

# WHITTLESEY TOWN COUNCIL

Thursday, 14 May 2026 - 6.30pm

## Minutes of Annual Meeting

**Present:** Councillor Miscandlon, Chairman; Councillors Bibb, Boden, Branton, Dickinson, Dorling, Gerstner, Laws, Nawaz, Singh Gill and Wicks.

**Officer in Attendance:** Mr T Jordan, Locum Clerk for the meeting.

### **F1/26. To receive members' apologies for absence and the reason (in brackets) for the absence**

Councillors Mockett (holiday) and Wainwright (holiday).

#### **(1) Election of Chairman of the Town Council (to be known as Town Mayor) for the municipal year 2026/27**

Members considered the election of a Chairman of the Council (to be known as Town Mayor) for the municipal year 2026/27.

Members decided, unanimously, on the proposal of Councillor Laws, seconded by Councillor Boden and there being no other nominations, that Councillor Miscandlon be elected as Chairman of Whittlesey Town Council and Mayor of Whittlesey for the municipal year 2026/27.

The Chairman signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office in relation to that position.

#### **(2) Election of Vice-Chairman of the Town Council (to be known as Deputy Town Mayor) for the municipal year 2026/27**

Members considered the election of a Vice-Chairman of the Council (to be known as Deputy Town Mayor) for the municipal year 2026/27.

Both Councillors Dickinson and Wainwright were duly proposed and seconded for the position.

Members decided, on the basis of a majority vote, that Councillor Dickinson be elected as Vice-Chairman of Whittlesey Town Council and Deputy Mayor of Whittlesey for the municipal year 2026/27.

*This item of business was the subject of a recorded vote. Voting was as follows:*

- *votes cast for Councillor Dickinson: Councillors Branton, Boden, Laws, Nawaz and Singh Gill (5)*
- *votes cast for Councillor Wainwright: Councillors Bibb, Dorling, Gerstner and Wicks (4).*

#### **(3) Election of Leader of the Town Council for the municipal year 2026/27**

Members considered the election of a Leader of the Council for the municipal year 2026/27.

Members decided, on the proposal of Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Laws, that Councillor Mockett be appointed as Leader of Whittlesey Town Council for the municipal year 2026/27.

#### **(4) Election of Deputy Leader of the Town Council for the municipal year 2026/27**

Members considered the election of a Deputy Leader of the Council for the municipal year 2026/27.

Members decided, on the proposal of Councillor Nawez, seconded by Councillor Singh Gill, that Councillor Boden be appointed as Deputy Leader of Whittlesey Town Council for the municipal year 2026/27.

**(5) High Causeway, Whittlesey**

Members considered a letter from an officer of the Local Highway Authority (LHA) in relation to the Town Council's Local Highway Improvement Scheme (LHI) in respect of High Causeway. The letter makes some suggestions in relation to installing replacement, improved highway signage as a means of addressing the highway safety issues on High Causeway; upon which it seeks the views of the Town Council. In addition, the point is made in the letter that the LHA does not currently have the capabilities to implement ANPR systems.

Councillor Gerstner commented that the proposal from the Local Highway Authority is, in his opinion, very disappointing.

Councillor Laws commented that she would like the Town Council to request that the money allocated by the LHA for the delivery of a LHI scheme for High Causeway be "ring-fenced" whilst other possible solutions could be explored; possibly use some of the allocation for improved signage. She wondered whether it would be possible for the town's CCTV cameras to be utilised to "watch" the traffic situation on High Causeway.

The point was made by Councillor Laws that the council has the opportunity to suggest other options to the LHA. There could be further debate of this matter at the next meeting of the Community Projects Committee.

Councillor Boden expressed the opinion that the town is not well-served by way of the CCTV system; not good value-for-money. He commented that he concurs with the comments which had been made by Councillor Laws.

Councillor Bibb expressed the opinion that random, occasional "blitzes" by the police in relation to addressing speeding have more effect than other measures.

Members decided, on the proposal of Councillor Laws, seconded by Councillor Boden, that the current situation be noted and that this matter be considered further at the next meeting of the Community Projects Committee.

**F2/26. To receive members' declarations of disclosable pecuniary, non-disclosable pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests in relation to any agenda item**

Councillor Wicks declared his non-pecuniary interest in the grant application from the 1<sup>st</sup> Whittlesey Scouts (minute F9/26 refers).

Although not having declarable interests in relation to specific items on the meeting agenda, the two councillors listed below requested that the following situations be noted:

- Councillor Laws: Portfolio Holder for Planning at Fenland District Council
- Councillor Gerstner: a member of the District Council's Planning Committee.

**F3/26. Public Forum**

Under this item, any member of the public is permitted to address the council. The total period of time available for such is 15 minutes, to be split between the total number of people wishing to speak.

The council heard from members of the public, as follows:

- (1) Mrs Cheryl Wright commented that she had been seeking to ascertain when the current Highways Maintenance Contract expires but had been unable to do so; she asked whether the Town Council could answer her question.

The Town Council agreed to waive its Standing Orders so that Councillor Boden could respond. He stated that the current contract had commenced in 2017 and has a duration of 10 years, with an option to extend for a further 4 years beyond 2027.

Councillors noted the comments of both the member of the public and Councillor Boden.

- (2) Mr Stephen Hodson sought an explanation for the change of contractors in relation to the Manor Leisure Centre refurbishment works proposed by Fenland District Council (FDC).

The Town Council agreed to waive its Standing Orders so that Councillor Boden could respond. He stated that all the information in relation to this matter is contained within the press release which had been issued very recently by FDC.

Councillors noted the comments of both the member of the public and Councillor Boden.

- (3) Mr Bibb commented that the position of Deputy Town Mayor is one which is an honour and he expressed the opinion that the councillor should not be elected to that position on a political basis but rather his or her visibility within the community and a demonstrated commitment to serving the people of the town.

Councillors noted the comments of the member of the public.

- (4) Mr Dorling referred to the recent Ofsted report in relation to the Sir Harry Smith Community College and commented there are issues which need to be addressed. He expressed the opinion that Whittlesey Town Council, although not the Local Education Authority, should help, wherever possible, the school to improve; he listed some ideas/options in that regard. He made the point that raising educational attainment improves employability and the local economy.

Councillors noted the comments of the member of the public.

- (5) Mr Robert Windle expressed the opinion that there are some hardworking councillors in Whittlesey but it is a shame that the public did not have the chance to change the order of items on the agenda, so that councillors could hear public opinion before the council elects councillors to certain positions on the council. He commented that he wishes both the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor the best for the new municipal year.

Mr Windle expressed disappointment that the Town Council had decided to no longer hold a Parish Assembly. He expressed the opinion that the council ought to set targets and objectives for the next 12 months and produce annual reports in terms of achievements delivered. He mentioned The Big Bash event, scheduled for 21 June 2026, to which the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor would be invited. Mr Windle informed the council that the deadline for inclusion of items in the next edition of the town's community magazine is the end of this month.

Councillors noted the comments of the member of the public.

#### **F4/26. Agenda items for discussion**

**(6) Dates of meetings for 2026/27**

Members considered the setting of dates for meetings of the town council and its committees for the municipal year 2026/27. The Clerk had circulated to members, in advance of the meeting, a schedule of proposed dates.

Councillor Boden commented that the proposed meeting dates for the municipal year 2026/27 generally replicate those for meetings which had taken place during the municipal year 2025/26.

Members decided, unanimously, on the proposal of Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Laws, that the dates of the meetings of the council and its committees for the municipal year 2026/27 be as proposed on the list which had been circulated by the Clerk.

**(7) Citizen of the Year and Young Citizen of the Year**

The Chairman announced who had been selected as Citizen of the Year (2026) and Young Citizen of the year (2026). He read to members the nominations which had been submitted in both cases. He mentioned that the awards would be presented at The Big Bash event in the town.

**F5/26. Fenland District Council Environment Newsletter and CCTV update**

Members received the District Council's Environment Newsletter covering the months of February, March and April 2026, which had been forwarded to them in advance of the meeting by the Town Clerk.

Members are aware that, following upgrade and replacement of the Peterborough City Council/Fenland District Council CCTV hardware and software systems, Fenland District Council (FDC) had stated that a quarterly "performance" report would be issued in April 2026; however, FDC has now informed the Town Council that the next report would not be produced until July 2026.

Councillor Laws expressed the opinion that this delay is unacceptable and she suggested that unless the support from the CCTV service improves, the Town Council may not look favourably on future funding by the Town Council for such provision in Whittlesey.

Members decided that

- (1) the content of the newsletter be noted;
- (2) the comments of Councillor Laws, with which they concur, be noted;
- (3) the Clerk would inform the Manager of the Peterborough City Council/Fenland District Council CCTV service of Whittlesey Town Council's dissatisfaction regarding its provision of CCTV "performance" information.

**F6/26. Police report and figures**

The Chairman reported that no information had been received from Cambridgeshire Constabulary since the last meeting of the council.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

**F7/26. Minutes of the Council meeting held on 16 April 2026**

Members decided that the minutes of the meeting of Whittlesey Town Council held on 16 April 2026 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

Councillor Dorling mentioned that he had noticed three spelling mistakes in those minutes but would not be giving the details in public as he did not wish to cause embarrassment. Councillor Laws suggested that, in future, Councillor Dorling should draw to the attention of the Clerk any such matters between the time of circulation of the draft minutes (with the agenda for the following meeting) and the date of the following meeting.

#### **F8/26. To receive councillor and outside body representative reports**

Members noted that there were no such reports.

#### **F9/26. Minutes of the Finance and Policy Committee meeting held on 11 May 2026**

The minutes of the meeting of the Policy Committee were not available; however, the committee had made a number of recommendations (presented by Councillor Boden) to Council; namely that

- (1) the council to provide funding for an additional half-day per week presence of CARC at Peel House; Councillor Boden commented that the situation would be monitored over a trial period of one year to assess the level of demand for the increase in the amount of service.

Members decided, unanimously, on the proposal of Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Laws, that the additional funding be made available.

- (2) the council organises a credit card for use by the Town Clerk for the purchase of goods for the council; Councillor Boden made the point that it would be necessary to determine a spending limit per individual transaction.

Members decided, unanimously, on the proposal of Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Wicks, that the council organises a credit card for use by the Town Clerk for the purchase of goods for the council.

- (3) the council would not proceed with use of the Parish Online service.

Councillor Dorling explained what he believes would be beneficial to the council if it were to utilise the Parish Online package – principally in terms of mapping and asset registration/management. He expressed the opinion that the council should use the 12 months free trial that is on offer. Councillor Dorling suggests that the council should not approve the recommended action of the committee and ask it to re-consider the matter.

Councillor Laws expressed the opinion that the council does not possess a sufficient level of staffing resource to be able to keep the data up to date. She expressed the opinion also that all of the information which would be available via Parish Online is available by other existing means (including the council's website). Councillor Laws thanked Councillor Dorling for his time and effort in researching the capabilities of Parish Online. Councillor Branton informed members that he is working on updating the council's assets register, including insurance re-valuations, and that he is able to find all the information that he needs without Parish Online.

Members decided, by a majority of 8 votes to 1, on the proposal of Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Nawez, that the recommendation of the Finance and Policy Committee (that being to not proceed with the use of Parish Online) be approved.

Councillor Boden mentioned that the Finance and Policy Committee had considered replacement of the council's photocopier and would be inviting quotations, for consideration at a future meeting of the committee.

Councillor Boden reported to members on grant applications which had been considered by the committee, which required approval by Council; those being:

- (1) Whittlesey Christmas Lights Committee – recommended by the committee that the application, seeking £7,500, be approved. In addition, the Finance and Policy Committee would suggest to the Whittlesey Christmas Lights Committee that it explores the opportunity of accessing monies from the Windfarm Fund
- (2) Whittlesey Royal British Legion - recommended by the committee that the application, seeking £400, be approved
- (3) 1<sup>st</sup> Whittlesey Scouts - recommended by the committee that the application, seeking £2,500 be approved.

Members decided that the three recommendations of the Finance and Policy Committee in relation to the grant applications that it had considered be approved.

*(Councillor Wicks did not participate in the application at (3) above because of his non-pecuniary interest in the application (see minute F2/26)*

#### **F10/26. To consider the council's financial documents**

Members received the council's financial documents (which had been considered on 11 May 2026 by the Finance and Policy Committee), as follows:

- 1) Bank Reconciliations as at 31 March 2026
- 2) the list of payments and uncashed payments as at 31 March 2026
- 3) the end of year (2025/26) figures.

Councillor Boden commented that although the council's year-end financial situation had been agreed by the Finance and Policy Committee, all the council's financial figures would be the subject of further scrutiny prior to completion of the council's AGAR for the financial year 2025/26.

Members decided

- (1) unanimously, on the proposal of Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Branton, that the year-end figures for the financial year 2025/26 be accepted;
- (2) that the comments made and explanations given by Councillor Boden be noted.

#### **F11/26. Draft minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 11 May 2026**

Members received the draft minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 11 May 2026.

Members decided that the content of these minutes be noted.

#### **F12/26. Draft minutes of the Community Projects Committee meeting held on 27 April 2026**

Members received the draft minutes of the Community Projects Committee meeting held on 27 April 2026.

Councillor Laws reported that the committee had decided to recommend to Council that, unless sponsorship can be achieved, the number of hanging baskets provided in Whittlesey would be reduced in 2027; the reduced level of provision would be focussed upon the town centre. She mentioned that businesses in the town would be invited to provide sponsorship. The committee would be considering, at its next meeting, this matter further, including the possibility of providing floral displays in the villages within the parish.

Members were informed by Councillor Laws that application had been made to Fenland District Council for the necessary licences/permits for the undertaking of "bucket" collections at the council's musical events.

Members decided, on the proposal of Councillor Laws, seconded by Councillor Bibb, that

- (1) the content of these minutes be noted;
- (2) the information provided by Councillor Laws in relation to future proposals for hanging baskets and floral displays in the parish in 2027 be noted.

#### **F13/26. Matters for information**

- (1) Councillor Gerstner updated members in relation to the scaffolding which had been erected at Barr Street, which is non-compliant – it has no licensing, permissions or other consents. He mentioned that a number of residents had contacted him regarding this matter. He commented that various current and former councillors had “been on the case”. The County Council had been failing to communicate regarding this matter but George Hay, Highways Enforcement Officer, is now pursuing the situation; Mr Hay had undertaken to try to achieve the installation of barriers around this scaffolding but it had not happened yet. Councillor Gerstner will pursue this matter with Mr Hay. Councillor Gerstner expressed the opinion that things appear to be, finally, “moving along”; he undertook to keep councillors apprised of any progress.

Members decided that the information reported by Councillor Gerstner be noted.

- (2) Councillor Dickinson, in making reference to comments which had been made during the Public Forum (part (3) of minute F3/26 refers), expressed the opinion that the manner in which civic roles are performed are matters for those so appointed; she commented that, as Deputy Mayor, she would always perform, to the best of her ability, any tasks allocated to her.

Members noted the comments of Councillor Dickinson.

#### **F14/26. Invitations**

Members noted that no invitations had been received by the council.

#### **F15/26. Exclusion of press and public**

There were no items of business on the agenda which required exclusion from the meeting of the press and public.

#### **F16/26. Date of next meeting**

Members noted that the next meeting of Whittlesey Town Council is scheduled for Thursday 18 June 2026, to commence at 6.30 pm.

**Meeting finished at 7.40 pm**



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Miscandlon', is written over a horizontal dotted line. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Councillor Miscandlon  
Chairman (and Mayor) of Whittlesey Town Council

