

WHITTLESEY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 11th December 2025 at 6:30pm at Peel House, 8 Queen Street, Whittlesey, PE7 1AY.

Present: Councillors Miscandlon (Chair), Bibb, Boden, Branton, Dickinson, Dorling, Nawaz, Wainwright and Wicks.

Officer in attendance: Miss Angelika Piotrowicz- Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

Recording: A recording is made as an aide memoir for the minutes.

F184/2025. To receive apologies from absent members and the reason for the absence.

F185/2025. To receive members' declarations of disclosable pecuniary, non-disclosable pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests in relation to any agenda items discussed later in the agenda and the Council to decide which items are to be discussed as confidential.

- Pensions
This was discussed under confidentiality minutes.
Councillor Dorling introduced the independent financial advisor to deal with the pensions.

F186/2025- Presentations.

Getting Britain Back to Work- The Get Cambridge Peterborough Working Plan is led by the Combined Authority in partnership with the NHS, DWP, Jobcentre Plus and the Integrated Care System. It forms a local response to the national *Get Britain Working Plan*, with the ambition of reaching an **80% employment rate** across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, while reducing inequalities.

The plan aligns with major national policies including welfare reform, the NHS 10 Year Plan, skills reform and changes to employment rights. A key focus is improving integration between **work, health and skills systems**, including closer working with Jobcentre Plus and the National Careers Service.

The plan supports the wider **Local Growth Plan** and is complemented by the **Local Skills Improvement Plan**, ensuring training provision matches local labour market needs. Major challenges include labour and skills shortages, poor work retention and progression (particularly for women), and stark inequalities in Fenland.

Although the local employment rate (78.1%) is above the national average, economic inactivity remains high, driven by students and long-term sickness. Many inactive residents want to work if given the right support. In Fenland alone, achieving the 80% target would require over **5,600 people** to move into employment.

Key priorities include:

- System leadership across work, health and skills
- Reducing hidden unemployment and health-related inactivity through a **£15m “Connect to Work” programme**

- Reducing NEET levels among young people

The Combined Authority invests over **£12m per year** in adult skills, works closely with the NHS on neighbourhood health programmes, and is revising Jobcentre Plus support for over-50s, young people and in-work progression. Employer engagement includes paid internships and workforce development.

Transport remains a major barrier in Fenland, limiting access to jobs, skills and healthcare. There is concern that adult skills funding does not fully reflect local need, and a request has been made to allow transport support within the Adult Skills Fund.

Work experience is a priority, with new national requirements for schools and colleges. Local proposals include community-based skills training using secondary schools, courses tailored to Fenland's economy (e.g. agriculture), and greater use of local trainers.

Whittlesey and Fenland are highlighted as areas with significant opportunity for targeted investment and meaningful change.

F187/2025- Presentation from CCC: Ralph Butcher Causeway

Followed by agenda Item for Discussion- Ralph Butcher Causeway- **Barry W**

Councillor Boden provided an update.

Members were advised that the Head of Complex Infrastructure was unable to attend the meeting held on **11 December**. It was reported that an officer would seek to attend the meeting scheduled for **22 January**.

Update on Works

Members noted that traffic lights have now been in place for **78 weeks**. Works commenced on **8 July** and were originally scheduled to last **22 weeks**. A document released approximately three weeks before the end of the 22-week period confirmed that the scheme was behind schedule, with completion now expected **no earlier than the end of January**.

It was reported that during periods of flooding, Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) Highways would focus on improving signposting of alternative routes rather than removing existing restrictions.

Alternative Routes

CCC Highways advised that alternative routes would be assessed to ensure they can accommodate increased traffic should the **B1040 or North Bank** flood. Remedial works have been identified on:

- The **B1040** between Whittlesey and Pondersbridge; and
- The **B1095** between Pondersbridge and Horsey Tower.

Patching works on the **B1095** are expected to take place in **early January**, subject to approval. Any patching works on the **B1040** will take account of the B1095 programme, and it was indicated that the two routes would not be subject to works simultaneously.

Written Question to County Council

Members were advised that a written question has been submitted to County Council under **Procedural Rule 9.4**. The question sets out the history of the bridge works and seeks clarification on the anticipated opening date. A written response is expected by **Tuesday of the following week** and will be circulated to Members upon receipt.

Freedom of Information Request

Members noted the outcome of a Freedom of Information request submitted to Cambridgeshire County Council. This confirmed that slippage in the programme was first raised at a progress meeting on **30 October** and formally confirmed on **3 November**. It was further noted that CCC waited **12 working days** from receipt of the updated programme before informing the public.

The response confirmed that CCC officers held **weekly meetings** with the contractor, and that an external project manager and supervisor had been appointed. There is currently **no planned formal review** of project management arrangements for the contract.

The contractor, **Jones Brothers**, stated within their programme that embankment works would be completed by **19 December**, with all works completed by **21 January**. Members also noted that the contractor had been instructed not to speak to the press or councillors regarding the bridge works.

F188/2025. Street Scene Officer Report & CCTV update

- Provided in Councillors Pack.

F189/2025 Police Report and figures

- No police officer report was received, there was only 1 report received within the last 9 months.

F190/2025. To confirm and sign the Minutes from the Meeting of the Council on Thursday 13th November 2025.

- Minutes were signed as a true record by **Councillor Miscandlon (Chair)**.

F191/2025 Public Forum

To allow any member of the public to address the council. Time allowed 15 minutes in total to be split equally between the total amount wishing to speak.

- **17 members of the public present.**

Peter Baxter- Under the Listed Building Act 1990, the chairman of Fenland District Council's planning committee has a legal duty to ensure that special attention is paid to the preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of conservation areas and listed buildings. Sadly, the bank building hasn't done well despite the legal safeguards and this council's inaction hasn't helped. My question is how Councillor Miscandlon at a district level applied the 19190 act to protect the NatWest building when in 2017 it was placed at risk by Historic England. And despite his failure to look after this building, the town's prized asset can reassure us that the town's prized assets are safe in his hands.

Standing orders suspended by Councillor Miscandlon

- To answer Mr Baxter's question.

Standing orders resumed.

Robert Windle- This Saturday we have the extravaganza in Whittlesey plus all the other events and we thank the council for their support, councillors donations and member of the public, with 9 rides this year which is more than we've ever done before. Also in need of volunteers for the Christmas extravaganza to help for two hours with a good break in between. Also a thank you to Councillor Arman for his help earlier on tonight. 200 advanced sales selling tokens and wristbands. On a separate matter I know somebody else that may wish to speak but on number four of the discussion it talks about Wally Newman and from a personal perspective I would fully endorse Wally's nomination to the freedom of town.

Mark Cross – Mark Cross addressed the Council on a number of matters. He began by raising concerns regarding the ongoing issues with the Ralph Butchers Bridge works. Drawing on his prior experience as a member of the Technical Institute, Mr Cross explained that he had contacted Jones Brothers to discuss the situation with the bridge. According to the information he received, the bridge is unlikely ever to be fully repaired, as water ingress has created fissures and softened the underlying clay, resulting in persistent subsidence. This, he stated, means the bridge will continue to sink over time. In addition to these remarks, Mr Cross also highlighted the shortage of employment opportunities for young people leaving school, emphasising the need for more local jobs to support youth in the community. It was reported that ongoing efforts have been made to clear out the gullies in the area, with some progress achieved. However, the section of the A605 along the Saxon side remains unattended as tree cutting activities are currently taking place there. Concerns were raised regarding the effectiveness of the drain clearance compared to previous years, noting that the process does not seem as thorough as it once was. Additionally, it was highlighted that when new kerbs are installed in conjunction with the drains, even a small amount of debris or mud can cause blockages. This leads to the drains not functioning properly, resulting in further frustration among those responsible for maintenance.

Julie Windle- Said that she would like to second her husbands words. As a past Mayor of this Town I would like to wholeheartedly recommend the motion by Councillor Wainwright that Mr Wally Newman becomes the first male recipient of Freedom of the Town of Whittlesey.

F192/2025 Agenda items for Discussion.

1. To reinstate a property/premises group for Peel House buildings. (previous members Cllrs David Mason, Alex Miscandlon & Eamonn Dorling)- **DL**
 - **It was recommended for this to be added to the next Finance and Policy meeting agenda to be discussed.**

2. Local Highway Improvements (LHI) WTC submission on or before January 2026.- **DL and Barry W.**
 - 2025/2026 LHI'S were discussed during members discussion. Members discussed previous two application that have been approved, Coates lay-by and High Causeway manual barrier.
Proposal for Coates Lay by- approved unanimously.
Proposal for High Causeway barrier- Declined application, Seconded by Councillor Arman.

Members also had discussion relating to LHI's for 2026, a decision needs to be made on what we put forward.

Two suggestions were made;

- **Traffic calming measures on Teal Road**
- **Double yellow lines around Whittlesey and surrounding villages.**
The limit is for one LHI application to be submitted per year.
Proposal for traffic calming measures on Teal Road by Councillor Wicks, seconded by Councillor Nawaz.

A question was asked regarding the double yellow lines, if Whittlesey Town Council would fund it.

- **This needs to be discussed on the next Finance and Policy agenda.**

3. Citizens advice.

This was discussed during the Finance and Policy meeting and brought forward to Full council.

- **Councillor Boden proposed to carry on with Citizens advice, seconded by Councillor Wainwright, with an unanimous vote.**
- Discussion were had that at this moment no service agreement will be discussed and will be revisited in the near future.

4. Proposal That to commemorate his centenary, the Mayor and other Councillors of the Town of Whittlesey do hereby confer upon Wally Newman the Honorary Freedom of the Town of Whittlesey as an act of gratitude for his services to the country and the town and in recognition of the high esteem in which he is held by the community of Whittlesey.-**Barry W**

- **Proposed by Councillor Wainwright, seconded by Councillor Miscandlon, this was an unanimous decision.**
- Members engaged in a discussion regarding the proposal to confer the Honorary Freedom of the Town upon Mr Wally Newman. During this discussion, members reflected on Mr Newman's numerous achievements throughout his life. They highlighted his consistent attendance at all civic events, his ongoing involvement with local schools, and his invaluable contributions to community life. Members expressed the view that Mr Newman is a remarkable asset to the town, and agreed that it is important for the town to formally recognise his dedication and service in a meaningful way.
- **A date must be set at some stage for an official presentation, Councillor Wainwright to assist the Clerk with two certificates.**

5. Ralph Butcher Causeway- **Barry W**

- **Item 5 was discussed previously in the minutes.**

6. MVAS batteries

- **Proposed by Councillor Miscandlon, seconded by Councillor Boden.**

F193/2025. To receive Councillor & outside body reports.

Progress report on Rail Working Party- Included in pack.

- Councillor Bibb thanked Councillor Dorling for attending meetings in his absence due to work commitments. He also noted significant progress and major improvements at the station.

F194/2025. To report the minutes from the Finance & Policy Meeting on Monday 8th December 2025.

A- Standing order amendment: Poll Cards

B- Standing order amendment: Public Questions

C- Standing order amendment: Whittlesey Southern Relief Road Committee

- A standing order amendment for poll cards was discussed.
- It was agreed to add new item 18 to standing order 3 to request poll cards be issued for by elections or election.
- **The formal wording of the change will go through Finance and Policy and then come back to the Next Full Council.**
- A standing order amendment for public question was discussed. A new standing order 8A is being suggested to allow members of the public to ask questions about the business of the Council. Questions must be submitted in writing withing five working days before the meeting and will be added to the agenda. A verbal or written answer will be given, and the question and answer will be recorded in the minutes.
- **The exact wording of the standing order will go to Finance and Policy and then come back to Full Council in January.**
- Standing order amendment for Whittlesey Southern Relief Road.
- A Southern Relief Road committee will be created. The committee's terms of reference will include providing input to processes supporting the completion of the strategic outline business case. The committee will determine the date of its meetings on an ad hoc basis. Councillors and substitute Councillors will be appointed to the committee for a term of office terminating at the next annual meeting of the Council. A request will be made to CCC Highways and Fenland District Council to assist the committee.

F195/2025 To report the financial documents.

- To report the bank reconciliation to 30th September 2025 per Scribe
- To report the list of payments 1st July 2025 to 30th September 2025 per Scribe
- To report the year-to-date figures to 30th September 2025 per Scribe

- The bank reconciliation to September 20th 2025, has been completed by the Town Clerk.

- List of payments from July 1st 2025- September 30th 2025, was presented for approval.

- The list included vouchers number 94 to 169 totalling £55,859.35.

The council unanimously approved the payments.

- The year-to-date figures for September 20th 2025, were closed down, but only for the three of the six months. A new version has been circulated for information.

F196/2025: WTC Budget 2026/27 Version 0 discussion.

- Version 0 of the budget repeated last year's budget with necessary changes. (Salaries, LHI cost, interest payable loans).
- Version 1 of the budget was created after the Finance and Policy meeting. It includes comments and items for consideration. **Full Council will make final decisions in January.**

F197/2025. To report the minutes from the Planning Meeting on Monday 24th November and Monday 8th December 2025.

- **The minutes from the planning meeting on November 24th and December 8th will be signed as accurate.**

F198/2025. To report the minutes from Community Projects meeting on Monday 24th November 2025.

- There was no specific proposals to bring to Full Council.

F199/2025. Consultations

- **Consultations for the Railway are coming out, and people are encouraged to participate.**

F200/2025 Information only.

Mud Walls- DL – information included in the pack.

Was not included in the pack.

WTC Christmas closure is from Tuesday 23rd December 2025, back open on Monday 5th January 2026.

Report on meeting with CCC Highways on A605 works planned for 2025, 2026 & 2027- **Barry W**

- **Councillor Wainwright has provided updates regarding the upcoming roadworks on the A605 and in Whittlesey in general.**
- **A list of around nine upcoming roadworks in Whittlesey was presented.**

Fenland nature survey analysis- **ED**

- **This was not discussed.**

F201/2025 Invitations.

F202/2025. Date of next meeting – Thursday 22nd January 2026 at 6.30pm.

F203/2025– Exclusion of the press & public

Pursuant to section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act, it is resolved that, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press leave the meeting during consideration of items to be discussed.

F204/2025. To discuss those items previously agreed at agenda item F185/2025

Councillor Miscandlon

Chairman

Full Council