

**KIDDERMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL
TOWN COUNCIL**

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

Present:

Councillors Doug Hine (Town Mayor), John Aston, John Beckingham, Ben Brookes, Liam Carroll, Vickie Caulfield, Darren Chambers, George Connolly, Bernadette Connor, Mark Crosby, Helen Dyke, Nicky Gale, Steve Hollands, Mary McDonnell, Shazu Miah, Fran Oborski (MBE) and Mary Rayner.

In Attendance

Hugh Peacocke, Chief Executive Officer
Adam Stockhall, Public Realm and Operations Manager.
Rob Beeston, Public Realm and Operations Officer.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Mike Smith.

19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Fran Oborski, Liam Carroll 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.

20. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

None

21. MINUTES

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the meeting of Kidderminster Town Council held on 25th June 2025.

22. Kidderminster Business Improvement District (BID)

The Mayor welcomed to the meeting Mr. James Barker and invited him to address the Council on the work and business of the BID.

Mr. Barker told the Council about the BID's cleaning and maintenance operations over the past 6 months and their work to enhance the overall cleanliness, accessibility and appearance of the Town Centre.

(Councillor Nicky Gale joined the meeting at 6.31 pm)

The Mayor invited comments or questions from Members and the following matters were raised:

- The BID Ballot
- Discounted fees for BID Levy payers who don't benefit from BID services
- Antisocial behaviour and drugs
- Wheelchair access into shops
- Pedestrian underpasses at the ring road and access for the Town Centre
- A designated "Safe Area" in the Town Centre
- Thanks for edible planters and
- Secure bike parking

The meeting thanked Mr. Barker for his presentation.

23. TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT

Councillor Doug Hine, Town Mayor, reported on the Mayoral activities since the last meeting of the Council and noted the successful Charity Afternoon Tea which he hosted in the Court Yard, Town Hall, on Saturday 18th October.

24. TOWN HALL UPDATE

The CEO updated the meeting on the following:

- The transformation project: the final consignment of stone to finish the podium had arrived and the completion date is now projected to 22nd November. Officers frustrated with delays and costs. A member asked about liquidated damages and the CEO would investigate this with them.
- 3 Test events had been held in the Town Hall and all went well. Issues raised around toilets and signage were being addressed.
- Savva Bars were setting up in the Courtyard, Café and Corn Exchange and the contract is to be signed
- The CEO circulated draft details around the re-opening event on 7th November
- The CEO told the meeting that approval had been received from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and local government to borrow up to £1.25M to complete the transformation project. This would enable the Council to repay to the District council the £800,000 bridging finance received from them.

RESOLVED: To formally thank the District Council for their support and assistance in making the bridging finance available to this Council.

25. ST. GEORGE'S PARK PADDLING POOL

The Public Realm and Operations Manager told the Council that the Services Committee had recommended that the Paddling Pool be closed. He outlined the position regarding the Pool and future options.

Councillor Fran Oborski proposed:

“That the Council suspend the recommendation from the Services Committee on the Paddling Pool for 10 months.

We will ensure all avenues of a sustainable solution have been fully pursued.

The Town Council should set up a new group with defined membership and terms of reference and key milestones for reporting progress or decisions.”

This was seconded by Councillor Mary McDonnell.

Councillor Oborski called for a named vote, which resulted as follows:

- For the proposal: Councillors Carroll, Connor, McDonnell, Miah, Oborski and Rayner (6)
- Against: Councillors Aston, Brookes, Chambers, Caulfield, Connolly, Crosby, Dyke, Gale and Hollands (9)
- Abstain: Councillors Beckingham and Hine (2)

The Mayor declared that the proposal was defeated.

Proposed by Councillor Hollands, seconded by Councillor Chambers and

RESOLVED: That the Council accepts the recommendation of the Services Committee and approves the closure of St George’s Paddling Pool.

The Mayor then adjourned the meeting for 10 minutes, to resume at 8.10 pm

26. Report of External Auditor on the financial year ended 31st March 2025.

The CEO advised the Council that he had not yet received the final report of the external auditors, PKF Littlejohn, on the accounts and annual return for 2024-2025.

27. BUDGET 26-27

The CEO circulated a timetable for the preparation of next year’s budget and the review of the Council’s Vision 2025-to 2029, so that all Members would be aware of the schedule and the process and how they could contribute their comments and ideas.

Members would be invited to submit suggestions and responses should be back to the CEO before 3rd of November.

28. COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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

- The Planning Committee meetings held on 22nd July, 26th August and 30th September 2025
- The Town Hall Committee held on 23rd July, 11th August, and 15th September
- The Operational Services Committee held on 2nd July and 13th August
- The Finance & Overview Committee held on 7th July, 4th August and 15th October
- The Staffing Committee held on 13th October.

29. CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

The Mayor said the Council had declared a Climate Emergency in 2021 and in January this year resolved to ensure that the activities of the Town Council were carbon neutral by 2035.

He added that the Council had expanded the remit of our Biodiversity Working Group to address the climate emergency and that the Working Group presents a draft Action Plan for approval at the October meeting of the Council.

The members of the Working Group were Councillors Nicky Gale, John Beckingham and the Town Mayor, Councillor Doug Hine and Councillor Hine was appointed Chairman by the Group. The Group met on 9th October to draft an Action plan for the Council, which was sent to Members for their consideration. The Mayor outlined the main provisions of the draft Working Plan and thanked the CEO for his contribution. He then invited questions or comments from the meeting.

In response to a question regarding monitoring of progress on the Action Plan, the CEO advised that the relevant Committees (mainly Town Hall and Services) would report to the Working Group every 6 months and the Working group would then make any observations to the Finance & Overview Committee. The Action Plan would be reviewed on an annual basis at Full Council.

RESOLVED: to approve the draft Climate Emergency Action Plan.

30. ANNUAL REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS

The Town Mayor told the meeting that it was good practice to occasionally review Standing Orders to review/ improve, if or where required. The CEO recommended a change regarding motions on Council or Committee agendas.

RESOLVED: To amend section 9 of the Council's Standing Orders so that written notice of motions for inclusion on an agenda requires a proposer and seconder.

31. THE CLAIRE WITNELL AND EDWARD BLOUNT TRUST

The meeting was advised that the Council's representative on the trust, Councillor George Connolly, had asked the Council to appoint his successor to the Trust. The CEO had sent information on the work and aims of the Trust to Members.

RESOLVED: To Appoint Councillor Connor as the Council's representative on The Claire Witnell and Edward Blount Trust.

32. FULL COUNCIL FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2025-26

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

The CEO told the meeting that he was working on arrangements for presentations from the Police, the Bus Companies (including the Cabinet member for transport at Worcestershire County Council) and Incredible Edible.

The Meeting concluded at 8.50 pm.

Signed: _____
Town Mayor

Date: _____