

Knutsford Town Council

Town Clerk: Adam Keppel-Green

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Minutes of the meeting of the Assets and Operations Committee held 22nd September 2025 in the Lower Council Chamber

A25/015 PRESENT

Councillors Coan, Dalzell, Hartley, Lowe and McCulloch

A Keppel-Green (*Town Clerk*)

A25/016 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs Gardiner (borough council business), Gray (personal business) and Wood (health)

A25/017 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No member declared an interest in any item on the agenda.

A25/018 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A resident spoke in relation to the proposed asset transfer of public open space, stating they felt the proposal was too big a project, that the finances presented were insufficiently thought through and that the sites are satisfactory maintained by Cheshire East Council, suggesting the council instead put £20,000 into a reserve to improve open spaces.

A resident commended the output of the Council Offices Improvement Plan working group in particular the proposal to reinstate the upper chamber and improving accessibility within the building; they further spoke in relation to 60 King Street expressing the hope that whatever decision is reached it restores the building and that ideally it restore the historic coffee house use. They also suggested the window be used for a temporary display.

A25/019 CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 30th June.

A25/020 REVIEW OF YEAR-TO-DATE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

The year to date income and expenditure report was noted.

It was **RESOLVED** to ratify expenditure of £5,770 in respect of asbestos removal from the cemetery garage, which it was noted was authorised by the Town Clerk following consultation with committee members due to the urgency of its removal.

A25/021 COUNCIL OFFICES IMPROVEMENT PLAN: INITIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The Town Clerk read comments submitted by Cllr Gray. The committee agreed the working group should look further at the proposed reconfiguration, expressing it was not convinced about the proposal to make the rear of the building the primary access.

The chairman adjourned the meeting to allow a member of the public to address the committee, the meeting was subsequently reconvened.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

- a) endorse the scope, objectives and direction set out by the working group
- b) make provision of £50,000 in the 2026/27 budget for roof works to the council offices
- c) recommend to Full Council that a budget of £10,000 be made available during the current financial year for the commissioning of professional support in developing the improvement plan
- d) authorise the Town Clerk to incur said expenditure (subject to Full Council providing the budget) in consultation with the working group

Cllr Hartley voted against the resolution.

A25/022 ASSET TRANSFERS

The chairman adjourned the meeting to allow a member of the public to address the committee, the meeting was subsequently reconvened.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

- a) Endorse the outlined success criteria for the asset transfer of the bus station and public open space
- b) Defer consideration of the transfer of public open space until the impact of Cheshire East Council's budget is known
- c) Make budgetary provision in the 2026/27 budget for the operation of the bus station

A25/023 STRATEGIC PLAN

The progress against strategic plan actions was noted. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the following action plan for 2026/27:

- a) Develop the weddings offer for the Tabley Hill Chapel
- b) Implementation of actions identified in asset management strategies
- c) Implementation of agreed management of 60 King Street
- d) Undertake roofing works to the Council Offices
- e) Secure planning permission for changes to Council Offices

with actions (c) and (d) as priorities.

A25/024 COMMITTEE BUDGET 2026/27

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the draft budget with the removal of the provisional budget for the transfer of public open spaces.

Cllr McCulloch abstained from voting.

A25/025 OUTSTANDING ACTIONS AND PROJECT UPDATES REPORT

The outstanding actions and project updates report was noted.

A25/026 COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

The committee workplan was noted.

A25/027 QUESTIONS TO THE TOWN CLERK

The Chairman responded to a question regarding an update on the medical centre, stating that no decisions would be taken by Cheshire East Council with regard to the vacant Bexton Court building until an impending announcement has been made.

A25/028 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next scheduled meeting will be held on 24th November 2025 at 7:30pm.

A25/029 60 KING STREET

It was **RESOLVED** to exclude the public and press on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

- a) Confirm the in principle agreement to dispose of the upper floors to facilitate renovation of the building
- b) Raise a number of specific questions with regard to the operational aspects of the proposal
- c) Require the more detailed information by 31st October with the matter to be referred to the November Full Council meeting.