HEREFORD CITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING – 25 NOVEMBER 2025

MINUTES OF MEETING

Present: The Right Worshipful the Mayor of Hereford Cllr Daniel Powell (in the Chair) and Councillors: Elizabeth Foxton, Debbie Hobbs, Diana Toynbee, Cat Hornsey, Jacqui Carwardine, Jeremy Milln, Rob Owens, Jim Kenyon, Sam Potts, Ben Proctor, Adam Spencer, Paul Stevens and Kevin Tillett.

Attending: Officers of the Council: Kim Carpenter – Town Clerk, Sarah Jones – Committee Co-ordinator,

C2025/26.64– APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs Andrews and Boulter (Disp).

C2025/26.65 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

No declarations of interest were made, and there were no requests for dispensation.

C2025/26.66 – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present at the meeting.

C2025/26.67 – MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

There was a point of clarification on page 23, where the Parish Charter needs to be included to aid clarity.

The minutes were proposed as an accurate record of the meeting, with this point of clarification by JM, this was seconded by KT and carried by a unanimous vote of Council.

It was RESOLVED to accept the minutes as a true representation of Council Committee on 28 October 2025.

C2025/26.68 AGAR EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2024/25

Council noted the AGAR certificate received from PK Littlejohn and were made aware of the reason for the qualification.

C2025/26.69 INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2025/26

The Interim Internal Audit Report produced by Adrian Shepherd-Roberts of Auditing Solutions Ltd was noted by Council. The meeting was advised that two further visits were scheduled before the final audit report will be provided.

C2025/26.70 GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The following policies were discussed along with the Council exploring Cyber Essentials, the meeting was advised that this accreditation was current in process.

- IT and Email Policy – this policy was proposed by DP with an amendment to some wording, this was seconded by DH and carried with a vote of 12 with 1 abstention.

  It was RESOLVED to approve the Hereford City Council IT and Email Policy following some amendments to the wording.

- Data Protection Policy - there was some debate about this policy and the meeting agreed that further work needed to be undertaken by the Town Clerk supported by BP. This was policy was proposed by JK, seconded by SP and carried with a vote of 12 with 1 abstention.

  It was RESOLVED for work on the Hereford City Council Data Protection Policy to be undertaken by the Town Clerk supported by BP.

- Financial and Risk Management Policy – this policy was proposed by DH, seconded by SP and carried with a unanimous vote.

  It was RESOLVED to approve the Hereford City Council Financial and Risk Management Policy.

- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy - there was a detailed debate about this policy as the meeting felt it needed further work to ensure it was suitable. The meeting decided that this policy be returned to the Governance Committee for further work and amendments**.**

  It was AGREED for further work on the Equality Diversity & Inclusion Policy, and this will be taken back to Governance Committee for approval once this work has been done.

Governance Committee during its review of the policies identified the need for a Safeguarding Lead Councillor, the deputy would be the Town Clerk, but there was a need for expressions of interest or nominations for the Lead Role. KT nominated DH, who accepted the nomination, this was seconded by JK and carried by a unanimous vote of council.

It was RESOLVED that Cllr Hobbs would be Hereford City Council's Safeguarding Lead Councillor with the Deputy Safeguarding Lead being the Town Clerk.

C2025/26.71 DRAFT BUDGET 2026/27

As Chair of the Finance Committee, PS spoke about the difficulty of the budget and the ongoing projects that the Council runs. There was much debate about the Zipper service and how this could be managed and potential other ways of spreading the burden, but these would need to be in discussion with the Stronger Towns Board. Council has a duty to make responsible decisions, and this is not the position that we want to be in.

The Town Clerk once again offered to sit with any Councillor to go through the draft budget in detail. KT reminded the meeting that the precept increased last year, and no complaints were made by residents.

C2025/26.72 ANNUAL FUNDING AWARD – H&W CITIZENS ADVICE

PS spoke about the CAB proposed 5yr Service Level Agreement (SLA) starting at £10k p.a. and rising by £1k per year to reach £15k by the end of the SLA. JK felt this was a sensible option for a service which helps so many people who fall into despair; they have some very talented people working at the CAB.

This was proposed by BP, seconded by JK and carried by a unanimous vote.

It was RESOLVED to change the H&W Citizens Advice Annual Funding Award to a 5yr SLA starting at £10K per year and then rising to £1k a year to reach £15K by the end of the SLA.

C2025/26.73 TWINNED TOWNS AND FRIENDSHIP CITY

DP spoke to this proposal, which was seconded by KT.

There was some debate about how the figure was derived, DP added that he had undertaken some research about potential costs covering vehicle hire, accommodation etc.

Many felt this was a sensible and important to retain the links with the twinned and friendship towns and this could show Hereford. There was some discussion about putting Twinning back into the budget and have a programme, but no decision was made on this element,

The recommendation:

1. Approve a budget allocation of £8,000 for the purpose outlined above,
2. Establish a Twinning Working Group of five members, as well as the Town Clerk and Mayor's officer, to plan and deliver the 2026 Twinning Visit to Hereford.

DP called for a vote to be taken, and the recommendation was carried by a unanimous vote.

DP then asked for members to sit on the working group, the following Councillors volunteered: Cllrs D Powell, C Hornsey, J Kenyon, E Foxton and K Tillett.

It was RESOLVED to accept the recommendation and establish a Twinning Working Group with the above councilors, Town Clerk and Mayors Officer.

C2025/26.74 – EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES COMPARISON

The meeting discussed the poor response received from Hoople during a difficult period and there was a general feeling that this was a good idea but there was a need to find the funding from within existing budgets.

BP proposed that this was accepted in principle, but for this to be sent to the Finance Committee to agree the details, this was seconded by JM and carried with a vote of 11 with 3 abstentions.

It was RESOLVED to look at funding within existing budgets through the Finance Committee.

C2025/26.75 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The exclusion of the press and public was proposed by Cllr Powell, seconded by Cllr Tillett and carried by a unanimous vote of Council

RESOLVED That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the duration of following items under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s1(2), due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed.

C2025/26.76 – CONFIDENTIAL STAFFING MATTER

> **[REMOVED. Minutes of this item are contained in the Confidential Minute Folder under C2025/26.76]**

C2025/26.77 – READMISSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

DP proposed to readmit the press and public at the conclusion of confidential business, this was seconded by KT and carried by a unanimous vote.

The meeting RESOLVED to readmit the press and public to the meeting and return to open session.

C2025/26.78 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS AND CIVIC EVENTS 2026

DP proposed that the Calendar of Meetings and Civic Events for 2026 be accepted, this was seconded by JK and carried by a unanimous vote.

It was RESOLVED to accept the Calendar of Meetings and Civic Events for 2026.

C2025/26.79 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

DP gave a brief resume of his mayoral activities since the last meeting and of note was the Mayor Commendation to Audrey Chatburn who has volunteered at the Open Gate Society for a very long time and was a force of nature in her charitable work.

He also advised that he would be attending the Police & Safer Streets Team meeting in January and would report back on this at the next meeting.

C2025/26.80 REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The following reports were received:

a) Hereford in Bloom – EF explained that there is not much to report, work on the planters continues and their reception will be held soon.
b) Close House – SP reported that the next board meeting will be held Friday 28 November 2025.
c) Hereford BID – There is still no response from Cllr Briggs or the leader, PS spoke to Paul Walker about this. The BID team is busy with the small Christmas trees.
d) Stronger Towns Board – BP had nothing too much to add, the restaurant at Castle Green is now open; Belmont Wanders are being offered project support; the museum is reviewing the next phase costs and there has been further vandalism at Growing Local.
e) Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School Charity – DT had attended the meeting today; they are happy to have a City Council representative. The investment policy is being reviewed as CCLA has been taken over and there is concerns about the returns.
f) Community Land Trust – JM said that the AGM was held on 12 November 2025 and there are now three new Directors.
g) Hereford Allotments & Leisure Gardeners – JK spoke about work continuing as usual, but they are still chasing land ownership and long-term leases for the sites.
h) Hereford Association of Local Councils – SP informed that there is a meeting next week, the NALC AGM is due and there are changes in the officers at NALC.
i) Youth Council – BP explained that two members of the YC attended the Shrieval Lectures, the Director of Children's Services attended the YC meeting and was quizzed by the young people and agreed to keep in contact.
   The makers market will be held on 6 December 2025 and there is still a need for additional raffle prizes.

C2025/26.81 TOWN CLERK'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Clerk has drafted a paper on the Town Hall and its condition, which will be going to the Governance Committee on 16 December, although we are still waiting for the full report from Herefordshire.

The letter to Paul Walker was also briefly mentioned; it's been drafted but it's difficult to finalize due to the issues with the Town Hall beyond public access.

C2025/26.82 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council is on 27 January 2025.

DP wished everyone a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

The meeting closed at 20:05.

Signed.....

Date.....