

**KIDDERMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL
TOWN COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the meeting held at 6pm on Wednesday 22 January 2025
In the Council Chamber, Wyre Forest House**

Present:

Councillors George Connolly (Town Mayor), John Beckingham, Liam Carroll, Vicky Caulfield, Bernadette Connor, Helen Dyke, Doug Hine, Steve Hollands, Mary McDonnell, Shazu Miah and Mary Rayner.

In Attendance

Hugh Peacocke, Chief Executive Officer.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors Nicky Gale and Mike Smith.

72. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Liam Carroll, Fran Oborski and Mary McDonnell declared their membership of the Save the Paddling Pool Group.

Councillor Mary Rayner declared her membership of the Friends of St. Georges Park.

Councillor Ben Brookes declared that he was a member of the Kidderminster Civic Society.

73. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

None

74. MINUTES

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the meeting of Kidderminster Town Council held on 10th October 2024.

75. TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT

The meeting received a report from the Town Mayor, Councillor George Connolly, on the events he had supported and attended as Town Mayor on the events he had attended since the last meeting of Full Council.

All Councillors joined the Mayor to welcome back Cllr Fran Oborski and to wish her well as she continued her journey to recovery.

He also wished the best of luck to all the candidates in the forthcoming Town Council by-election.

76. Town Hall Update

- 76.1** The CEO updated members on the progress of the Town Hall Transformation project. The meeting noted that the Town Hall had been damaged during Storm Darragh and that the costs were being claimed through the Council's insurance.

- 76.2** The Mayor invited Mr. Ross Brearley, from Glenn Howell Associates to present the proposals for the plinth on the front of the Town Hall.

Mr. Brearley explained that the purpose of the plinth was to improve access to all of the Town Hall entrances and to provide a frontage which linked the 2 sections of the building. A major feature of the plinth was the wheelchair slope, giving access to the Courtyard and the Civic Entrance. The overall design was acceptable and 2 options were presented, 1 with a handrail on the wheelchair slope and one without that rail.

Mr. Brearley also presented proposals for the re-use of the metal railings on the front of the Town Hall.

RESOLVED:

- A) To approve the proposal for the plinth on the front of the Town Hall which would include a handrail along the wheelchair slope, and
- B) To approve the proposals for the re-use of the metal railings and other heritage artefacts on the front of the Town Hall.

77. Public Consultation report

The Council received a report from the CEO detailing the responses received from the recent public consultation. The CEO told the meeting that the Vision Working Group had considered the outcomes of the consultation and that these would be reflected in the proposed Vision 2025-2029. The CEO thanked the Communications and Engagement team at the District council for their assistance and support in the consultation process. The meeting thanked the officers for their work in the process and agreed that the survey was a valuable resource for the Council.

78. Vision 2025-2029

The Council considered the draft Vision proposals received from the Vision Working Group.

Members thanked the Working Group, CEO and the officers for their work in preparing the Vision.

RESOLVED:

- A. To Approve the draft Vision, 2025 to 2029,
- B. To direct Officers to prepare an action plan for the delivery of the Vision, and
- C. To amend the Terms of Reference of the Finance and Overview Committee so that the Committee can approve the Action Plan and monitor progress on its delivery.

79. The Budget and Precept for 2025-26

The CEO presented the draft budget for 20256-26, as recommended by the Finance and Overview Committee.

Members thanked the CEO for the constructive and open process during the preparation of the budget process and for the briefing for all members on 19th December. They also thanked the officers and Committees of the Council for their input into the budget

RESOLVED: To approve an overall budget of £3,730,144 for the financial year 2025-26 and to raise a precept of £1,224,286 towards this expenditure for the financial year 2025/26.

Members asked that the Council look to have a leaflet explain the precept included with the Council Tax bills for households in Kidderminster Parish area.

80. Climate Change

The meeting considered a report on how the Council might respond to the Climate Emergency which the Council had declared in 2021. The members thanked the CEO for the excellent report.

RESOLVED:

- A) To ensure that the activities of the Town Council are carbon neutral by 2035.
- B) To promote biodiversity across the Council's parks and open spaces.
- C) To actively encourage and support actions that will make Kidderminster as a whole more environmentally sustainable, and
- D) To expand the remit of the Biodiversity Working Group to address the climate emergency, including the above actions and that the Working Group presents a draft Action Plan for approval at the October meeting of the Council.

81. Appointments to Outside Bodies

- 81.1** Councillor George Connolly was appointed as a trustee on The Clare Witnell and Edward Blount Charity.
- 81.2** Councillor Ben Brookes was appointed to attend meetings of the Kidderminster Civic Society
- 81.3** The Council, sitting as the Trustee of the Kidderminster Education Foundation, appointed Councillor George Connolly to chair the meeting. The Trust set up a Management of 3 members of the Trust, to manage the finances and grant applications of the Foundation.

Councillors Fran Oborski, Liam Carroll and Helen Dyke were appointed to the Management Committee.

82. St. George's Paddling Pool update

The Council received the update from the Council's Public Realm and Operations Manager.

Cllr. Fran Oborski proposed the following motion in this matter:

- *This Council aims to re-open the St. George's Park Paddling Pool for Summer 2026.*
- *The Services Committee and the Working Group should address this aim and make their recommendations to Full council in April 2025.*
- *The Council meeting in April should authorise officers to carry out any research, including public consultation, if required, as well as full financial costings, etc, so that this matter can be properly assessed in Budget 26-27, with our aim to re-open for Summer 2026.*

Cllr. Mary McDonnell seconded the motion and a named vote was called, which resulted as follows:

Councillors G. Connolly (Mayor),	Abstained
J. Aston,	For
J. Beckingham,	For
B. Brookes,	For
D. Chambers,	For
L. Carroll,	For
V. Caulfield,	For
B. Connor,	For
H. Dyke,	Abstained
D. Hine,	Abstained
S. Hollands,	For
M. McDonnell,	For
S. Miah,	For
F. Oborski (MBE),	For
M. Rayner	For

83. Committee Meetings

The minutes of the Committee meetings held since the October meeting of the Council have been sent to Members and published on the Council's website:

- The Planning Committee meetings held on 29th October, 26th November and 18th December 2024, chaired by Councillor Doug Hine
- The Town Hall Committee on the 16th December 2024, chaired by Councillor John Beckingham,
- The Civic, Community and Events Committee on the 14th January 2025, chaired by Councillor Mary Rayner; Cllr. Rayner told the meeting that the Committee had agreed 2 extra events in 2025, to commemorate the 80th anniversaries of VE Day and VJ Day and a beacon would be provided,
- The Operational Services Committee held on 10th December 2024 chaired by Councillor Liam Carroll,

- The Finance & Overview Committee meeting held on 16th January, chaired by Deputy Chair, Councillor Helen Dyke, and
- The Staffing Committee meeting held on 3rd December 2024, chaired by Councillor Helen Dyke

84. Schedule of meetings 2025-26

The council noted the schedule of meetings planned for the Municipal Year 2025-26

85. Notice of Motion

Received from Councillor Helen Dyke:

“Kidderminster Town Council calls on the planning authority, Wyre Forest District Council, to consider naming a road or street in the parish of Kidderminster, in honour of the late Bob Fleming who worked for many years in the role as Mayor’s Officer for the Charter Trustees of Kidderminster.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Fran Oborski and unanimously supported.

86. Full council forward work programme 2024-25

The Mayor presented the Forward Programme and invited members to comment or propose any additions for future meetings.

It was noted that the Kidderminster District Youth Council would be presenting to the next meeting on 16th April.

It was agreed that the bus companies operating in Kidderminster should be invited to attend a future meeting of Full Council.

The Meeting concluded at 8.08 pm.

Signed: _____
Town Mayor

Date: _____