

STURMINSTER NEWTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 3rd JUNE 2026 AT 7.15 PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER



PRESENT:

Cllr P Batstone
Cllr L Cooper
Cllr N Dobson
Cllr A Donaldson
Cllr C Fraser

Cllr L Jackson
Cllr H Lacey
Cllr P Marks
Cllr J Rose
Cllr S Trim

IN ATTENDANCE:

K Squire (Town Clerk) J Drew (Office Administrator)

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 5

MINUTE NO	COMMENTS
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| 26/27/029 | To receive comments and questions from members of the public
A member of the public spoke regarding the resignation of ex Cllr Mantock, and what actions had been taken to try and keep her as a Councillor.
Cllr Rose informed that the resignation had been given at the end of a meeting, and ex Cllr Mantock had then left the meeting.
Cllr Marks stated that her decision was her personal matter of judgment. |
| 26/27/030 | Report from Dorset Councillor Carole Jones
Report attached to these minutes. |
| 26/27/031 | To consider apologies for absence
All members were present. |
| 26/27/032 | To approve declarations of interest and written applications for dispensation
No interests were declared and no written requests for dispensation received. |
| 26/27/033 | To approve the minutes of the Annual Town Council meeting held on 6th May 2026.
The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 6 th May 2026, having been circulated and published prior to the meeting, were taken as a true and correct record and duly signed by the Chair. |

- 26/27/034 To approve recommendations from the following committee meetings:**
- **Planning & Environment – 20th May 2026**
- 26/27/026 To consider Neighbourhood Plan review**
- The Committee resolved to recommend to Full Council a medium focussed review of the Neighbourhood Plan with as much of the review being done by Council, only employing a specialist where information cannot be obtained elsewhere.
- The Council resolved to approve the recommendations of the Planning & Environment Committee**
- 26/27/035 To consider and approve the Annual Internal Audit report for 2025/26.**
- The Council considered the report which had been previously circulated.
- The Council resolved to approve the Annual Internal Audit report for 2025/26.**
- Cllr Fraser requested that a letter of thanks be sent to Tim Light for his assistance with audit matters for many years and wish him a happy retirement.
- 26/27/036 To consider and approve the Annual Governance Statement section 1 for 2025/26.**
- The Clerk read the assertions on the Annual Governance Statement for 2025/26 which has been previously circulated, and the Council confirmed compliance with each statement.
- The Council resolved to approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2025/26 which was then signed by the Chair and Clerk.**
- 26/27/037 To consider and approve the Accounting Statements section 2 for 2025/26.**
- The Council considered the Accounting Statements section 2 for 2025/26 which had been previously circulated.
- The Council resolved to approve the Accounting Statements section 2 for 2025/26.**
- 26/27/038 To approve date for the notice of public rights and publication of unaudited Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2026.**
- The Council considered the notice of public rights and publication of unaudited Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2026 and resolved to approve the dates as follows:**
- The notice will be displayed from Thursday 4 June 2026, will commence form Friday 5 June 2026, and end on Thursday 16 July 2026.**
- 26/27/039 To consider and confirm any conflict of interest with external auditors BDO LLP.**
- The Council resolved to confirm no conflict of interest with external audiotrs BDO LLP.**

- 26/27/040** **To consider final internal audit report and recommendations for 2025/26.**
The Council considered the report which had been previously circulated.
The Council resolved to note and approve the recommendations from the report.
- 26/27/041** **To consider the effectiveness of Internal Audit for 2025/26.**
The Council resolved to confirm effectiveness of the Internal Audit carried out for the Council for 2025/26.
- 26/27/042** **To consider terms of reference for committees and working groups and agree any changes.**
The Council considered the terms of reference for committees and working groups which had previously been circulated with items for consideration.
The Council resolved to instruct the Clerk to make the recommended changes to the terms of reference for committees and working groups.
- 26/27/043** **To approve insurance renewal quote (year 2 of 3).**
The Council considered the insurance quote that had previously been circulated.
The Council resolved to confirm that the insurance cover for 2025/26 was fit for purpose and approved the renewal.
- 26/27/044** **To consider land transfer from Bellway Homes at Corallian Heights.**
Following previous discussions at a previous meeting, the Clerk updated the Council regarding the conditions of the offer of land transfer and the financial contributions. The Council noted that Wessex Water would be managing the SuDS.
The Council resolved to approved acceptance of the land transfer at Corallian Heights from Bellway Homes.
- 26/27/045** **To consider response to invitation to join the Sturminster Newton Chamber of Trade.**
The Council considered the invitation from the Sturminster Newton Chamber of Trade.
The Council resolved that the Mayor will represent the Town Council on the Sturminster Newton Chamber of Trade.
- 26/27/046** **To receive a report from Cllr Lacey regarding the School Council.**
Cllr Lacey updated the Council on the meeting of the School Council on the 18 May 2026. They will meet again on the 25th June 2026. Cllrs Rose, Cooper and Jackson will attend.
- 26/27/047** **To approve payments over £2000.**
There were no payments over £2000.

- 26/27/048 To receive correspondence.**
- A letter had been received from Newton Residents Association regarding installation of a defibrillator at Glue Hill.
This will be discussed at the next Finance & Policy meeting on 22 July 2026.
 - A letter had been received from a resident seeking permission to repair a wall from the Recreation Ground side.
This will be discussed at the next Amenities Committee meeting on 24 June 2026.
- 26/27/049 To receive a report from the Town Clerk.**
- The Clerk apologised for omitting consideration of Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils (DAPTC) subscriptions from this agenda. She will include it in the next meeting agenda.
- She also informed the Council that she had overlooked sending Dorset Cllr Jones the agenda for the meeting and has sent her an email to apologise. She had noted that the Volunteer Centre were no longer running the Thriving Communities networking event and wondered if the Council could carry on this project.
- 26/27/050 To receive a report from the Town Mayor.**
- See attached report.
- 26/27/051 To receive information from members and proposals for future business.**
- Cllr Cooper* – shared that:
- The footpath at the Royal British Legion site will remain closed.
 - The Town Council will be having a table at the Big Weekend on Saturday 6th June.
 - Harts are arranging a litter pick.
 - There will be a Teracycle box in Reception for the recycling of blister packs.
 - The Rights of Way Group are having a ‘Walk with us’ weekend in July.
 - He suggested the Council contact Dorset Cllr Jones to remind her that she is welcome to attend Council meetings at any time.
- Cllr Fraser* – informed members that the founder of the Cittaslow movement had died.
- Cllr Marks* -thanked the Clerk for all her work in the preparation for the meeting.
- Cllr Batstone* asked:
- About the DAPTC report and if the Council need to outside support for communications strategy.
 - About the situation with the pre application for the Youth Club. The Town Clerk advised that the pre-application has been submitted, pending response.

Cllr Donaldson:

- Had attended the Mayor Making Ceremony in Blandford on behalf of the Mayor.
- He advised there had still not been a reply from Highways regarding the planning application at Hillcrest Close. He will take this matter up with Dorset Cllr Jones.

The Council resolved under standing order 10(a)(xi) to exclude the press and public from the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed

Confidential Items:

- 26/27/052 To consider quotes and appoint internal auditor for 2026/27.**
The Council considered three quotes for internal audit services which had been previously circulated.
The Council resolved to appoint Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd to provide internal audit for three years.
- 26/27/053 To consider quotes to change website provider and agree further action.**
The Council considered three quotes from website providers which had been previously circulated.
The Council resolved to change website provider to Motley Digital Ltd.
- 26/27/054 To consider quotes for HR advisor and agree further actions.**
The Council considered three quotes from HR advisors which had been previously circulated.
The Council resolved to appoint Rely Ltd to provide HR services for a 12 month period.

The meeting closed at 8.37pm.

Signed by Chair..... Approved on.....

I hadn't received an agenda or notice of the meeting directly as I usually do – but I hope the report below suffices.

New stats have been published on Sturminster Newton:

We have 3552 Electors and 2357 homes

13.6% of the population is aged under 15. 56.6% is aged between 16 & 64, &

29.8% Aged over 65

52% female and 48% male, total population 4631

88.7% are white British and 11.3% ethnic minority

79.8% describe their health as good or very good, whilst 5.5% describe it as bad or very bad

19.9% of our population has a long-term illness or disability & 9% of our population is providing unpaid care

In terms of deprivation, overall SN ranks well, with the exception of Housing and Services.

The new CEO of Dorset Council is working with the SLT on a program of Transformation, and community conversations have been taking place with Town and Parish Clerks.

Issues locally have been revolving around ASB – mainly with residents affecting their neighbours, and I have been working with the SNG ASB Officer along with our local police to resolve, where possible, these issues.

School Meals for children – From this Autumn, all children whose parents receive any level of UC will be entitled to free school meals regardless of how much their household earns. It is important to note, though with the changes that parents must apply – those currently eligible will still need to apply from 1st June. More information is available here:

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/news/more-dorset-children-could-qualify-for-free-school-meals->

Children's Services – the last two quarters have shown an increase in the number of children being taken into care. There is no one reason for this.

Finally, I am running monthly Councillor Surgeries on the first Saturday of each month from 10 – 12 at the Family Hub. Any/all councillors are welcome to join me. Starting from this coming Saturday June 6th.

Can I please request consideration of a refresh of the Council's website, as it is rather out of date, with key resources in the Town not shown, and it should also perhaps include my details as the Dorset Councillor. Nordcat is no longer – and community transport needs to be made clear that it is only available for medical appointments. The Vale Family Hub is an important resource for the town, and the link on to the other website for the town is woefully out of date.

As I have not heard anything further with regards to a meeting between all councillors and myself, I assume this will not be taking place.

26/27/050 To receive a report from the Town Mayor.

The Mayor reported that:

May was a quiet month in terms of attendances.

On the weekend of 15th – 18th May I joined the twinning visit to Montebourg (which I undertook as Chairman of the Twinning Committee, although as Mayor I am also currently the president of the Twinning Association)

I also attended the following civic events during the month:-

10th Wimborne Civic Service

31st Yeovil Civic Service (for incoming Mayor)

My thanks to Cllr Donaldson for representing me at Blandford's Mayor making on Friday 15th