

STURMINSTER NEWTON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
held on Wednesday 7th May 2025 at 7.15pm in The Council Chamber

Present:

Cllr P Batstone (Mayor)
Cllr L Cooper
Cllr N Dobson
Cllr A Donaldson
Cllr C Fraser

Cllr M Jones
Cllr D Mantock (Deputy Mayor)
Cllr J Matthews
Cllr J Rose

In Attendance: K Squire (Town Clerk), J Drew (Office Administrator), R Revel (Finance Officer),
Dorset Councillor Carole Jones.

Members of the Public: 3

Minute No.	Comments
25/26/001	ELECTION OF CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL AND TOWN MAYOR Cllr Pauline Batstone was duly elected as Chair of the Council and Town Mayor until May 2026.
25/26/002	SIGNING OF THE DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN AND TOWN MAYOR Cllr P Batstone signed the Declaration of the Office of Chair of the Council and Town Mayor.
25/26/003	ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR OF COUNCIL AND DEPUTY MAYOR Cllr Debbie Mantock was duly elected Vice Chairman of the Council and Deputy Town Mayor until May 2026.
25/26/004	PUBLIC SESSION No comments were made. Dorset Cllr Carole Jones updated members that Dorset Community Transport would be contacting past users of Nordcat to gauge interest in using their transport. Things are settling down at The Vale Pantry after the sudden death of Paige, and they are fundraising for an Ice Cream Maker in her memory...
25/26/005	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies had been received from Cllr P Marks and Cllr H Lacey and were accepted by members present.
25/26/006	TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND APPROVE ANY WRITTEN APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATIONS No interests were declared and no written requests for dispensation had been received.
25/26/007	MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 16 April 2025, having been circulated and published prior to the meeting, were taken as read and approved for signature by the Chairman as a true and correct record.
25/26/008	TO APPROVE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 23 APRIL 2025 The Chair of the Finance & Policy Committee updated members that approval had been given for spending on allotments lease arrangements with a limit of £6000 before referral back to the Committee.

25/26/009

TO APPOINT MEMBERS TO THE STANDING COMMITTEES AND FOR THOSE COMMITTEE MEMBERS TO ELECT A CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR FOR EACH COMMITTEE

The Council reviewed the membership for the three standing committees.

The Council resolved to approve the following committee appointments including Chair and Vice Chair:

	Planning & Environment all members	Finance & Policy 7 Including Chair & Vice Chair	Amenities 7 including Chair & Vice Chair
Cllr P Batstone Mayor	√	√	√
Cllr L Cooper	√		√ (Vice Chair)
Cllr N Dobson	√	√ (Chair)	
Cllr A Donaldson	√ (Chair)	√	
Cllr C Fraser	√		√
Cllr M Jones	√	√	√
Cllr H Lacey	√		√
Cllr D Mantock Deputy Mayor	√ (Vice Chair)	√	√
Cllr P Marks	√		√ (Chair)
Cllr J Matthews	√	√	
Cllr J Rose	√	√ (Vice Chair)	

25/26/010

TO APPROVE THE TERMS OF REFERENCE AND DELEGATED POWERS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES

The Council resolved to retain the existing Committee terms of reference and delegated powers for the civic year 2025-2026 with one amendment. That the Staffing Sub Committee be made up of the Chair of Finance & Policy, the Deputy Mayor and the Chair of Amenities. A secondary appeals panel would be made up of the Mayor, the Vice Chair of Finance & Policy and the Chair of Planning & Environment.

25/26/011

TO APPOINT REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES AND WORKING GROUP MEMBERS.

The Council resolved to approve the appointment of representatives of outside bodies, as attached to these minutes and change if necessary throughout the year.

25/26/012

TO CONSIDER FINANCIAL MATTERS
i CHEQUE SIGNATORIES

The Council resolved to retain the existing cheque signatories: Cllrs Donaldson, Fraser, Lacey, Rose and Kate Squire (Town Clerk).

ii REVIEW AND CONSIDER LIST OF SUBSCRIPTIONS

The list of annual subscriptions were reviewed and approved by the Council as follows:

Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils (DAPTC)
Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)
Institute of Cemetery & Crematoria Management (ICCM)
Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)

iii TO APPROVE ANY PAYMENTS FOR INVOICES IN EXCESS OF £2000.

There were no payments in excess of £2000 to be approved.

- 25/26/013 **TO REVIEW AND ADOPT STANDING ORDERS FOR 2025/2026**
 Standing Orders had been previously circulated with the agenda.
 The Council resolved to approve and adopt Standing Orders for 2025/2026 subject to an amendment to add that the Vice Chair of Standing Committees should be elected at the same time as the Chair is elected.
 Cllr Mantock enquired why Working Groups are not mentioned in the Standing Orders and what the difference is between a Sub Committee and a Working Group. The Clerk will seek clarification.
- 25/26/014 **TO REVIEW AND ADOPT CODE OF CONDUCT FOR 2025/2026**
 The Code of Conduct had been previously circulated with the agenda.
 The Council resolved to approve and adopt the Code of Conduct for 2025/2026.
- 25/26/015 **TO REVIEW AND ADOPT FINANCIAL REGULATIONS FOR 2025/2026**
 Financial Regulations had been previously circulated with the agenda.
 The Council resolved to approve and adopt Financial Regulations for 2025/2026.
- 25/26/016 **TO APPOINT INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR 2025/2026 AND AGREE SCOPE OF WORK**
 The Council resolved to appoint Tim Light of Lighttouch for a further year as Internal Auditor, the scope of work to remain as in previous years.
- 25/26/017 **TO CONSIDER THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR 2025/2026**
 The Council resolved to confirm that the Internal Auditor is independent of any of its members.
- 25/26/018 **TO CONSIDER AND MAKE COMMENT ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS:**
- **P/HOU/2025/02295 Lancefields, Bath Road, DT10 1EB**
 No objections
- 25/26/019 **TO RECEIVE CORRESPONDENCE.**
 There was no correspondence to consider.
- 25/26/020 **TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE TOWN CLERK**
 The Town Clerk reported that there will be meeting at the Mill with the Consultant, a Structural Engineer and a Mill Right next week to look at the safety of the building and machinery. The cost for the visit is very high and has taken some time to organise, so she requested Cllrs leave the professionals to conduct the inspections uninterrupted. A reminder that tomorrow there will be a Flag Raising for VE Day at 10am, a Church Service at 8pm followed by the Beacon Lighting at 9.30pm.
 There will be training for all Cllrs on Audit and Governance at 5pm on Thursday 5 June.
- 25/26/021 **TO RECEIVE INFORMATION FROM MEMBERS AND DISCUSS PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE BUSINESS**
 A report, attached to these minutes, from the previous Town Mayor was read in her absence.
- Cllr Batstone* – Had attended Civic events at Weymouth and Portland. She welcomed Rachel Revel to the Council as the new Finance Officer. Also a reminder about the Literary Festival in June.
- Cllr Fraser* – Reported that an update on the Chapel lease had been received and he would take this to the Amenities Committee in June.
- Cllr Donaldson* – had been contacted regarding non collection of refuse from Retsel House he hoped to have solved the issue with Dorset Council. He had also received correspondence from the Newton Residents Association stating concerns regarding the development on the A357. A resident had spoken to him recently regarding the

current Mill closure. Finally he had attended the Yewstock School Open Morning and reported a well-run and outstanding facility.

Cllr Mantock – Wished to thank Cllr Lacey for her hard work as Mayor. Over the previous two years. She had also attended the Open Morning at Yewstock School which she found inspirational.

Cllr Rose – would be attending the Twinning event when the French visitors are coming to Sturminster Newton.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.15 pm

Approved on Chairman's Signature

DRAFT

**MEMBERS APPOINTED TO REPRESENT THE COUNCIL ON OUTSIDE BODIES AND
ORGANISATIONS 2025/2026**
Councillor Representatives

Cemetery Liaison
DAPTC
Rights of Way Officer
Sturminster Newton Allotments Association
Sturminster Newton Museum & Mill Society
Sturminster Newton Twinning Association
Tree Officer
Charity of William Williams
Youth Representative

Councillors Charles Fraser/Janet Matthews
Town Mayor/Deputy Town Mayor/Town Clerk
Lee Cooper
Councillors Peter Marks/Debbie Mantock
Councillors Peter Marks/Martin Jones
Town Mayor/Deputy Mayor
Councillor Andrew Donaldson/Lee Cooper
Councillor Helen Lacey
Councillor Helen Lacey/Janet Matthews

Working Groups

Mill Working Group

Cllr Charles Fraser
Cllr Martin Jones
Cllr Helen Lacey
Cllr Deborah Mantock
Cllr Peter Marks

Neighbourhood Plan Review Group

Cllr Andrew Donaldson
Cllr Charles Fraser
Cllr Deborah Mantock

Community Engagement Group

Cllr Pauline Batstone
Cllr Nick Dobson
Cllr Helen Lacey
Cllr Deborah Mantock
Cllr Janet Matthews

Open Spaces Group

Cllr Lee Cooper
Cllr Andrew Donaldson
Cllr Charles Fraser
Cllr Martin Jones
Cllr Deborah Mantock
Cllr Peter Marks
Grounds Manager – Adam Dodson

Youth Hub Group

Cllr Charles Fraser
Cllr Martin Jones
Cllr Helen Lacey
Cllr Peter Marks
Cllr Janet Matthews

Developer Contributions

Cllr Nick Dobson
Cllr Andrew Donaldson
Cllr Debbie Mantock
Dorset Cllr Carole Jones

Allotments

Cllr Peter Marks
Cllr Debbie Mantock
Grounds Manager – Adam Dodson
Chair of Allotment Association
Other Member of Allotment Association

A report from Cllr Helen Lacey – Outgoing Town Mayor

The Youth Council met on Thursday 24th April, 12 members of the High School Youth Council attended along with Mrs Phillips, who is the High School Staff Lead and Mr Mottram, the Head.

We had a good discussion, going over the action points raised from our last meeting and we also discussed the new temporary Youth Hub. We had a discussion what sort of activities and fixtures they thought they would like (a bulk order of bean bags, a comfy sofa and books, including Shakespeare, have been mentioned!). The School Council have been tasked with finding out what other evening activities take place in the town that pupils attend and which days they are held. This can help us determine which will be the best nights for the Hub to be open.

It is hoped that for our next meeting we can meet at the temporary hub so that they can see the space for themselves.

I also explained a little of what the Chamber is used for and a very very brief explanation of precept and Council Tax!

One of the action points from our previous meeting was for the High School to take and install some of the Swift boxes which were donated. Mike Mottram has taken one back to the school for discussions with his maintenance team.

I would, with Council approval, like at some point to meet with the School Councils of William Barnes and Yewstock, there is so much more we can do alongside our younger residents.

Finally, I would just like to thank Kate and Jas, and latterly Louise for their help and support over the last two years. It has been my honor to represent the Town at various events, the most of important of these (in my view) being those in the town itself. I've met some amazing people along the way, we are a small town with a big heart and so much to offer.

Helen