Minutes of a meeting of CREWKERNE TOWN COUNCIL held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Market Square, Crewkerne on Monday 21 September 2026.

PRESENT

Cllrs. M. Best, R. Cosgrove, K. Head, P. Maxwell, J. Morris, J. Nathan, C. Rawe and A. Samuel (Mayor) and A. Stuart

In attendance: G. Hughes (Town Clerk), S. Syeda Bowen (Deputy Town Clerk), Cllr. S. Ashton (Unitary Councillor) and four members of the public.

078 26/27 **TO NOTE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors N. Draycott and D. Livesley (personal reasons)

The reasons for absence were APPROVED.

079 26/27 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors Best and Head declared an interest in item 090/2627 as members of CUDOS.

080 26/27 **MINUTES**

To confirm the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 10 August 2026

The minutes of the Full Town Council meeting held on 10 August 2026 were AGREED as a true and accurate record.

081 26/27 **PUBLIC OPEN FORUM**

A member of the public thanked the Town Clerk for organising the cemetery open day. She queried why the bus route does not travel along North Street, Ashlands Road and East Street, and raised concerns about residents who do not drive being offered medical appointments in Martock.

Councillor Head, as Chair of the League of Friends, advised that she would continue to raise these issues. She also advised that she attends stakeholder meetings with Councillor Best, where these matters can also be raised.

082 26/27 **TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:**

a. Somerset Councillors

Councillor Ashton explained that he is now Chair of the Somerset Rivers Authority. He advised that it had been agreed that car park charges would increase by 10% across the board and, as the increase would apply uniformly, no consultation would be required. Sunday charges would be put on hold.

Councillor Ashton also provided an update on changes to planning arrangements. He advised that a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published on 6 August, would be applied. Changes to the delegation of planning decisions by Unitary Councillors would take effect from 30 September. Minor applications of fewer than 10 dwellings would no longer be able to be referred to committee by Councillors and would instead be determined under delegated authority.

He advised that changes would also affect the planning appeal process, including the requirement for objections to be lodged before an appeal, with a reduced timeframe of three working days. He also referred to changes relating to settlement boundaries and advised that Town Councils would increasingly be limited to making representations based on planning considerations, with extensions to consultation deadlines not being granted.

Councillor Ashton advised that he would prepare notes summarising the changes for the Town Clerk to circulate to Councillors.

b. Local Community Network (LCN) representative

There have been no recent meetings.

c. Crewkerne Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT)

Councillors received an updated quarterly crime statistics report, which included a comparison with data from the same period in the previous year. A Police Officer had been invited to attend the meeting but was unable to do so. The Clerk was asked to contact the Police to request a written report providing further explanation of some of the statistics.

083 26/27 **CLERK'S PROGRESS REPORT**

The Town Clerk reported that a by-election had been called to fill the vacancy and would be administered by Somerset Council, with the election taking place on Thursday 22 October 2026. The deadline for nominations is 4.00pm on Friday 25 September, with nomination papers to be delivered by hand to Petters House, Yeovil. The Notice of Election had been published on the Town Council's noticeboards and social media.

The Clerk also reported ongoing incidents of anti-social behaviour at the War Memorial Gardens. The matter had been reported to Avon and Somerset Police, and volunteers had been asked to report individual incidents online so that they could be formally recorded. The Town Council would continue to monitor the situation and liaise with the Police as appropriate.

084 **FINANCE AND PROCEDURE**

26/27 a. To approve the accounts for payment for July and August 2026 as listed.

Cllr. Best verified the accounts for payment in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations. Accounts for payment for 31 July 2026 in the sum of £58,296.89, and 31 August 2026 in the sum of £45,229 were APPROVED.

b. To report that the bank reconciliation for July and August 2026 have been completed

Cllr. Best verified the bank reconciliations for July and August 2026. It was noted that cash in hand as of 31 July 2026 was £762,775.01, and 31 August 2026 was £724,069.96.

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

Cllr. Best verified the Trust accounts and it was noted that cash in hand as of 31 July 2026 was £7,048.71 and 31 August 2026 was £7,717.64.

d. To note the conclusion of the External Audit for 2025/26

The conclusion of the External Audit for 2025/26 was noted.

e. To note that two fraudulent credit card transactions have now been reimbursed

The Clerk reported that Lloyds Corporate Cards had identified three attempted transactions of £36.00 each on the Council's Corporate Credit Card. One transaction was blocked by Lloyds and two were processed but subsequently refunded following confirmation that they were fraudulent. The card was cancelled and a replacement issued. There was no financial loss to the Council.

The Clerk confirmed that the transactions were unauthorised and that the card had been securely stored at the time. The transactions have been recorded on the finance system for transparency.

085 **BUS STOP**
26/27 To consider delaying the proposed relocation of the bus stop until further consideration by the Council

Councillors discussed the proposed relocation and noted that circumstances had changed since the original proposal was made, including changes to local businesses and their clientele. Concerns were raised that the loss of parking could have a financial impact on local businesses.

It was also felt that any changes to the street scene should be deferred until the link road has been built and the potential one-way system can be considered. This would allow the wider town centre to be considered more cohesively, including opportunities for improved pavements, parking and tree planting. It was suggested that the Council's longer-term aspirations for the street scene could be stated in advance.

Councillors AGREED to delay the proposed relocation of the bus stop until further consideration by the Council.

086 **SOMERSET RIVERS AUTHORITY**
26/27 To consider making a grant application

Councillor Ashton explained that the Council could apply in principle at this stage, even though no detailed proposals were yet in place. He advised that consultants were available to help assess the costs and implications, ensuring that projects were considered as part of the wider picture rather than in isolation, and to provide advice on any necessary permissions.

- **Chard Road** – installation of a grate and drain across the road to intercept surface water flowing towards the town. This solution had previously been proposed by the Environment Agency, but funding had not been available at the time.
- **Blacknell Lane** – investigation and improvement of the existing drainage system at the Taylor Wimpey site. A large pipe currently discharges into a stream, which then enters a smaller pipe running underneath Merriott Plastics. During periods of high rainfall, the system is unable to cope with the volume of water, resulting in flooding. Previously, flooding would have occurred at Viney Bridge, but the new development has moved the problem further downstream.

Councillors AGREED to submit a grant application to the Somerset Rivers Authority Community Flood Action Fund for these two projects.

087 **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP MEMBERSHIP**

26/27 To consider:

a. the appointment of Councillor Ashton as a community representative on the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

The Clerk explained that a recent meeting had been inquorate due to insufficient members. Councillor Ashton confirmed that he was willing to remain in the group, although he was busy until November.

Councillors AGREED to appoint Councillor Ashton as a community representative.

b. the appointment of a Town Councillor on the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Councillor Rawe expressed an interest in the vacant position.

Councillors AGREED to appoint Councillor Rawe to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

088 **POLLING CARDS**

26/27 To consider whether the Council wishes to issue polling cards for the forthcoming by-election

It was noted that the cost of issuing poll cards and letters would be £3683.72.

Councillors AGREED to issue poll cards for the by-election.

089 **NATIONAL PAY SETTLEMENT 2026/27**

26/27 To note the conclusion of pay negotiations for the current financial year, backdated to 1 April 2026, for all employees on NJC pay scales.

The conclusion of pay negotiations for the current financial year was NOTED. It was noted that the agreed pay award for employees on NJC pay scales was 3.3%, backdated to 1 April 2026.

090 **VICTORIA HALL - DESIGNATED PREMISES SUPERVISOR**

26/27 To consider arrangements for the appointment of a new DPS, following the current DPS's intention to step down from the role on 31 March 2027

Councillors Best and Head left the room.

Councillors APPROVED the appointment of a replacement Designated Premises Supervisor (DPS) for Victoria Hall, subject to the proposed DPS obtaining a Personal Licence. The Administration Officer was authorised to submit the necessary application to vary the DPS once the Personal Licence had been obtained, in accordance with the recommendation set out in the report.

Councillors Best and Head returned to the room.

091 **DEVOLUTION**

26/27 To determine whether the Council wishes to continue to pursue the devolution of land at Langmead Place

Councillors noted that, following the availability of the Land Registry Title Plan, the land at Langmead Place was shown to include a number of additional small areas of land and grass verges which would be included in the devolution.

It was AGREED not to proceed with the devolution at this time. The Clerk confirmed that the devolution offer from Somerset Council remained open and could be revisited at any time.

092 **SOMERSET HERITAGE AT RISK REGISTER**

26/27 To review the register and consider any amendments

Councillors discussed the former Liberal Hall. The Town Clerk explained that this is not a listed building. The pillbox was also discussed, although it was noted that there are currently no concerns regarding decay or deterioration. Crewkerne Railway Station House was also discussed; however, this is located within the parish of Misterton.

It was AGREED to follow the recommendation in the report to:

- update the existing entry for Viney Bridge Mills;
- request the addition of 2 Market Street (former NatWest Bank), 24 Abbey Street (former St. Martin's School), The Royal Oak, Hermitage Street, 31 Market Street (former Gresham Books), and the individually listed chest tombs and headstones and churchyard walls at St. Bartholomew's Church to the Somerset Heritage At Risk Register; and
- request the inclusion of the Station House at Crewkerne Railway Station.

093 **BOOK HUNT**

26/27 To consider a request to support a community book hunt

Councillors AGREED to support the event but not to promote the organiser's business, as this could be seen as providing commercial promotion to an individual business. Delegated authority was given to the Town Clerk to agree the final locations for the event.

094 **ROOM HIRE**

26/27 To consider a request for free room hire at Victoria Hall for a pop-up orchestra on 14 November 2026.

The Mayor explained that this event would raise funds for the Poppy Appeal.

Councillors AGREED to waive the room hire charge for this event.

095 **TIME MANAGEMENT**

26/27 a. to consider quotations for staff time recording machines at three locations

b. to review and adopt a Time Recording and Attendance Policy

The Town Clerk explained that the proposed systems would cover all three buildings where staff work. They would also assist with fire safety at the Town Hall by providing a record of staff and volunteers present in the building at any given time.

Councillors AGREED to defer consideration of items a. and b. to a future meeting, where they could be discussed in a confidential session.

096 **STAFFING MATTERS**

26/27 a. To consider an amendment to the Staff Handbook

The updated section on Time Off in Lieu in the Staff Handbook was APPROVED.

b. To review and approve risk assessments for working in excessive heat

i. Office based staff

ii. Outdoors based staff

The risk assessments for both office based staff and outdoors based staff for working in excessive heat were APPROVED.

097 26/27 **TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING MINUTES:**

a) Reports from Town Council representatives to outside bodies
b) Amenities Committee: 13 July 2026
c) Planning & Highways Committee: 13 July 2026
d) Staffing Sub-Committee: 1 June 2026
e) Youth Service Steering Group: 5 August 2026

An outside body reports from the Crewkerne Heritage Centre Ltd. was circulated in advance. All minutes b) to e) were duly noted and AGREED**.**

098 26/27 **TO RECEIVE MATTERS OF REPORT (for information only)**

Councillors discussed the following matters:

- Planning applications being returned to meetings for minor amendments, and the potential for delays where extensions to consultation periods are requested.
- The management of Bincombe Beeches, with Councillor Maxwell requesting that this be reviewed.
- The memorial tree which had suffered fire damage. The Deputy Clerk confirmed that the incident had been reported to the Police.
- The damaged post at the zebra crossing on East Street, which had now been repaired. The need for improved signage was also raised.
- Faded H-bar road markings on Kithill. Councillors were advised to report these to Somerset Council via its online reporting system.
- Blocked gullies on Rose Lane. The Deputy Clerk agreed to report these to Somerset Council.

099 26/27 **NEXT MEETING**

Monday 26 October 2026, 18.45, Council Chamber, Town Hall, Market Square, Crewkerne.

The meeting closed at 19.51

Signed: ……

Dated: …….

TC21September2026