

WINSFORD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of **Winsford Town Council** held in **Room G2, Ground Floor, Wyvern House, Winsford** on **Monday 20th July 2026**.

PRESENT

Cllrs Fitzsimmons (Mayor), Bingham, Daniels, Fletcher, Hartley, Moorcroft, Newton and Roberts.

ALSO PRESENT

Members of the public.

IN ATTENDANCE

Dr M Bailey (Town Clerk)

Mrs E Haspell (Administrative/Civic Officer)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Hulmston, Mault, Mellor, Pardoe and Welch.

Opening/Formal Items

C57	DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	The following Members declared an interest at the meeting. <i>Agenda Item 12 – Grants</i> Cllr Newton declared a personal interest - agenda item 11 – Grants - Winsford History Society (see minute C67). <i>Agenda Item 23 – Land Consultation</i> Cllr Fletcher declared a personal interest - agenda item 23 – Land Consultation (see minute C78).
C58	OPEN FORUM	Several members of the public attended the meeting, and the following comments were made. • Speaker One - requested an update on the Town Centre Toilets project. Members were advised that the lease was awaiting signature by Cheshire West and Chester Council, after which the maintenance works would be subject to a tender process. • Speaker Two - discussed plans to rejuvenate two football pitches at Wharton Recreation Ground. The pitches would be used on Saturdays and Sundays until approximately 1.00pm. Responsibility for maintenance would be undertaken by the users, including litter removal, pitch

		marking and grass cutting. They also thanked the Council for its grant funding, which had contributed towards the purchase of a new PA system. The Council requested that a proposal be submitted in writing for the football pitches and that an end of grant report is also submitted. • Speaker Three - advised that it was the 60th anniversary of the Winsford History Society this year and expressed hope that the Council would support its grant application, which aimed to help attract new members. • Speaker Four - spoke on behalf of the Winsford Pride community and requested permission to use Town Park for the Winsford Pride event scheduled to take place on 5th September 2026. • Speaker Five - representing the Friends of Winsford Town Park, spoke in support of reinstating horticultural support for the park. The speaker highlighted the significant investment made in the Park's redevelopment and noted that Winsford Town Park had received the Cheshire Civic Society's highest award in 2021. He referred to comments made by the judges, which recognised both the Council's management of the park and the contribution of the Friends group. Reference was also made to the 2018 Management Plan and the 2024 Management Plan prepared by the former horticulturist. Concern was expressed regarding the condition of several planted areas, the prairie zone and pond margins, which were described as being affected by weed growth. It was argued that the removal of the horticulturist role two years ago had resulted in a loss of specialist leadership and horticultural knowledge. The speaker emphasised that responsibility for the park rests with Winsford Town Council and urged Members to consider reinstating the horticulturist role in principle, with details of any future appointment to be determined at a later stage. The
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		speaker concluded by suggesting that professional horticultural support could assist the Park in working towards Green Flag status in the future.
C59	MINUTES	The Council RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 15th June 2026.
C60	MATTERS ARISING	The following matters were raised from the above minutes. • Barton Stadium – It was reported that several legal firms had been contacted and the Clerk was waiting on quotes for the work. • Meeting dates – Members asked for the calendar to be updated. • Disability Pride – It was reported that most of the actions had been undertaken apart from the setting up of a fundraising/donations page via the website/social media. • Youth and Community Forum – Members were advised that the Clerk had contacted the Forum and that a revised application would be submitted. • Winsford United FC u10s Lions – a written report was requested from Winsford United FC regarding the grant received last year. • Policies – The Clerk advised Members that work was ongoing on the Social Media Policy and the Statement of Internal Controls, and that both documents would be circulated in due course. • Solar panels – it was reported that the outstanding payment had been paid.
C61	MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS/ APPOINTMENTS	The Mayor made the following announcements. • Raised the flag for the Armed Forces Week in 2026 • Attended the Armed Forces Day event. • Attended the Deaf/Sensory Open Day

		• Attended the raising of the flag in Chester for the National Health Service • Attended the Darnhall Show • Opened the Celebration of Summer on Delamere Street. • Attended the Knutsford Civic Service • Visited the Buddy and Befriending group on the Industrial Estate to officially take over raising funds. • Handed out awards and certificates to the Wharton Allotments and Over Allotments and attended the Knights Grange Friends Launch.
Finance Committee Items		
C62	ACCOUNTS FOR APPROVAL	Members considered the following items. • Payments since last meeting (£50,542.58). ○ 7381/7390/7392/7393 – a Member queried the British Gas payments and asked that they are checked ○ 7389 – Members were informed that this was equipment for events and work clothes. • Payments for approval (£23,100.33). ○ 7413 – Members were informed that this was for staffing cover. ○ 7436/7437 – this was for allotment and Marina Building keys. Members RESOLVED to approve the above payments.
C63	BANK RECONCILIATION REPORT	Members noted the bank reconciliation report for June 2026. • To follow up the outstanding payment on the allotments site. • It was explained that the See Impact payment was for the first payment for the land consultation.
C64	BUDGET REVIEW – TO 30TH JUNE 2026	Members noted the budget documents, which detailed the budget position up to and including 30 th June 2026.
C65	BUDGET UPDATE 2026/27	Members noted the budget statement for areas of spend broken down into External Committee/Finance Committee items up to the

		end of June 2026.
C66	INTERNAL AUDIT 2025/26	The Clerk informed Members that all actions had been completed and that an updated report would be circulated to Members. Members RESOLVED to approve the report from the Internal Auditor for the 2025/26 financial year.
C67	GRANTS	The Town Council received the following grant application for consideration by Members. <u>Winsford History Society</u> This application was for £1,840.00 towards the cost of designing and distributing a leaflet to all residents in Winsford. Members APPROVED this application. <u>Neuromuscular Centre</u> This application was for £2,500 towards the cost of improving raised planting beds to enable users to be able to grow food. Members APPROVED this application.
Committees/Working Groups		
C68	MINUTES	Members were asked to ratify minutes from the following meetings of Town Council Committees. <u>Staffing and Assets Committee – 29th June 2026</u> RESOLVED: - Members agreed to ratify the minutes. <u>External Committee – 6th July 2026</u> RESOLVED: - Members agreed to ratify the minutes. <u>Planning Committee – 8th July 2026</u> RESOLVED: - Members agreed to ratify the minutes.
Policies		
C69	REVIEW OF PLANS/POLICIES/PROCEDURES	Members considered the following policies. • Biodiversity Policy ○ To refer to the next meeting of the External Committee and consider the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

		• Civic Protocol ○ To consider adding that the Mayor makes the final decision on accepting/refusing civic invitations and takes advice from Officers where appropriate. ○ To consider equality, diversity and inclusive language and a commitment to inclusion and accessibility as reasonably practicable at civic events. ○ To look at DBS checks and safeguarding requirements. ○ To obtain guidance on the use of social media and the use of photography. ○ To refer to the next meeting of the Town Council. Members RESOLVED to defer the two policies.
C70	CO-OPTION POLICY	Members RESOLVED to approve the Co-Option Policy.
Events		
C71	COMMUNITY PRIDE EVENT	Members RESOLVED to approve the request for the use of Winsford Town Park on Saturday 5 th September 2026 for the Community Pride Event.
C72	ARMED FORCES DAY	Members RESOLVED that Armed Forces Day be held again in 2027 at Wharton Recreation Ground.
Assets		
C73	BRUNNER GUILDHALL	Members RESOLVED to establish a Brunner Guildhall Working Group comprising Town Councillors and community representatives, with the purpose of developing a long-term vision and sustainable future governance arrangements for the Brunner Guildhall, and that the Town Clerk be authorised to prepare Terms of Reference and invite expressions of interest from community representatives for consideration by the Council.
Motion to Council		
C74	MOTION TO COUNCIL	The Clerk challenged the perception that Winsford Town Council has not undertaken work within Town Park and highlighted several improvements carried out by the Council, including the cleaning of ponds, clearance of

		the prairie area, and efforts to address planting issues. He noted that the Council is constrained by available resources but has invested approximately £100,000 in the park. The Clerk further advised that the Council continues to organise community events within the park, including the forthcoming Party in the Park event, and has maintained the site following the departure of the horticulturist. He also acknowledged the positive working relationship with the Friends of Town Park, with both parties collaborating to address issues as they arise. Members RESOLVED to decline the motion to reinstate the horticulturist at Town Park.
C75	SHARED INFORMATION/COMMUNICATIONS	No items were raised by Members.
C76	DATE OF NEXT MEETING	The next meeting to take place on Monday 21 st September 2026 at 6.30 pm.
C77	EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC	Members RESOLVED that, due to its confidential nature, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following matters in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.
C78	LAND CONSULTATION	<i>Cllr Fletcher declared an interest on this item.</i> Members RESOLVED to defer this item pending further information.
C79	LAND ISSUES	Members RESOLVED to: - • Note the opportunities presented by the Biodiversity Net Gain market. • Approve the undertaking of a council-wide review of land holdings to identify sites suitable for BNG habitat creation. • Authorise officers to investigate opportunities for leasing additional land for potential habitat banking purposes. • Commission a preliminary ecological feasibility assessment of shortlisted sites. • Receive a further report setting out: ○ Potential unit yields; ○ Capital requirements; ○ Revenue forecasts; ○ Delivery options; and ○ Legal implications and to • Consider establishing a ring-fenced

		Biodiversity Net Gain Reserve should future schemes proceed.
C80	WHARTON RECREATION GROUND	Members AGREED this in principle but asked that Winsford United FC provide a written proposal.
C81	TOWN CENTRE TOILETS	Members noted the latest position relating to the town centre toilets.
	CLOSURE OF MEETING	The Town Mayor declared the meeting closed at 20.42 pm.

TOWN MAYOR