



Minutes of a meeting of Full Council held in the Town Hall, Chippenham on 24 November 2021 at 7pm.

**Councillors present:**

Desna Allen  
Declan Baseley  
Jenny Budgell  
Pete Cousins  
Robert Giles  
Kathryn Macdermid  
Andy Phillips  
Nic Puntis  
John Scragg (Chair)  
George Simmonds  
Hayley Wilson

Liz Alstrom (Vice-Chair)  
James Bradbury  
Clare Cape  
Bill Douglas  
Gemma Grimes  
Nick Murry  
Nina Phillips  
Chris Ruck  
Matthew Short  
Myla Watts

**Officers present:** Mark Smith, Chief Executive  
Nick Rees, Director of Resources  
Matt Kirby, Director of Community Services  
Lynsey Nichols, Head of Communications and Customer Service  
Andy Conroy, Head of Planning  
Will Tidmarsh, Head of Environmental Services  
Heather Rae, Head of Democratic Services  
Michael Weeks, Democratic and Civic Officer  
Ciaran Howell, Technician

**Public present:** There were 6 members of the public present.

**PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were two written questions and one verbal question from members of the public, which are appended to these minutes at **APPENDIX A**. The responses to these questions were not part of the meeting but are appended to these minutes at **APPENDIX B**.

**53. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mary Norton due to ill health, Councillor Angie Litvak-Watson with no reason given and Councillor David Poole due to family illness.

**54. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made.

**55. MINUTES**

The minutes from the meeting held on 22 September 2021 were proposed by Councillor Desna Allen and seconded by Councillor Robert Giles with all in favour, it was;

**RESOLVED that:**

The minutes from the meeting held on 22 September 2021 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

**56. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

i. a) The Mayor highlighted the recent Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday events which were well attended by the residents of Chippenham. The Mayor thanked the Democratic and Civic officer and all officers involved in the events alongside key partners such as the Royal British Legion, 9 Regiment RLC and St Andrews Church.

b) The Mayor congratulated the Deputy Mayoral Cadet, Alaric Childerhouse, who was chosen to represent, and be part of the Wiltshire Scouting contingent that will be going to the World Scouting Jamboree in South Korea in 2023. It was noted that the Deputy Mayoral Cadet will now be fundraising to finance his trip to South Korea.

ii. The list of engagements undertaken by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor since the last meeting of the Council held on Wednesday 22 September 2021 were noted.

**57. POLICE REPORT**

The Police Constable updated on the current policing priorities within the Chippenham area including anti-social behaviour, increased bike thefts and preventative work. It was noted that CCTV had been useful for bike thefts within the town. Councillors raised the importance of joined up working with volunteers and organisations that support young people to keep them informed and work with them on recent anti-social behaviour and bike thefts. Councillors highlighted instances of traffic lights not being adhered to in particular in the Station Hill area. The Chairman thanked the Police Constable for attending the meeting and answering Councillor questions.

**RESOLVED that:**

The update be noted.

**The Police Constable left the meeting**

**58. COMMITTEE MINUTES**

a. Amenities, Culture and Leisure Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2021 were presented by Councillor James Bradbury with all matters resolved.

b. Planning, Environment and Transport Committee

The minutes of the meetings held on 16 September, 07 October and 28 October 2021 were presented by Councillor Gemma Grimes with all matters resolved.

c. Strategy and Resources Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2021 were presented by Councillor Myla Watts with all matters resolved.

d. Human Resources Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2021 were presented by Councillor Desna Allen with all matters resolved.

59. YOUTH COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED that:

The minutes from the Youth Council meetings held on 12 October and 09 November 2021 were noted.

60. ELECTION OF LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Mayor sought nominations for the position of Leader of the Town Council. Councillor Pete Cousins was proposed by Councillor Declan Baseley and seconded by Councillor Gemma Grimes. Councillor Desna Allen was proposed by Councillor Jenny Budgell and seconded by Councillor Clare Cape. With no further nominations a vote was taken and with the majority in favour of Councillor Desna Allen, it was;

RESOLVED that:

Councillor Desna Allen be elected Leader of the Town Council for the remainder of the municipal year.

61. CIVIL WAR CHIPPENHAM 1643 - PARTNERSHIP EVENT

The Director of Community Services presented the report regarding funding for a partnership event organised by the English Civil War Society (ECWS) in July 2022. The Director of Community Services outlined that the funding covers items such as risk assessments, materials, and equipment. With the majority in favour, it was;

RESOLVED that:

i) Councillors confirmed that £15,000 will be allocated within the Income and Expenditure budget for 2022/23 to cover the costs of this event.

ii) Officers duly proceed with the organisation and delivery of the event.

**62. WESTBURY TOWN COUNCIL - REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

The Director of Community Services presented the report requesting Councillors consider a response to a request from Westbury Town Council for financial assistance in relation to a legal challenge against Wiltshire Council's decision to approve a waste incinerator on the edge of their town. Councillors highlighted that giving money to another town was unprecedented, however the proposed incinerator will spread carbon and could affect Chippenham residents.

Councillor Desna Allen proposed a pledge of £1000 in principle conditional on the Secretary of State agreeing to call in the application, this proposal was seconded by Councillor Bill Douglas. Councillors highlighted that there are additional methods to support Westbury's campaign such as through social media promotion and the use of Crowd Justice fundraising page by Westbury. Councillors noted that a nearby dairy employs residents from Chippenham, the pollution from the incinerator could negatively affect the dairy. The Chief Executive confirmed that Westbury Town Council had approached 18 Town Councils with this request. Councillors requested that the Chief Executive write to Westbury Town Council to seek further information on what Westbury intend to achieve to understand the risks about getting involved further. With all in favour, it was;

**RESOLVED that:**

Councillors delegated to the Chief Executive to respond to Westbury Town Council's request to seek further information on what Westbury intend to achieve to understand the risks involved and to pledge £1000 in principle, subject to the Secretary of State agreeing to call in the application.

**63. DECLARATION OF OFFICE**

The Head of Democratic Services highlighted that since the last meeting of Full Council, Councillor Mary Norton was unable to sign the Declaration of Office due to ill health. Councillor Nic Puntis updated that Councillor Mary Norton was improving and hoping to be able to attend the Town Hall to sign the Declaration of Office in the next weeks. Councillors were asked to consider a further extension, a vote was taken and with the majority in favour, it was;

**RESOLVED that:**

Councillors agreed that Councillor Mary Norton may sign the Declaration of Office at a later date prior to the next meeting of Council on 12 January 2022. If this does not happen, it will be put on the agenda for consideration again at the meeting on 12 January 2022.

**64. COUNCILLOR MOTIONS**

**i) COUNCILLOR MOTION 1**

Councillor Myla Watts presented the Councillor motion regarding replacing the use of 'Chairman' to 'Chair', due to the term being generally accepted as gender neutral. The motion was seconded by Councillor James Bradbury. The Chief Executive highlighted

that the Local Government Act does not make any reference to 'Chair' and uses 'Chairman' throughout. Councillors requested that the terms for the Mayor be maintained as 'Mr Mayor' or 'Madam Mayor' in line with the Mayoral Protocol until a time that there is a Mayor in place that wishes to be addressed differently in relation to gender. The proposer and seconder agreed to include this amendment in the motion and with the majority in favour, it was;

**RESOLVED that:**

The term 'Chairman' be replaced with 'Chair' for the purposes of all Council business by the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022.

**ii) COUNCILLOR MOTION 2**

Councillor Bill Douglas presented the Councillor motion regarding Group Leaders meetings being attended with representation from all groups. The motion was seconded by Councillor Desna Allen. Councillors discussed the benefits of good communication within the Council but highlighted that the Independents are not a political party and there are different opinions within the group which does not make a Group Leader practical. It was noted that no decisions are made at Group Leader meetings, but they are a conduit to disseminate information. It was noted that newly elected Councillors had not seen the information which can come from Group Leader meetings. Councillor Desna Allen, as the newly elected Leader, offered to attend these meetings with the Corporate Management Team and disseminate information to all group members and noted that other Group Leaders would be invited to attend if they wished.

Councillor Jenny Budgell proposed that the original motion be deferred and Councillors request that the Leader attend meetings with the Corporate Management Team and circulate information to all groups which could be reviewed in six months. This was seconded by Councillor Andy Phillips and with the majority in favour, it was;

**RESOLVED that:**

The Leader attend meetings with the Corporate Management Team and circulate information arising from these meetings to all groups.

**65. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE**

The Head of Planning updated Councillors on the progress of the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan since the last update in September 2021. Councillors thanked the Head of Planning for all work undertaken.

**RESOLVED that:**

Councillors noted the report.

**66. COUNCILLORS FEEDBACK**

i. There were no updates from Town Councillors.

ii. The Chairman, Councillor John Scragg, said that a combined AGM and Executive Committee meeting of Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC) would be held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and would consider a proposal to recruit a part time officer to provide additional administrative support to the County Secretary. A new Chairman of NALC had been elected, Cllr Keith Stevens from East Sussex, to replace Cllr Sue Baxter who had completed her term of office. A new President of NALC had been appointed, namely Baroness Rosalind Scott of Needham Market (Suffolk).

iii. Councillor Nic Puntis updated on flooding in Potterne, and involvement in response to that as Chairman of the Operational Flood Working Group North. It was noted that Wiltshire Council's response to flooding was being investigated in relation to known flooding, predicted flooding and maintenance with the aim of reducing the amount of hardship that flooding can cause. Any input from Councillors from their residents in Chippenham and surrounding areas was welcomed.

Councillor Clare Cape thanked the Chief Executive for an update on the letter to Wiltshire Council regarding a workshop and perseverance in obtaining a response. There are a series of Future Chippenham workshops taking place later this week but this separate to what was requested by the Town Council, which was a full day session chaired by the Mayor of Chippenham Town Council.

Councillor Nick Murry highlighted the workshop arranged by Wiltshire Council is not regarding overall numbers of houses in Chippenham. It was noted that in Monkton Ward there had been continual anti-social behaviour in Sadlers Mead car park. It was highlighted that the Chippenham Area Board had agreed to a forum including groups such as the Town Council, CEAG, Zero Chippenham and others to get together and share what is going on regarding Climate, the Area Board dedicated £10,000 for climate reduction projects. The Station Hub Steering Group Meeting was upcoming, it was noted that information could be forwarded to officers to consider sending a Town Council representative to these meetings.

iv. The following Committee Membership changes were noted:

- Councillor David Poole replaced Councillor Nina Phillips on the Amenities, Culture and Leisure Committee.
- Councillor Robert Giles filled a vacancy on the Community Donations Sub Committee.
- Councillor Chris Ruck replaced Councillor Mary Norton on the Strategy and Resources Committee.
- Councillor Mary Norton replaced Councillor Chris Ruck on the Planning, Environment and Transport Committee.
- Following election of Leader, Councillor Desna Allen replaced Councillor Clare Cape on the Strategy and Resources Committee.

v. Councillor Nick Murry suggested a potential CIL project to be funded by the 85% of CIL that Wiltshire Council retain be since taking control of the Olympiad, Wiltshire Council take measures to improve the facility and bring up the standard, this idea will be forwarded to Wiltshire Council for consideration.

Councillor Clare Cape suggested a potential CIL project to be funded by the 85% of CIL that Wiltshire Council retain be the walkway under the bridge is consistently flooded, a

solution or access route could be looked into using CIL, this proposal was seconded by Councillor Liz Alstrom, this idea will be forwarded to Wiltshire Council for consideration.

vi. Under Community Matters, Councillor Jenny Budgell noted, as a trustee on Chippenham Borough Lands Charity (CBLC), that feedback from representatives on outside bodies should be included on future agendas. It was noted that The Arc was a bit behind schedule, but it will be a positive in Chippenham and there will be open days and a launch event.

**67. ITEMS FOR COMMUNICATION**

Councillors requested communications on the Council decision to support Westbury Town Council in relation to minute 62.

**68. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of Full Council will take place at 7pm on Wednesday 12 January 2022.

The meeting concluded at 8.51pm

These Minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting

Signed on behalf of the Council as a true record of the meeting

Chairman:

Date:

Public Comments and Questions

At the invitation of the Chairman residents made the following comments and questions or they were read out by an officer on their behalf:

1. “Thank you Mr Mayor, I want to start off by thanking Chippenham Town Council as a whole on behalf of the residents of Cepen Park South and Hunters Moon. It’s been a challenging year for all of you and I would just like to praise you all, officers and Councillors for the work you have done for Chippenham. Having been a Town Councillor, I know it’s a task that you do not get the credit you deserve but I just wanted to put my vote of thanks to you on behalf of my residents for the work you have done as we draw to the end of this year. It’s been a challenging year as I said, one of my statements is around the budget that you will be considering for next year’s precept. I currently do a lot of work with the food banks in Chippenham, and I know from first-hand experience that many families are still struggling through COVID and they are receiving food bags, they need it as an essential item for their families each week. My plea to you, is when you are considering your precept and budget for next year that you make it affordable, and you take into consideration all the families of Chippenham regardless of their affluence or need and make it an affordable and aligned budget which I’m sure you will do.

My specific question relates to something I raised at a previous Full Council and that relates to community noticeboards. Hunters Moon is now in its phase three and we are still awaiting a community noticeboard. I know the town council wishes to encourage community engagement quite rightly through all the new developments in Chippenham and I would just like an update so I can pass on the details to my residents about when a community noticeboard will be installed in Hunters Moon, thank you”.

2. “Following COP26, the Mayor signing a covenant to commit the town to EU climate and energy objectives, Chippenham Town Council declaring Climate and Ecological emergencies I look forward to priority being given in Chippenham through using CIL money and savings not raising Council Tax to address the climate and ecological emergencies.

To stand up to Wiltshire Council and not be a dumping ground for 20% of the housing for the whole of Wiltshire on greenfield sites destroying the County Farms, the walk to Lacock and the tranquil, clean air zone of the canal area enjoyed by so many and a haven for wildlife. Wiltshire Council's Future Chippenham plans are misleading and totally unsustainable and against everything that came out of COP26 and NPPF guidelines.”

3. “At your Human Resources Committee meeting on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2020 the Chief Executive confirmed that no staff had been furloughed and noted that there was a lack of clarity on eligibility at the time and that the casual staff were needed. In contrast, the Chief Executive of Trowbridge Town Council has claimed from HMRC a total of £478,670 in Furlough Payments, which resulted in a positive contribution to Town Council budgets. Please can the Council explain why Chippenham Town Council has claimed NOTHING in furlough, when Trowbridge Town Council had no hesitation regarding the Council’s furlough eligibility and claimed just under half a million pounds from HMRC? What was the financial impact of Coronavirus on your Council budgets and how was any shortfall financed? Please can the Council explain how it is in the interest of Chippenham residents to hold £805,419 of their money in General Reserves when Trowbridge holds only £197,233? Can officers look at way Council portrays the figures on the website to be more accessible.

Not part of the meeting

Written responses to public questions asked at the Full Council meeting on 24 November 2021:

1. Thank you for your comments and questions asked at Full Council on 24 November 2021, your comments have been noted and thank you for your positive comments about the work of the town council. The community noticeboard in Hunters Moon is being planned alongside a community noticeboard in Birds Marsh, however there is no timescale for when the noticeboards will be installed. Ward Councillors will be updated when there is a confirmed timescale.
2. Thank you for your comments and questions asked at Full Council on 24 November 2021, your comments have been noted.
3. Thank you for your comments and questions asked at Full Council on 24 November 2021, your comments have been noted. Furlough was not used by the town council; all permanent Chippenham Town Council staff were needed to work continually throughout COVID. Staff on casual contracts were only utilised as required. By managing its costs carefully, Chippenham Town Council made a surplus last year (2020/21) which enabled it to transfer £260k to Capital/Ear Marked Funds and maintain its level of General Reserves at 25% of Precept in line with sector guidance and the Council's approved Financial Regulations. Therefore £805,419 is in General Reserves at the end of the last financial year (2020/21).

The Director of Resources (Responsible Financial Officer) provides a quarterly finance report to the Strategy and Resources Committee and the annual budget reports and accounts are reported to Full Council. Agendas and minutes can be found on the town council website under 'Your Council', 'Agendas and Minutes' [HERE](#)<sup>1</sup>. Further financial information, including the full statement of accounts, can be found on the town council website under 'Your Council', 'Finance and Policies' [HERE](#)<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.chippenham.gov.uk/agendas>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.chippenham.gov.uk/finance>