foreword



Town Mayor
Councillor Sally Kimondo

I am both proud and honoured to present the annual report for Dunstable Town Council for 2025/2026. This year has been a remarkable journey for our town, and it has been a true privilege to serve as your Town Mayor.

My heart is filled with gratitude for the kindness, support, and dedication that you, the community, have shown me, as each one of you welcomed me with open arms.

A special mention must go to my chaplain, Julian from Com Church, whose steadfast prayers and support have been a guiding light throughout this journey. My consort, my sister Jules, has also been my best friend, sharing in both the challenges and joys of this role.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to the schools that reached out to learn more about my journey. The letters I received from students truly warmed my heart and reminded me of the bright future ahead. I encourage all of you to pursue your dreams relentlessly; remember that every great achievement starts with a single step. Your aspirations are within reach, and with determination, anything is possible.

Through this experience, I have learned invaluable lessons, not only about myself but about all of you. I have come to appreciate that differing viewpoints can be a source of strength rather than division. Embracing advice and constructive criticism is essential for growth and fosters a deeper sense of community among us.

During my year, I have had the privilege of connecting with numerous organisations, businesses, charities, and remarkable individuals. I've seen firsthand the struggles some face with confidence, while others demonstrate incredible resilience. To anyone who finds inspiration in my journey, remember this: your dreams are within reach. The support you need is there; all you must do is embrace it.

As an immigrant from Kenya, Dunstable has become my home, a place that fills my heart with warmth. Together, we can navigate the changes our town is undergoing through kindness and understanding. As Dunstable embraces progress with me as its first Black Mayor, I cannot thank you all enough for welcoming me so warmly. Your simple "hello" has meant the world to me. Admittedly, my pronunciation of certain words might differ, but I see it as a unique opportunity to learn and grow.

This year, I have chosen kindness as my guiding theme, for it is a powerful force for transformation. Acts of kindness can create ripples of change, requiring nothing from [illegible] while yielding immeasurable impact.

Foreword

Dunstable Town Council is evolving, and I have cherished the opportunity to meet many of you at various events, from celebrating 40 years of Dunstable's town-making, and cheering together at the Bloom competition awards. I was honoured to plant a tree in celebration of our 40th anniversary, a meaningful reminder of growth and longevity for our community.

I proudly raised the Bedfordshire flag to show our solidarity and had the joy of reopening Grove House for weddings, marking a new chapter for our community. The 2025 Anglia in Bloom awards were a testament to our collective hard work and commitment, and being crowned the Overall Winner of Anglia in Bloom 2025 highlighted our community spirit.

Each event reinforced the thriving spirit of Dunstable, showcasing how we come together to strengthen and improve our town. The launch of the Freeman/Woman awards illuminated the contributions of those who consistently give their time to our community, while the Dunstable Community Lottery has enabled us to give back while enjoying ourselves.

Supporting local charities and voluntary organisations has been a cornerstone of my mayoral term. I have cherished every visit to the mayoral parlour, connecting with those who signed the mayoral book and sharing our collective aspirations. Working closely with Hospice at Home Volunteers Dunstable (HHV) and Chums, I had the honour of hosting events where your generous donations will ensure these vital services continue their important work.

I am deeply grateful to my fellow councillors, local organisations, Town Council officers, and, most importantly, to each of you, the people of Dunstable, for your unwavering support and commitment. Thank you for making my year as your Mayor an unforgettable experience.

I urge each of you to be mindful and kind to one another. Your actions, no matter how small, can make a significant difference in someone's life. Together, we can create a kind and compassionate Dunstable, where everyone thrives and feels supported.

Thank you for welcoming me with the kindness you have shown throughout this journey.
You have made my mayoral journey one to remember, and I will cherish every moment.

"Together, let us sow the seeds of kindness and watch our community blossom."

Town Mayor of Dunstable
Councillor Sally Kimondo

Foreword



Chair of the Community Services Committee

Councillor Matthew Neall

It gives me great pleasure to report on some of the work of the Community Services Committee for 2025/26.

During the Council's 40th anniversary year, we saw our Community Services continue to grow and develop, reaching more of our local community in the work that they do. All this has been possible due to the dedicated officers who have given so much of their time and energy to their work, which they clearly enjoy and are amazing at delivering. The Head of Service Becky Wisbey, completed her 16th year in this position, and in February received recognition from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) of her Outstanding Service to the Community of Dunstable with an invitation to a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace. This is a testament to the work Becky and the team do, and how we as a Council enable their work to grow and develop. I have enjoyed seeing first hand the achievements over the last 12 months in my role as Chair of Community Services and look forward to seeing where our 41st year takes us.

The events programme this year not only saw the popular events like Party in the Park, Dunstable Live and St George's Day (to name but a few) grow from strength to strength, and be enjoyed by thousands, but to mark our 40th anniversary the team delivered a whole new event – Dunstable's first Soap Box Derby. The event was a complete success, bringing families, businesses and visitors together and proved so popular that it is featured in the 2026 events programme.

Priory House restoration works continued to edge that bit closer to completion, and by the end of the year the scaffolding and hoarding had been removed for everyone to see the beautifully refurbished exterior. Bucking the national trend, Middle Row Markets continued to increase trader numbers with more traders than ever. Our Young Trader Market returned and for the first time they teamed up with our events to show those at our events what Middle Row Markets have to offer.

The Big Lunch, held in Grove House Gardens for older residents, was once again a great success as well as the popular summer activities for young people, being a fantastic addition to the town in the summer months. Whilst the Million Hours Funding for our detached youth work came to an end in March, the team celebrated with the Town Council's first under 18s night at Dunstable Conference Centre which was enjoyed by so many young people, with requests to make this a regular event.

Chair of the Community Services Committee

Councillor Matthew Neall

Foreword



Chair of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee

Councillor Peter Hollick

This Committee is responsible for public open spaces including recreation grounds and play areas, the Cemetery, Grove House and Priory House Gardens, allotments, the town's floral displays and the Town Rangers.

This year has seen two significant departures. John Crawley has been Head of Service for nearly 16 years. In February he retired leaving behind him an important legacy. He has seen Green Flags awarded and retained for Grove House and Priory House Gardens, as well as for Bennett Memorial Recreation Ground and for Dunstable Cemetery. A Green Heritage Site Accreditation has also been awarded for Priory Gardens. The greatest accolade came with winning Britain in Bloom (Large Town category) in 2022 and for seeing a second entry into Britain in Bloom later this year. Dunstable was also named Best Town in the 2025 Anglia in Bloom awards.

For 12 years the service successfully managed Creasey Park Football Ground, which then changed hands to be managed by Bedfordshire Football Association. Under John's time as head of service the town also saw the introduction of the Town Rangers Service. While he will be missed at the helm, we are pleased to welcome Jane Conway as the newly appointed Head of Grounds and Environmental Services.

Mary Dobbs, Cemetery Manager, recently left for pastures new after overseeing the achievement and retention of both the Green Flag Award and the ICCM Charter for the Bereaved Award. The cemetery team, supported by the Friends of Dunstable Cemetery, continue to maintain the site to a high standard, and we welcomed James Stenson as the new Cemetery Manager.

The Town Rangers continue to provide an excellent service both in the Town Centre and in the five wards, whilst also providing a timely response to residents' requests.

To commemorate 40 years of the Town Council, 40 trees and 40,000 bulbs were planted across Dunstable. The Grounds Team are to be congratulated for caring for our parks and green spaces and creating colourful displays in the town centre, Grove House and Priory House gardens throughout spring and summer.

My thanks go to all the staff who work under the Grounds and Environmental Services umbrella who help to make Dunstable a welcoming environment.

Chair of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee

Councillor Peter Hollick

Foreword



Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee

Councillor Nicholas Kotarski

As Chair of the Council's Finance and General Purposes Committee, I am pleased to report on some of the key initiatives and achievements delivered during 2025/26, helping make Dunstable a better place while providing value for money for residents.

Residents rightly pay close attention to the Council's budget. Despite rising costs, the Council continues to deliver popular events such as Around the World, Dunstable Live and Party in the Park, alongside valued services including our award-winning parks and floral displays. A particular highlight was Dunstable representing the Anglia region in Britain in Bloom. To help manage costs, officers, committee members and councillors reviewed the budget line by line to identify savings, while additional funding was needed to help protect staff working alone. As a result, the Council approved a 7.92% budget increase in February 2026 to maintain the services and events enjoyed by residents.

We were also fortunate to receive sponsorship from Penrose Estate Agents, Regtransfers and Howden Insurance, helping fund the Christmas tree, accessible viewing platforms and children's Christmas presents. Progress was also made against the Corporate Plan, including the introduction of weddings at Grove House, a more accessible website, a new pergola in Priory Gardens featuring Dunstable's history and the expansion of the Town Rangers Service.

Another key role of the committee is ensuring strong governance and sound financial management. Thanks to the work of our Head of Corporate Services and RFO, Lisa Scheder, and her team, the Council received a clean bill of health on its 2025/26 accounts from the external auditor. None of this would be possible without the dedication of our council officers, volunteers and fellow councillors.

I would also like to encourage local businesses to consider supporting our events and services as part of their corporate social responsibility commitments. If you would like to get involved, please contact events@dunstable.gov.uk. For more information on the Finance and General Purposes Committee, including how to attend meetings, please visit the Council's website.

Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee

Councillor Nicholas Kotarski

Vision, Mission Statement & Values



VISION

"To help make Dunstable a better place"

MISSION STATEMENT

Dunstable Town Council will do all it can to create a lively and vibrant town, promoting civic pride and improving the quality of life for all those who live, work and visit Dunstable.

VALUES

The Council will at all times:

Be an advocate and campaigning voice for the people of Dunstable

Work to the highest standards of integrity and openness and deliver services to the best of our abilities

Work in partnership with other organisations to improve services and deliver value for money for the Dunstable council taxpayer

A Year in Dunstable 2025 to 2026

New logo for celebrating 40 years of Dunstable Town Council

Dunstable Businesses Celebrate 40 Years of the Town Council with a Shop Window Competition



40 trees and 40,000 bulbs planted to celebrate 40 years of Dunstable Town Council





High Street Banners Illustrating 40 Years of Town Council Services





A Year in Dunstable

Dunstable Town Council celebrates 40 years with its first-ever Soapbox Derby



The Dunstable Community Lottery was launched to help local charities and community groups raise funds, while giving residents an easy way to support good causes in Dunstable.





A Year in Dunstable

Six wooden sculptures unveiled in Dunstable reflecting the town's history funded through the High Street Heritage Action Zone scheme and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund



Historic Honour Returns: Dunstable Awards Honorary Freedom of the Town for the first time in 65 years



"History of the Town Council 1985 - 2025 published by the Council, having been compiled by Cllr Peter Hollick.



Dunstable inclusive and innovative website launched



A Year in Dunstable

Young People help shape a more youth-friendly High Street



Restoration of iconic red phone box on Church Street in partnership with Dunstable in Bloom



Dunstable Town Council celebrates young entrepreneurs at the second Young Traders Market



Dunstable Young Traders triumph at London & South East Young Trader Regional Finals Market



A Year in Dunstable

Bennett Memorial Recreation Ground, Dunstable Cemetery, Grove House Gardens and Priory Gardens retain coveted Green Flag Award





Dunstable Crowned 2025 Anglia in Bloom Overall Winner for the first time and Multiple Category Successes



A Year in Dunstable

Dunstable Christmas Window Competition





Imagination Majorettes awarded Seedcorn Grant



Dunstable's Temporary Banking Hub opens ahead of permanent site



A Year in Dunstable

Weddings return to Grove House in Dunstable





Dunstable Celebrates Kindness at the Town Mayor's Civic Service



Volunteering Leads the Agenda at Dunstable's 2026 Annual Town Meeting



A Year in Dunstable

175 residents enjoy Dunstable's Big Lunch – Back to the '80s



Dunstable celebrates youth funding success with its first 'Dunstable's Biggest Under-18s Night', attended by 170 young people, funded through Central Bedfordshire Council and the National Lottery Community Fund



Progress against objectives

In 2024 the Council adopted its fifth Corporate Plan to span the years 2024 to 2027. During the lifespan of the first four Corporate Plans the Council showed remarkable focus on its Key Priorities and Objectives, and from 2020 to the end of 2023 successfully completed 34 of the original 51 objectives that were set out.

What follows is a table showing 50 objectives adopted in the Corporate Plan 2024/27 and narrative that describes progress made to date against each of the 6 priorities as at the end of March 2026. Objectives will continue to be reported through future annual reports.

Comments made in green show that objectives are progressing well or have been completed.
Comments made in amber show that progress has started to be made or that objectives have not been considered yet.
Comments made in red show that actions have not or will not be completed and a reason given.

1. Continuing to improve the organisational management and efficiency of the Town Council

Action		Council Committee	Original Timescale	Timescale	Progress to March 2026
1	Deliver Investors In People action plan	Finance and General Purposes Committee		By March 2027	Continue with current plans until re-assessment in 2027
2	Carry out internal refurbishment of Kingsbury sports pavilion and renew the roof.	Grounds and Environmental Services Committee	By March 2025	By March 2027	The project remains in progress
3	Carry out a planned maintenance programme at Grove House to ensure the building is safe and suitable for ongoing use by the Council.	Finance and General Purposes Committee		By March 2025	PPM completed and now in progress of implementing plan.
4	Scope the viability of expanding the Council's wedding and event offer to include Grove House.	Community Services		By March 2025	Completed. First wedding held May 2026
5	A doorway created in the outside Rangers area (Grove House) to access the back of the band stand to allow equipment to be moved easily at events and create a secure area during events for equipment and staff.	Finance and General Purposes Committee		By March 2025	Complete
6	Work towards making Dunstable Town Council a carbon neutral organisation by 2030, including by investigating the possibility of installing solar panels on suitable Council venues, beginning with the Dunstable Cemetery	Finance and General Purposes Committee		By March 2027	Following an Energy and Carbon assessment and review, it is unrealistic to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. Solar Panels will be reviewed following essential Chapel maintenance.

7	Create and implement a Biodiversity Policy and Plan	Grounds and Environmental Services Committee		By March 2027	This has now been completed and was adopted in June 2024.
8	Carry out a programme of replacing existing vehicles with more fuel efficient, hybrid or electric vehicles where appropriate	Grounds and Environmental Services Committee		By March 2027	Vehicle Replacement policy is in place. Programme of replacement will be amended to reflect budget.
9	Develop the organisation's use of IT to include all data being stored externally and all staff being able to work flexibly	Finance and General Purposes Committee		By March 2025	Complete
10	Ensure the Council is transparent, and residents can find out what they need to know about how the Council is run	Finance and General Purposes Committee		By March 2025	Complete – Councillor meetings streamed transparency info on website
11	Obtain and keep Cyber Essentials accreditation	Finance and General Purposes Committee		By March 2025	Complete
12	Review the use and functionality of the current chapel; scope providing new chairs, a screen, music streaming system, and webcast facility	Grounds and Environmental Services Committee	By March 2027	By March 2028	To be incorporated into service plans for 2027.
13	Scope providing a weatherproof cover over the seating area at Priory House	Community Services		By March 2027	Scope achieved but unable to progress due to listed building consent
14	Provide new office accommodation / mess facilities for grounds staff	Grounds and Environmental Services Committee		By March 2027	Planning application submitted
15	Improve events infrastructure by installing additional power points and better configuration of outside stores	Community Services		By March 2025	Complete
16	Increase the use of Bennett's Splashside Café outside of the splash park season.	Community Services		By March 2025	Open all year round
17	Purchase and install an external LED board to replicate the information provided from the information window on the High Street	Community Services		By March 2027	Multiple options were discussed; however, planners advised that planning permission was unlikely.

Progress against objectives

2. Preserve and enhance the history and identity of the Town, creating a sense of pride in Dunstable

	Action	Council Committee	Original Tmescale	Timescale	Progress to March 2026	
18	Celebrate the Town Council's 40th anniversary in 2025: Enhance the events programme and all services to reflect and celebrate 40 years of achievement. Hold at least one civic event	Finance and General Purposes Committee		By December 2025	Completed	
19	Support Dunstable in Bloom to enter Anglia in Bloom each year	Grounds and Environmental Services Committee		By March 2027	2024 2025 2026 2027	Complete Complete Complete
20	Invest in and increase public art. Provide a sculpture trail, additional Middle Row art and virtual trail	Community Services		By March 2027	Wooden heritage sculpture trail installed, which was funded by UKSPF & HSHAZ	
21	Review and expand the Town Rangers Service.	Grounds and Environmental Services Committee		By March 2025	New Ranger was appointed in September 2024.	
22	Retain the Heritage Flag for Priory Gardens. Improve access to historical information and interpretation of the site	Grounds and Environmental Services Committee		By March 2027	2024 2025 2026 2027	Complete Complete Complete
23	Reopen Priory House and engage users in line with funders' requirements. Promote Priory House as an important heritage destination.	Community Services		By March 2027	Major ongoing building works.	

3. To further improve and develop the provision of the green and open space in the Town

	Action	Council Committee	Original Timescale	Timescale	Progress to March 2026
24	Take ownership and create garden by White Lion busway stop - College Drive	Grounds and Environmental Services Committee		By March 2027	£20,00 funding secured, with £10,000 to be spent by March 2027. Land transfer being progressed.
25	Work with Dunstable Town Bowls Club to ensure future provision of outdoor bowling opportunities in Dunstable	Grounds and Environmental Services Committee	By March 2026	By March 2027	Delayed due to external factors.
26	Plan for and open new cemetery in Dunstable	Grounds and Environmental Services Committee		By March 2029	Specialist Consultant procured. Early stages of planning – on track
27	Provide one new allotment site	Grounds and Environmental Services Committee	March 2027	By March 2029	Provision for 30 allotment plots in planning.
28	Improve the provision of waste bins on Council property. Combine all general and dog waste to increase the capacity overall and reduce costs	Grounds and Environmental Services Committee		By March 2025	Complete

29	Support allotment holders at one site to create an allotment association to maintain and oversee activities, build a sense of community and engage with the local area	Grounds and Environmental Services Committee		By March 2027	Limited demand at present
30	Carry out a feasibility study to identify an open space in one of our current parks that could be used for dog activities	Grounds and Environmental Services Committee		By March 2025	This objective is not being progressed at this stage.
31	Develop and implement green space management plans for each recreation ground. Each plan will involve public consultation consider the headings used for Green Flag management plans along with developing play areas, accessibility and inclusivity, benches, gym trails etc. Year 1 - 2024/25: Kingsbury Recreation Ground, Downs Road Recreation Ground Brewers Hill Recreation Ground. Year 2 - 2025/26: Ridgeway Avenue Recreation Ground, Downside Recreation Ground & Mentmore Recreation Ground. Year 3 - 2026/27: Newton Recreation Ground, Markham Crescent Public Open Space, Frenchs Avenue Public Open Space & Olma Road Recreation Ground	Grounds and Environmental Services Committee		Year 1: By the end of March 2025	Complete
				Year 2: By the end of March 2026	Complete
				Year 3: By the end of March 2027	In progress
32	Replace Priory Gardens pergola and knee rail	Grounds and Environmental Services Committee		By March 2026	Pergola is complete. Knee rail in progress, pending funding confirmation. Friends of Priory House and Gardens have committed £1,000 to project.
33	Look to maintain more of the grass verges across our town and smarten them up	Grounds and Environmental Services Committee		By March 2027	Ongoing discussions
34	Resurface the Bennett's Rec Tennis Courts with a safer surface that can be played on all year round	Grounds and Environmental Services Committee		By March 2027	No funding secured at present
35	Undertake feasibility study and consider the creation of a Pickleball Court in one of our open spaces that incorporates other sporting / activities	Grounds and Environmental Services Committee		By March 2027	No funding secured at present
36	Install disabled / inclusive play equipment at larger play sites	Grounds and Environmental Services Committee		By March 2027	Equipment has been installed at Grove House Gardens playground, using UKSPF funding. No further plans yet.

Progress against objectives

4. Continue to improve services targeted to all community sectors in the Town

Action		Council Committee	Original Timescale	Timescale	Progress to March 2026
37	Increase the Big Lunch Opportunities to 150 older people	Community Services		By March 2025	Complete
38	Launch additional lunch club or other activities for older people	Community Services		By March 2026	Launched breakfast club at Bennetts Café & Community Hub, and Food club successfully. Lunch Club has also moved venue which has increased capacity.
39	Extend Grove Corner buildings, creating a proper hub for youth services in the town	Community Services		By March 2027	Plans have been drawn up, and this project has been scoped. Benefits of works do not currently justify the funding required and will not progress.
40	Deliver current programme of detached work to March 2026 and secure ongoing resources	Community Services		By March 2026	Three nights of detached youth work secured until March 2027

5. Contribute to the regeneration of the Town Centre and development of neighbourhoods in the Town

Action		Council Committee	Original Timescale	Timescale	Progress to March 2026
41	Create a pop-up meanwhile space	Community Services		By March 2026	Dunstable Town Council were unable to secure a unit from Central Bedfordshire Council, and The Quadrant.
42	Create a parklet/Green Space in Town Centre	Community Services		By March 2027	Land transfer negotiations with Luton Borough Council continue.
43	Implement the Town Centre Management Business Plan	Community Services		By March 2025	Overall Plan delivered with market targets exceeded – ongoing
44	Make physical improvements such as: Install solar benches with USB ports in appropriate locations, water refill stations, living columns + art trails	Community Services		By March 2025	Complete
45	Install Self-clean pop-up toilets in the town and gardens, increasing the toilets in the town and offering more choice to the	Community Services		By March 2027	This objective is aspirational and is not being progressed at this stage.

Progress against objectives

46	Review the Council's support for the Community and Voluntary Sector	Community Services		By March 2027	Ongoing
47	Strengthen and develop cultural services and activities in the town; deliver cultural capacity development programme funded by UKSPF	Community Services		By March 2025	Complete
48	Establish a community Lottery to enable local community groups to raise funds.	Finance and General Purposes Committee		By March 2027	Complete

6. Represent residents, businesses and community groups of Dunstable on key strategic issues facing the Town

Action		Council Committee	Original Timescale	Timescale	Progress to March 2026
49	Scope a Neighbourhood Plan to give Dunstable more say over its own future, be it to protect the town from unwanted development or have more control over the developments that do take place in the town	Community Services		By March 2027	Action Completed – decision taken not to progress
50	Ensure best use of developer contributions and key developments in the town	Grounds and Environmental Services Committee		By March 2027	Funding being sought for Kingsbury Pavillion development.

Performance Measures, Service Planning and Monitoring Arrangements

To monitor the Council's performance effectively against its priority objectives, a series of performance indicators (PIs) has been developed across all Council service areas. Some indicators are user-focused, while others measure service performance more directly. A small number relate to areas where the Council does not have direct control, such as town centre shop unit vacancies; however, these are still monitored because they provide useful insight into the overall health of the town. The indicators below were agreed at the end of 2024, when Members adopted the current Corporate Plan for the period 2024-2027, and have since been reviewed to ensure they align more closely with the Council's Corporate Priorities.

A total of 50 indicators have been reported upon, of which:

- **29 achieved their target or improved on the previous year's performance**
- **3 are slightly below target**
- **10 are below target**
- **8 were unable to be reported on**

Highlights in Council performance include:

- Facebook followers significantly exceeding the 4-year target figure
- Number of community led initiatives exceeded the 4-year target.
- Increased number of events held throughout the year
- Significant increase in number of attendance to services for young people

1. Continuing to improve the organisational management and efficiency of the Town Council.

Responsible Committee		Performance Indicator	Service Area	2-Year Target to March 2026	March 2026 Out-turn
Finance and General Purposes	1	Number of bids/tenders submitted, Including grant applications, tenders submitted and quotes for new work.	Corporate	8	6
Finance and General Purposes	2	Income secured as a percentage of gross expenditure outside of the council tax collection	Finance	32%	18.74%
Council	3	By annual survey, Percentage of residents satisfied overall with Council services	Corporate	79%	No Data
Finance and General Purposes	4	IIP accreditation maintained at a minimum of Silver standard	HR	Silver	Silver

Finance and General Purposes	5	Council General Reserve level maintained at 25% of salary bill	Finance	25%	25%
Finance and General Purposes	6	Average number of sick days per employee	HR	7	5.51
Finance and General Purposes	7	Staff retention, by percentage of contracted staff who remain employed for at least two years.	HR	90%	82%
Finance and General Purposes	8	Annual Governance Accountability Return (AGAR) completed with no exceptions	Finance	Yes	Yes
Council	9	Provide/facilitate a minimum of seven publicly accessible community facilities across the town per annum	Corporate	7	7
Finance and General Purposes	10	Percentage of Performance Indicators/Objectives achieved	Corporate	90%	60%
Council	11	Percentage of contracted staff undergoing training.	HR	75%	45%
Council	12	Reduce energy consumption	Corporate	2%	Baseline figure now received- can calculate going forward
Council	13	% of low emission vehicles in fleet	Corporate	55%	56%
Council	14	% of recycling in weight collected	Corporate	40%	94.8%

2. Preserve and enhance the history and identity of the Town, creating a sense of pride in Dunstable

Responsible Committee		Performance Indicator	Service Area	2-Year Target to March 2026	March 2026 Out-turn
Community Services	15	Increase in income year on year from actual	Priory House	£29,200	£20,366
Community Services	16	Percentage of users satisfied with service	Priory House	80%	No Data
Community Services	17	Increase in visitors/customers year on year with 2025/26 being the baseline	Priory House	5%	No Data

Performance Measures, Service Planning and Monitoring Arrangements

3. To further improve and develop the provision of the green and open space in the Town

Responsible Committee		Performance Indicator	Service Area	2 Year Target to March 2026	March 2026 Out-turn
Community Services	18	Percentage of users satisfied with service	Bennett's Splash	NEW	No Data
Community Services	19	Increase in income year on year	Bennett's Splash	65,000	£56,792
Grounds & Environmental Services	20	Percentage of residents satisfied overall with green and open spaces	Green Spaces	92%	No Data
Grounds & Environmental Services	21	To retain Green Flag accreditation at four sites	Green Spaces	4	4
Grounds & Environmental Services	22	% of play equipment faults fixed within 2 working days.	Green Spaces	NEW	No Data
Grounds & Environmental Services	23	To annually retain ICCM Charter for the Bereaved silver status at Dunstable Cemetery.	Cemetery	Silver	Silver
Grounds & Environmental Services	24	Number of volunteers working directly with the Council to enhance the town's green spaces	Green Spaces	25	217
Grounds & Environmental Services	25	The completion of 10 new management plans for recreation grounds and large open spaces over 3 years – 3 in Year 1, 3 in Year 2 and 4 in Year 3.	Green Spaces	3	3

4. Continue to improve services targeted to all community sectors in the Town

Responsible Committee		Performance Indicator	Service Area	2 Year Target to March 2026	March 2026 Out-turn
Grounds & Environmental Services	26	Town Ranger income achieved	Green Spaces	£8,240	£9,067
Community Services	27	Percentage of people satisfied with events	Events	98%	93.34%
Finance and General Purposes	28	Total number of events	Corporate	47	71

Finance and General Purposes	29	Total number of volunteers	Corporate	28	7
Community Services	30	Total number of young people visits to services for young people	Grove Corner	4,000	9,771
Community Services	31	Total number of individual young people engaging in youth provision run by DTC	Grove Corner	500	No Data
Community Services	32	Hours of youth provision delivered to young people	Grove Corner	810	1,289.50
Community Services	33	Meet budgeted income year on year	Grove Corner	£11,000	£8,703
Community Services	34	Total number of older people visits to council delivered older people services	Older People	2,000	3,528
Community Services	35	Increase provision offered to the older community	Older People	1	3
Community Services	36	Number of community-led initiatives supported	Community engagement	1	6
Community Services	37	New community groups engaged with	Community engagement	2	3

5. Contribute to the regeneration of the Town Centre and development of neighbourhoods in the Town

Responsible Committee		Performance Indicator	Service Area	2 Year Target to March 2026	March 2026 Out-turn
Community Services	38	Number of new traders on markets etc.	Town Centre	40	66
Community Services	39	Number of trading businesses on the market	Town Centre	93	141
Community Services	40	Average number of stalls per market for middle row	Town Centre	27	28
Community Services	41	Number of businesses engaged with each year	Town Centre	140	210

Performance Measures, Service Planning and Monitoring Arrangements

6. Represent residents, businesses and community groups of Dunstable on key strategic issues facing the Town					
Responsible Committee		**Performance Indicator**	**Service Area**	**2 Year Target to March 2026**	**March 2026 Out-turn**
Finance and General Purposes	42	Percentage increase in the number of followers on all social media platforms	Communications	5%	47%
Finance and General Purposes	43	Number of website visits per year	Communications	10,000	113,000
Finance and General Purposes	44	Number of people reached via Facebook	Communications	333,000	517,700
Finance and General Purposes	45	Number of articles published	Communications	12	30
Finance and General Purposes	46	Number of views of Council meetings online	Democratic	500	1448
Council	47	Percentage physical councillor attendances at all main committees	Democratic	74%	69%
Council	48	Percentage of recommendations to main committees approved	Democratic	85%	97%
Council	49	Percentage of events attended by the Mayor which are in Dunstable per annum	Democratic	67%	51.1%
Council	50	Number of Councillor led surgeries (open public meetings)	Democratic	10	4

Please find below further information relating to the Performance Indicator targets.

2. Original Targets included CPCFC. Target figure is now unachievable.
7. Three long-term employees left, two of whom retired.
11. Subject to change year-on-year due to requirements of roles/services.
15. Priory House not fully open, income target unachievable.
29. Independently run friends group formed since 24-25
33. Income target set when external contract funding in place

Budget and Precept (excerpt from Financial Regulations)

Budget Preparation and Approval

- Councils are legally required to calculate and approve a council tax budget before setting a precept, following the Local Government Finance Act 1992 or later laws.

Salary Budget Review

- Budgets for salaries and employer contributions must be reviewed annually in autumn by the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Draft Budget & Forecast

- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) prepares a draft budget by December each year:
  - Includes income and expenditure estimates
  - Provides a 3-year forecast
  - Accounts for asset lifespans and related costs

Earmarked Reserves

- Unspent funds from partially completed projects can be carried forward only with full council approval, by placing them in earmarked reserves.

Committee Responsibilities

- Committees with budgetary authority must:
  - Review their draft budgets
  - Submit proposed amendments to the Finance and General Purposes Committee by the end of December

Final Consideration

- The Finance and General Purposes Committee reviews all inputs and makes a recommendation to the full council.

Setting the Precept

- The council sets the final budget and precept—which is the required amount for council tax—no later than the end of February for the next financial year.

Budget and Precept (excerpt from Financial Regulations)

2025/2026 Budget Setting

When preparing the budget for financial year 2025/2026, the Council faced a number of unknowns including:

- National pay award unknown, estimated at 3%
- Council tax base reduced for first time in known history
- Exact underspend unknown from financial year 2024/2025
- Impact following the loss of the management contract at Creasey Park Community Football Centre

In addition, the Council also had awareness of a number of challenges that had a financial impact including:

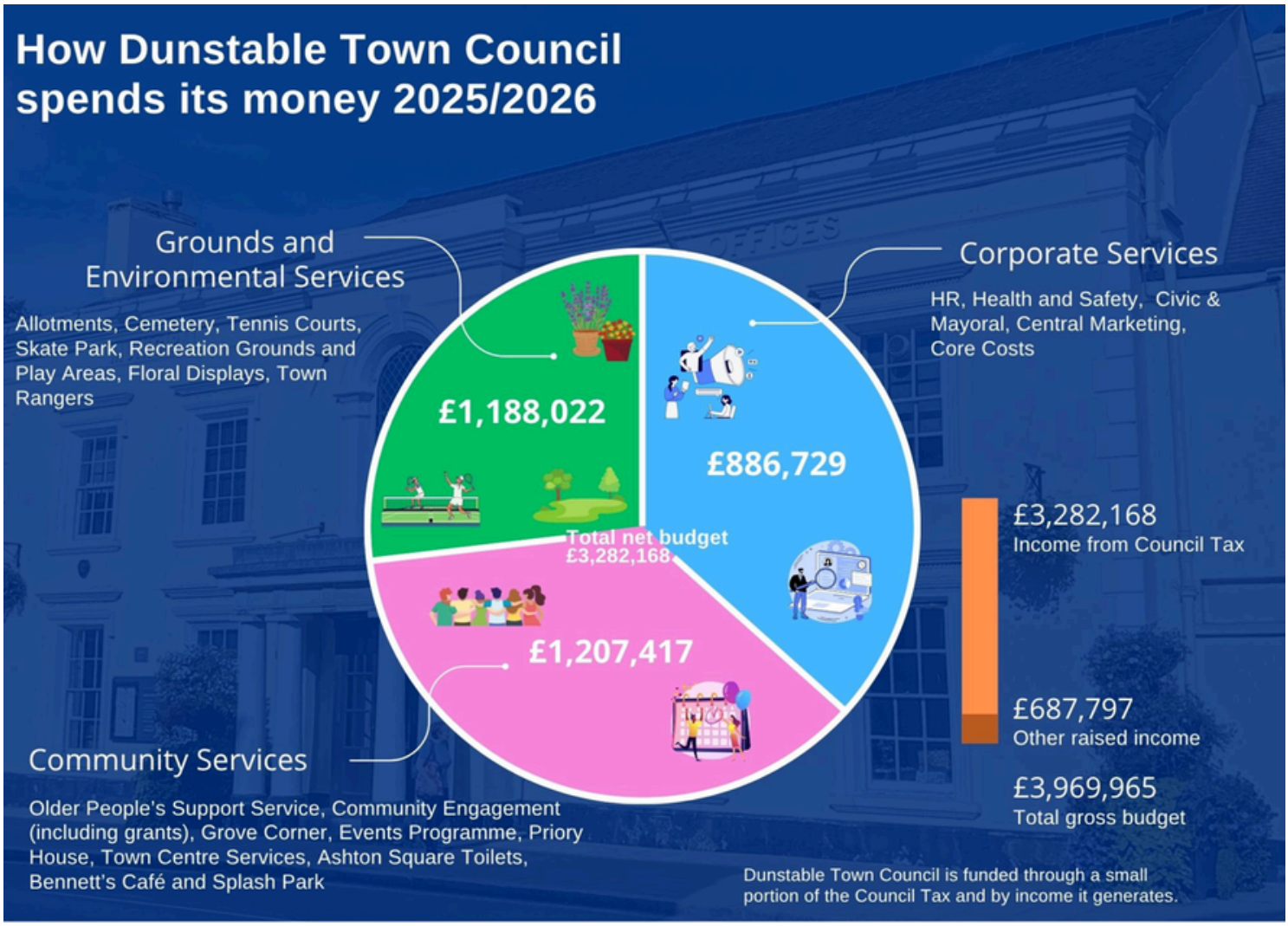
- Vehicle replacement requirements – current reserve contributions not sufficient
- Essential Grove House building repairs required
- Priory House building repairs ongoing – loss of income
- Grounds depot rent and utilities
- Loss of tenant at Grove House
- New cemetery land requirement

In addition, the Council celebrated the 40th anniversary of Dunstable Town Council by enhancing the events programme, street dressing and floral displays across the town.

Following a detailed review of all budget areas, the Council agreed a Council Tax increase of 11.89%, resulting in a precept requirement of £3,282,168 and a Band D Council Tax rate of £246.13. A four-year budget was also set to plan for inflationary pressures, ongoing building maintenance and the development of a new cemetery. Full budget details, including future forecasts, are available on the Council's website.

2025/2026 Outturn

Despite the financial challenges faced during 2025/26, the Council recorded an overall net revenue underspend of £105,854. This was largely due to lower-than-budgeted National Pay Award costs, staff vacancies and fuel savings. Members approved the allocation of this underspend to support one-off requirements, including additional professional fees, essential roof repairs to the ranger store and the detached youth service.


How Dunstable Town Council spends its money 2025/2026
Grounds and Environmental Services
Allotments, Cemetery, Tennis Courts, Skate Park, Recreation Grounds and Play Areas, Floral Displays, Town Rangers
£1,188,022
Corporate Services
HR, Health and Safety, Civic & Mayoral, Central Marketing, Core Costs
£886,729
Total net budget £3,282,168
£1,207,417
Community Services
Older People's Support Service, Community Engagement (including grants), Grove Corner, Events Programme, Priory House, Town Centre Services, Ashton Square Toilets, Bennett's Café and Splash Park
£3,282,168
Income from Council Tax
£687,797
Other raised income
£3,969,965
Total gross budget
Dunstable Town Council is funded through a small portion of the Council Tax and by income it generates.

Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

The Council must submit its Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2025/26 to the External Auditor by 30 June 2026. The accounts contained in this return present fairly the Council's financial position, are consistent with the underlying financial records, and have been prepared on an income and expenditure basis.

The AGAR for 2025-26 is shown below:

		Last Year £	This Year £	Summary
1	Balances brought forward	2,168,307	2,140,531	Total balances and reserves brought forward from previous financial year
2	(+) Precept or Rates ans Levies	2,933,469	3,282,168	Total precept receivable in the year. The Precept required for financial year 2025/2026 was based on an 11.89% increase, equating to £246.13 for a band D council tax rated property.
3	(+) Total other receipts	2,058,695	1,847,735	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook, less the precept but including any grants received. Receipts reduction from previous year, predominantly due to reduced external funding in year.
4	(-) Staff costs	2,184,074	2,260,598	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Includes gross salaries and wages, employers NI and pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments (if applicable). The increased costs are due to the national pay award, as well as incremental payments due in year.
5	(-) Loan interest / capital repayments	122,376	121,151	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings. Further detail on borrowings can be found at point 10 below, and on the following page.
6	(-) All other payments	2,713,490	2,770,266	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staffing costs (at item 4) and loan interest / capital repayments (at item 5).
7	(=) Balances carried forward	2,140,531	2,118,420	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year (items 1+2+3 less items 4+5+6)
8	Total value of cash and short term investments	2,135,048	1,983,821	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March, which agrred with the bank reconciliation. A breakdown of this can be found on the following page at item 2.
9	Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	8,406,182	8,423,801	The value of all of the property the authority owns; it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March 2026. The figure increased from the previous year due to some additional assets being purchased during the financial year. Details can be found ont he following page at item 3.
10	Total borrowings	841,714	770,293	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (Public Works Loan Board). A breakdown of this can be found on the following page at item 4.

Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

Further information

1 - Grants and Service Level Agreements (SLA) awarded in 2025/2026

£7,900 Service Level Agreements awards as:

£800	Dunstable Town Guides
£2,000	Hospice at Home
£2,000	Dunstable and District Citizens Advice Bureau
£1,000	Dunstable Town Band
£600	Sorted Counselling Service
£1,500	Bedfordshire Rural CC

As well as £1,000 awarded in Seedcorn Grants to local groups or organisations

2 - Cash and shortterm investments

Bank Statement Balances at 31 March 2026

Account Description	Balance	
Current Account	£10,000.00	
Business Reserve	£77,750.91	
CCLA Deposit Fund	£1,892,270.52	
		£1,980,021.43

Other Cash & Bank Balances at 31 March 2026

Float - Priory House	£500.00	
Float - Splash Café	£650.00	
Tearooms petty cash	£300.00	
Central petty cash	£1,899.19	
Grove Corner petty cash	£100.00	
Grove House petty cash	£150.00	
OPDCS petty cash	£50.00	
Splash Café petty cash	£150.00	
		£3,799.19
		£1,983,820.62

3 - Assets

A summary of the assets purchased during the financial year are as follows:

£3,972	Health and Safety / Maintenance Equipment
£2,007	IT / Technical Equipment
£755	Kitchen / Catering Equipment
£4,467	Furniture
£1,643	Planters
£1,115	Football goals
£3,380	Self Closing gates
£280	Additional (race timing, vacuum cleaner)
£17,619	

4 - Borrowings

The Council currently have 7 loans outstanding through the Public Works Loan Board;

Balance outstanding at 31 March 2026	End Date	Site
£1,594	Nov 2026	Kingsbury Pavilion
£62,100	Nov 2034	Grove House - part 1
£158,333	May 2035	Grove House - part 2
£195,000	Nov 2038	Cemetery
£133,333	Nov 2033	Priory House - part 1
£37,184	May 2034	Priory House - part 2
£182,750	Oct 2042	Priory House - part 3
£770,293		

Income and Expenditure Budget & Actual Comparison 2025/2026

31st March 2025		31st March 2026
	Income Summary	
2,933,469	INC - Precept	3,282,168
2,933,469	Sub Total	**3,282,168**
	Operating Income	
2,109	CENTRAL SERVICES	1,611
39,270	GROVE HOUSE	30,161
151,224	CORPORATE MANAGEMENT	119,412
583	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES	386
(3,196)	CREASEY PARK - COMM F'BALL	98
281	CREASEY PARK - BAR/CATERING	98
53,831	SPLASH PARK	56,792
393	G&ES COSTS	0
14,261	ALLOTMENTS	12,667
302,434	CEMETERY	243,931
16,324	REC.GENERAL-R.G.	17,783
5,488	TOWN RANGER SERVICES	9,067
25,857	OLDER PEOPLES DAY CARE SERVICE	32,842
16,392	G & E CAPITAL & PROJECTS	0
65,503	COMM SERVICES STAFF COSTS	80,995
9,532	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	9,784
10,676	GROVE CORNER	8,703
1,230,929	FUNDING	1,112,307
14,628	EVENTS PROGRAMME	19,290
43,417	PRIORY HOUSE	20,366
42,023	TOWN CENTRE	47,980
16,737	TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT	23,463
4,992,164	Total Income	**5,129,903**
	Running Costs	
486,588	CORP SERVICES STAFF COSTS	534,672
132,413	CENTRAL SERVICES	166,105
78,213	GROVE HOUSE	72,072
174,937	CORPORATE MANAGEMENT	171,836
26,331	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES	43,630
172,727	F & GP CAPITAL & PROJECTS	104,864
1,021	CREASEY PARK - COMM F'BALL	98
110,704	CREASEY PARK - BAR/CATERING	98
140,266	SPLASH PARK	152,946
874,937	G&ES COSTS	918,148
8,216	ALLOTMENTS	8,043
166,175	CEMETERY	167,360
123,804	REC.GENERAL-R.G.	110,790
21,808	TOWN RANGER SERVICES	15,213
47,295	OLDER PEOPLES DAY CARE SERVICE	59,271
220,889	G & E CAPITAL & PROJECTS	64,442
374,401	COMM SERVICES STAFF COSTS	430,542
42,195	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	41,726
33,157	GROVE CORNER	27,570
24,081	HSHAZ Scheme	0

Income and Expenditure Budget & Actual Comparison 2025/2026

31st March 2025		31st March 2026
978,742	FUNDING	1,209,490
149,715	COMM S CAPITAL & PROJECTS	298,977
175,114	EVENTS PROGRAMME	211,109
244,482	PRIORY HOUSE	126,254
75,052	TOWN CENTRE	72,143
132,024	TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT	137,982
4,656	ASHTON SQUARE PUBLIC CONVENIEN	6,634
5,019,940	Total Expenditure	**5,152,015**
	General Fund Analysis	
757,573	Opening Balance	593,193
4,992,164	Plus : Income for Year	5,129,903
5,749,737		5,723,096
5,019,940	Less : Expenditure for Year	5,152,015
729,798		571,082
136,605	Transfers TO / FROM Reserves	5,367
593,193	**Closing Balance**	**565,715**

Reserves Summary 2025/26

Key:

= Finance and General Purposes Committee

= Grounds and Environmental Services Committee

= Community Services Committee

Description	Bal as at 31.03.26	Commitments/ Programme of works, etc	Committed Amount	Bal after committed	26/27 proposed contribution	Notes on uncommitted / plans for future requirement
General Reserve	£565,714	Minimun requiremnt c/fwd to 2026/27 = 25% of annual salaries = £544,587	-£544,587.00	£21,127	-	minimum requirement of 25% of annual salary budget (£548,703 for 26/27)
Vehicles Reserve	£94,169	FGP 17.06.24- Minute 141/24- bal of £28,347 for 2 replacement vehicles & 1 additional ride on mower (of £92,337 approved) GES 19.01.26- Minute 032/26- £50,000 for Ranger vehicle and refurbishment of cemetery digger	-£78,347.00	£15,822	£60,000	10 year replacement programme. Revision to plan and spend proposal to GES in Jan 2026
Christmas Lights Reserve	£19,766	5 year replacement lighting plan 21/22-25/26 ; Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= release of £8,731 for replacement and repairs of lights	-£9,094.80	£10,671	£7,000	Ongoing maintenance/replacement - under tender
Street Dressing Reserve	£0			£0		
Downside Building Maintenance Res	£15,840	FGP 12.06.23- Minute 141/23= £36,679 & £8,792.55- for 2nd phase roof repairs FGP 26.01.26- Minute 041/26= £34,297- for 2nd phase roof repairs totalling £79,769 approved less exp to	-£15,839.60	£0	£5,000	2nd phase roof repairs
Grove Corner Building Maint Reserve	£42,565	Chairs Approval 17.04.23= bal of £2,000 roof survey & development plans (of £5,000 approved)	-£2,000.00	£40,565	£4,000	Building reserves for future repairs/works to the building
Building Security Systems	£5,357	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £5,357 for improved security for Grove House	-£5,357.48	£0		
Cemetery Memorial Safety	£4,730	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £3,075 for periodic inspections and subsequent works	-£3,075.00	£1,655	£1,738	Reserve being built up to fund contractor to undertake testing which is next due in October 2027
Priory House Tearooms Equipment	£12,000	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £9,000 for replacement of kitchen/catering equipment	-£9,000.00	£3,000	£3,000	For Priory House reopening costs
IT/Equipment Reserve	£21,213			£21,213	£20,000	For replacement/upgrade of IT across all service areas
Older People's Day Care Service	£12,325			£12,325		Reserve to cover unforseen costs and still enable the service to continue e.g. CBC ceases funding with no notice or transport/food costs increase considerably

Reserves Summary 2025/26

Description	Bal as at 31.03.26	Commitments/ Programme of works, etc	Committed Amount	Bal after committed	26/27 proposed contribution	Notes on uncommitted / plans for future requirement
Election Reserve	£0			£0	£20,000	Reserve being built up to fund future election and by election costs
Grove House Building Reserve	£160,194	Council 24.06.24- Minute 165/24= £213,276 for essential repair and maintenance works (of £226,550 approved)	-£91,194.30	£69,000	£69,000	For ongoing essential building works
Priory House Works Contingency	£29,864	Council 07.04.25- Minute 115/25= £29,864 for PH Exhibition (in £161,013 total with £11,149 on 327 & £120,000 on 333)	-£29,864.20	£0		For the Priory House reopening costs
Mayoral Reserve	£3,000	FGP 19.01.15-Minute 24 - to be retained for transport/allowance as required	-£3,000.00	£0		
Priory House Exhibition	£11,149	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £11,149 for programme of future	-£11,149.00	£0		
Priory Churchyard	£0			£0	£5,000	Buiding reserve up to deal with any maters arising from the church quinquennial report which includes the closed churchyard. Report
Town Twinning Reserve	£8,274	Retained for twinning activities to be determined		£8,274		
Tree Reserve	£11,261	Chairs Approval 02.02.26= £1,400 additional 2026 survey works/specialist visit (from £5,139 approved)	-£1,400.00	£9,861	£15,000	The tree reserve is used every year to fund ongoing inspections and annual tree works to maintain the Council's tree stock in a healthy and safe condition . The 2025/26 contract is out to tender for completion by March 2026.
Open Spaces Improvement Plan	£73,949	FGP 20.01.20- Minute 8- Bal of £4,723 for recreation grounds improvement works (from £26,668 agreed); Council 29.06.20- Minute 85- bal of £12,982 for Priory Gardens Pergola Repairs (from £15,000 agreed);	-£17,705.38	£56,244	£30,000	The emerging management plans for Recreation Grounds will inform its future use. It has also been used in the past to fund play improvements.

Reserves Summary 2025/26

Description	Bal as at 31.03.26	Commitments/ Programme of works, etc	Committed Amount	Bal after committed	26/27 proposed contribution	Notes on uncommitted / plans for future requirement
Priory House Building Reserve	£223,426	FGP Minute 41/23 23.01.23- bal of £3,700- Roof works (amended requirement 12.01.26); Council 07.04.25 - Minute 115/25= bal of £74,200 - Priory House Exhibition (of £120,000 agreed) Community Services 12.01.26- Minute 012/26= bal of £195,526, for required maintenance/improvement works (of £220,282.49 approved; £170,522.59 + £50,000 26/27 res contrib)	-£223,425.59	£0	£50,000	See committee report readditional works
Pavilion Buildings Maintenance Res	£50,632			£50,632	£15,000	Ringfenced for works on Kingsbury, also to be funded by £169k from the Meadway Capital, £97k of S106.
Church Street Phone Box Maintenance	£0			£0		
Health and Safety Reserve	£0			£0	£5,000	For known future requirements to fire panel and electrics in Grove House
Community Lottery Reserve	£0			£0	£1,750	Still in first year of operating so full value and purpose to be determined.
Allotments Reserve	£26,482	FGP Minute 107 20.06.22= bal for 5 year infrastructure improvement programme (upto £42,800 approved) (includes £5,000 pa contributions to 26/27)	-£15,112.24	£11,370	£5,000	This reserve is used to fund the current improvement programme. A future GES will need to receive a report on progress and the potentail reallocation of funding set aside for composting toilets to now fund a security fence at meadway allotment for which quotations have been obtained.
Outdoor Leisure (non play) Reserve	£27,052			£27,052	£12,000	Repairs to the SkatePark and Splash Pad in time will be expensive so important to gradually build a healthy reserve of £100-200k. Members may also wish to consider seeking ownership of the BMX track to ensure it is better managed as a community facility.

Reserves Summary 2025/26

Description	Bal as at 31.03.26	Commitments/ Programme of works, etc	Committed Amount	Bal after committed	26/27 proposed contribution	Notes on uncommitted / plans for future requirement
Memorial Kerbs Reserve	£461	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £300 for purchase of memorial kerbs	-£300.00	£161		This will be used to assist with funding memorial kerbs and sanctums, which are then leased for 25 or 35 years
Cemetery Building Maintenance Res	£54,773	GES Minute 150/25= £27,281 for cemetery building works, information board and footpath repairs FGP Minute 167/25 = £27,492 (tfrd from general reserve) for cem building works, with above	-£54,773.00	£0	£10,000	For the general upkeep of the cemetery building and footpaths/ driveways.
Fencing Maintenance Reserve	£7,088			£7,088	£7,000	For fencing and kneerail repairs across parks and open spaces as required
HSHAZ/Priory House HAR	£63,343	HSHAZ scheme programme / HAR 1 Priory House works programme- to future claim / claims due	-£63,342.69	£0		
NEW Play Equipment Improvement Res	£2,616			£2,616		
Website Development	£1,612			£1,612	£900	Building reserve for future website development and / or next tender
Neighbourhood Development	£12,668	FGP 26.01.26, Minuted 043/26 - Approval of balance of reserve, together with 25/26 forecast underspends, for essential required works	-£12,668.00	£0		No longer required - Members made decision not to continue with the Neighbourhood Development Plan.
NEW Detached Youth Service Reserve	£31,000	FGP 26.01.26, Minute 043/26 - £31,000 Approved of 25/26 year end underspends to ringfence and release of funds for future detached youth service	-£31,000.00	£0		
NEW Ranger Stores Maintenance Res	£30,000	FGP 26.01.26, Minute 043/26 - £30,000 aproved from 25/26 year end underspends to ringfence and release of funds for roof repairs to ranger stores	-£30,000.00	£0		
NEW Professional Fees Reserve	£32,186	FGP 26.01.26, Minute 043/26 - bal of y/end underspends to ringfence and release of funds for professional fees as required	-£32,186.00	£0		
Earmarked Reserves Total	**£1,654,708**		**-£1,284,421**	**£370,288**		

Reserves Summary 2025/26

Capital Receipt - Sale of Land at Meadway						
Description	**Bal as at 31.03.26**	**Commitments/Programme of works, etc**	**Committed Amount**	**Bal after committed**		
White Lion Land Landscaping	£10,000	Council 05.12.22 Minute 210- creation of new reserve from capital receipt received July 2022		£10,000		Reserve specifically set up for this area works
New Cemetery Development	£147,361	FGP 18.09.23- Minute 187/23= balance of £32,135.50 for development of the new cemetery (of £76,775 approved) Council 09.02.26- Minute 062/26- for the purchase of Cottage Bottom Field to develop the new cemetery	-£134,635.50	£12,725		Reserve specifically set up for purpose
Grounds Depot Extension	£95,685	FGP 17.06.24- Minute 141/24= bal of £95,685 - Depot Extension (of £100,000 approved)	-£95,685.00	£0		
Luton Road MUGA	£42			£42		
Priory House Furniture	£26,000	Council 17.04.23 Minute 93/23- release from capital receipt received July 2022 for Priory House furniture	-£26,000.00	£0		
Kingsbury Pavilion Refurbishment	£166,250	Chairs Approval 11.04.25- bal of £1,830 (from £2,830 approved) - Professional Fees	-£166,250.00	£0		
Splash Canopies	£57		-£57.09	£0		
Capital Receipts Total	**£445,395**		**-£445,395**	**£0**		

S106/External Funding/Ringfenced Expenditure specified by funding body						
Development Contributions- REV	£18,316	Bal of £14,129 for Willoughy to rev budget 26/27 & 27/28 (from S106 £47,645) Bal of £4,038 for Court Drive Landscaping (from CBC £15,000) - FGP approval 26.01.26 for town centre & Court Drive planting for 2026 programme	-£18,167.05	£149		Included in report to FGP 26.01.26 for Court Drive balance of £4,038 for - use for central reservation planters, rain gardens and pots, as well as refresh of the plants for court drive
Joint Committee Fund	£49,144	Bal in holding code as committed Joint Committees fund only = not DTC	-£49,144.00	£0		
External Funding	**£67,460**		**-£67,311**	**£149**		
TOTALS	**£2,167,563**		**-£1,797,126**	**£370,437**		

For more information about the Council's finances visit: https://www.dunstable.gov.uk/council-finances/