Dunstable Town Council — MINUTES

Community Services Committee — Monday, 9 November 2026

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Attendance

Present: Councillors Attwell (Chair), Bater, Brennan (substitute for Kimondo), Collins, Kotarski, Tamara (substitute for Crawley)

Apologies: Councillors Adams, Alderman, Blennerhassett, Crawley (substituted by Tamara), Gurney, Kimondo (substituted by Brennan), Neall

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

Public: 2

283/26 Declarations of Interest

Apologies were received from Councillor Kenson Gurney (Chair) and Councillor Adams (Vice Chair) of the Committee. The Town Mayor proposed to chair the meeting in their absence.

It was proposed, seconded and
RESOLVED: that the Town Mayor would chair the meeting.

There were no specific declarations of interest.

284/26 Public Question Time

There were no questions from the public.

285/26 To agree the minutes of the meeting of 7 September 2026 as an accurate record

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 7 September 2026 be approved and were signed by the Chair.

286/26 Town Centre Services

The Town Centre Manager summarised the report to members.

Members note that Ashton Square Toilets had regained the Platinum Award standard. Further awards, including potential Period Dignity and Roll of Honour recognition, would be announced in January. Members congratulated staff on the achievement and recognised the high standard of maintenance provided throughout the year. In response to a question, it was confirmed that the toilets remain owned by Central Bedfordshire Council and that no formal lease or transfer agreement was currently in place, although Dunstable Town Council continues to manage the facility.

Members discussed market benchmarking. It was explained that Dunstable's specialist and artisan market offer differs from larger traditional markets such as Leighton Buzzard. Officers advised that collaborative discussions were underway with neighbouring market operators across Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire to share traders, good practice and market opportunities rather than compete directly.

Members noted that Dunstable had agreed to host the next Vibrant Towns Meeting on 13 January, welcoming town

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centre managers from across Hertfordshire, Luton and the surrounding area.

287/26 Christmas Lighting Scheme Decision Report

The Head of Community Services presented the report to members. The Committee were advised that the new lighting contract had been approved following a tender exercise; however, the increased costs had not been incorporated into the budget setting process due to timing, resulting in additional funding being required during the current financial year.

It was proposed, seconded and
RESOLVED: to allocate £5,000 from the Christmas lighting reserve to fund urgent repairs to the tree lights and provide a small contingency for any further repairs that may be required during the winter season.

288/26 Events

The Events officer summarised the report to members.

Members recorded their appreciation to officers and volunteers involved in organising the Council's events programme, particularly the Soapbox Derby, Proms in the Park and for the contribution to making the Remembrance Sunday Act of Remembrance a success.

289/26 Priory House

The Cultural Services Manager presented the report to members.

290/26 Grove Corner and Community Engagement

The Youth and Community Manager presented the report to members.

291/26 Older People's Services

The Youth and Community Manager presented the report to members.

292/26 Service Level Agreement Decision Report

The Youth and Community Manager presented the report to members.

Members welcomed the cultural and wellbeing benefits the programme could provide and discussed opportunities for the Orchestra to support Council and community events as part of its developing presence in the town.

ACTION: to explore options for Alina Orchestra to contribute to Town Council Events - Events Officer

It was proposed, seconded and
RESOLVED: that the Council enter into a four-year Service Level Agreement from budget 303 4321 with Alina Orchestra; for £2,000 per year, totaling £8,000 over the four years.

293/26 Budget Proposals for 2027/28 Report

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive summarised the report to members. Members considered the draft Community Services budget proposals for 2027/28.

Councillor Tamara Stepped out of the Chamber at 21:21

Councillor Tamara returned to the Chamber at 21:25

Members discussed the Dunstable Community Lottery, including income generated, running costs and how funds are allocated to support community projects. Members requested further information on how similar lottery schemes fund their operating costs and use surplus income.

Members discussed the proposed budget allocation for a voluntary and community sector app. Officers advised that a detailed report, including findings from ongoing community sector engagement work, would be presented in January.

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ACTION: The Head of Community Services to provide further information on the Community Lottery funding model and the proposed voluntary and community sector app for consideration at a future meeting.

At 9:30 pm due to Standing Orders the Town Mayor proposed a vote to carry on the meeting as it hit the two and a half hour mark

It was proposed, seconded and
REVOLVED: To continue the meeting

it was proposed, seconded and
RESOLVED: that the draft Community Services budget proposals for 2027/28 be noted and referred to Finance and General Purposes Committee for further consideration, subject to the comments raised by Members.

294/26 Reports from Outside Bodies

South Beds Dial-a-Ride Management Committee - Councillor Peter Hollick

No Update

Dunstable Town Band - Councillor Robert Blennerhassett

No Update

Men in Sheds - Councillor Richard Attwell

The Town Mayor advised that no formal update had been received but it was reported that a successful summer season had been experienced, including attendance at a number of local events, and a growth in new members.

Dunstable Pride - Councillor Matthew Brennan

Councillor Brennan advised Members that there were concerns regarding the future sustainability of Dunstable Pride. Discussions were ongoing regarding the organisation and delivery of future events, with a provisional date identified should the event proceed. Members noted that further discussions would take place and a more detailed update would be provided at a future meeting.

295/26 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.

296/26 Splash Pad Decision Report

The Youth and Community Manager presented the report to members

It was proposed, seconded and
RESOLVED: to approve the use of up to £8,000 from the appropriate reserve for essential Splash Pad repairs, subject to receipt and review of the contractors' revised quotation.

297/26 Staffing Decision Report

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive presented the report to members.

It was proposed, seconded and
RESOLVED: to approve all the recommended changes to the staffing establishment within the service to the Finance and General Purposes Committee

298/26 Peter Newton Pavillion - Verbal Update

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

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299/26 Date of the Next Meeting

Monday 11 January 2027 at 7pm

The meeting closed at 22:10.

Signed: _____

Chair of the Community Services Committee

Date: _____

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