

Minutes of a meeting of CREWKERNE TOWN COUNCIL held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Market Square, Crewkerne on Monday 27 October 2025.

PRESENT

Cllrs. Ashton, Best, N. Draycott, K. Head, D. Livesley, P. Maxwell, J. Morris, J. Nathan, C. Rawe, A. Samuel, and S. Woodland.

In attendance: Town Clerk G. Hughes and two members of the public

No members of the public were present.

066 TO NOTE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
25/26

Cllr A. Stuart (personal).

067 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
25/26

Cllr. Best declared an interest in 074 25/26 as he is a member of the Devon and Somerset Fire Authority, and Cllr. Head declared an interest in 077 25/26 as she is the Chair of Crewkerne in Bloom.

068 MINUTES
25/26 **To confirm the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 22 September 2025**

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2025 were AGREED.

069 ONE MINUTE SILENCE
25/26

A one-minute silence was observed in memory of Alan Burbage, husband of the late Betty Burbage, a former Town Councillor, and Ken Leamon, husband of former Mayor Hilary Leamon.

070 PUBLIC OPEN FORUM
25/26

A member of the public spoke regarding the Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) at Henhayes. It was noted that the revised habitat plan for the Miller's Garage planning application identifies three trees for removal. Concern was expressed that TPOs can be overruled by a planning officer, and the Council was asked to make further enquiries.

The mayor extended thanks to the member of the public for applying for the TPOs.

A representative of the fire service spoke in relation to agenda item 074 25/26. The speaker outlined that weekly fire drills are undertaken each Tuesday to test skill sets, with larger joint exercises with other fire authorities held every six months. The fire service wishes to use the GRC for a mock chemical/gas incident in January or February.

071 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:
25/26

a. Somerset Councillors

The following points were raised:

- A new public consultation has opened on local nature recovery. It was noted that there is a shortage of black poplars in the area, and there may be an opportunity to purchase some at a

later date. As these trees are dioecious, it was suggested that local schools could be involved in planting and growing them until they can be identified as male or female.

- The Council were informed of a new *Go Green* grant, offering between £2,000 and £15,000 to local businesses for environmental improvements.
- It was noted that Somerset Council has not invested significantly in Crewkerne, and the Council's unitary representatives are seeking ways to secure improvements for the town.
- Signage outside the Town Hall has been amended to direct HGVs along a preferred route.
- It was noted that there has been an increase in weeds around the town, despite spraying having been carried out.
- Concern was raised regarding one of the Dorset service buses operating between Crewkerne and Beaminster, as the high number of school children using the service, alongside members of the public, has resulted in the bus reaching capacity before arriving at the school.

b. Local Community Network (LCN) representative

Cllr. Head reported that focus groups were taking place to consider the success of the LCN meetings.

c. Crewkerne Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT)

The Clerk has been unable to obtain a report due to the change of police staff.

072
25/26

CLERK'S PROGRESS REPORT

The Town Clerk reported that:

- New directional signage has been installed outside the Town Hall to guide HGVs along a preferred route to help to reduce congestion at the corner of North Street.
- The new Deputy Clerk will be starting on Monday 3rd November.

073
25/26

FINANCE

a. To approve the accounts for payment for September 2025 as listed

Cllr. Rawe queried a MiPermit payment, and it was explained this is for staff car parking. The Clerk was asked to circulate information regarding the Youth Council to Weston-Super-Mare.

Cllr. Head verified the accounts for payment in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations. Accounts for payment for 30 September 2025 in the sum of £31,089.66 were APPROVED.

b. To report that the bank reconciliation for September 2025 has been completed

Cllr. Head verified the bank reconciliation for September 2025. It was noted that cash in hand as of 30 September 2025 was £840,812.69.

c. To note that the monthly accounts for the War Memorial Commemoration Trust have been checked

Cllr. Head verified the Trust accounts and it was noted that cash in hand as of 30 September 2025 was £6,454.58.

d. To receive the Q2 income and expenditure summary

The quarterly report was noted. The Clerk explained that the overspend on staff costs was a one-off expense resulting from the payment of outstanding lieu time, and it is not expected that the budget will be exceeded by the end of the financial year.

e. To note the conclusion of the External Audit for 2024/25 with no issues raised

The conclusion of the audit was noted.

f. To consider a grant application from Open Doors

Councillors considered the application but felt that further information was required. The Clerk will ask for further information and invite a representative to a future meeting.

074 FIRE EXERCISE/DRILL

25/26 To consider a request from the fire service to use the George Reynolds Centre (GRC)

Councillors commented that the proposal could contribute to the Emergency Plan currently being developed for the town and suggested that Somerset Prepared and the Somerset Rivers Authority could be involved, as they provide emergency planning briefing sessions.

A representative from the fire service explained that the exercise would ideally take place on a Tuesday evening and, if approved, a more detailed plan would be provided and the Council's Operations Manager involved.

The request to use the GRC for a fire exercise was AGREED, subject to the submission of a detailed plan and risk assessment.

075 TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS

25/26 To note the addition of TPO's on nineteen trees at Henhayes Recreation Ground

The Tree Preservation Orders were noted. The Clerk was asked to thank the member of the public online for submitting the applications.

076 MEMORIAL BENCH

25/26 To confirm the donation of a memorial bench from the Royal British Legion

Councillors noted the donation. It was explained that the new bench will be in the same style as the other bench outside the Town Hall. It was requested that delivery and installation take place before Remembrance Day, if possible, although this may not be achievable. The existing bench will be refurbished and relocated elsewhere in the town.

077 TREE STUMP

25/26 To consider a proposal from Crewkerne in Bloom

Cllr Head explained that Crewkerne in Bloom would like to commission a wooden planter to be placed on the tree stump in Market Street. The planter would be filled with perennial plants and would provide a more cost-effective alternative to removing the stump and roots.

Councillor Head left the room.

Councillors made the following comments:

- It was noted that it had previously been agreed to seek a quotation for the removal of the stump and replacement of the tree.
- A new Tree Officer will be appointed at Somerset Council shortly, after which they will be able to provide a quotation.
- A query was raised as to whether the cost of removal should be met by Somerset Council.
- A planter would need the approval of Highways.

Councillors expressed that they would like to see the costs of a replacement tree before considering alternative options.

Councillor Head returned to the room.

078 STAFFING

25/26 To note the appointment of the new Deputy Clerk.

Councillors noted this appointment.

079 TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING MINUTES

25/26

- a) Reports from Town Council representatives to outside bodies

Councillors Ashton and Samuel reported that they had recently attended a Business Group meeting. A proposal had been put forward by the Yeovil Crime Reduction Team to introduce a system for sharing information on known offenders. The Clerk was asked to make enquiries and to invite representatives to a future meeting. It was also noted that the threshold determining when the police will respond has now been rescinded.

- b) Planning and Highways Committee: 8 September 2025
c) Policy and Resources Committee: 9 June 2025

All minutes above were duly noted and AGREED.

080 TO RECEIVE MATTERS OF REPORT (for information only)

25/26

Councillors discussed the following points:

- A member of the public would like to pass on their praise to the Clerk and an LIC volunteer for helping with an issue.
- A question was raised between the relationship between the Birds Almshouses and the properties on Birds Close, and whether they were privately owned.
- The Clerk was asked to ensure the codes at Bincombe are changed on a monthly basis to avoid any unauthorised access.
- It was confirmed that the Wednesday market had now closed due to lack of trade.
- There had been reports of people trying door handles and windows on North Street, this has been reported to the police.
- There is currently no progress on the proposal to move the bus stop.
- Councillor Best was making enquiries about wrapping the empty shop windows with vinyl.
- The disabled parking bays at Bincombe cannot be enforced as the town council has no enforcement powers.
- The Clerk was asked to reinstate Councillor Ashton on the Patient Participation List (PPG) mailing list.

- The lamp post in the churchyard is still awaiting repair.
- Councillor Morris recently represented Crewkerne by visiting Helmstedt, Germany with Chard Twinning Association.
- A banging manhole cover at North Street was discussed. This has been reported to Highways but is not considered a safety defect.
- Councillors expressed thanks to the Grounds Team for their hard work in maintaining the town's open spaces and for achieving a Commendation for Henhayes and a Bronze Award for Happy Valley in the Playing Field of the Year 2025.

081
25/26

NEXT MEETING

Monday 24 November 2025, 18.45, Council Chamber, Town Hall, Market Square, Crewkerne.

The meeting closed at 19.43.

Signed:

Dated:

TC27October2025