CHIPPING NORTON TOWN COUNCIL
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Office Hours: Mon/Weds/Fri, 9am-5pm

Minutes of a Strategic Planning Committee meeting held on the 9th March 2026 at 6:30pm in the Council Chamber, Chipping Norton Town Hall

PRESENT: Mike Cahill (Chair), Sandra Coleman, Ian Finney, Jo Graves, Mark Walker, Mike Rowe, Tom Festa, Dom Rickard, Athos Ritsperis

ALSO PRESENT:
Katherine Jang, Town Clerk & CEO
Lou Arkley, Assets and Operations Officer
Paolo Oliveri, Maintenance Operative
2 Members of the public

SPC53	**Apologies for absence** None received
SPC54	**Declaration of interests** None received
SPC55	**Minutes** a. To approve the minutes of the Committee meeting held on the 19th January 2026 Amendment to add in Jo Graves' apologies for absence **RESOLVED:** That subject to the amendment above that the Chair signs the minutes of the meeting as an accurate record. b. To note the minutes of the Traffic Advisory Sub-Committee meeting held on the 29th January 2026 c. To note the minutes of the Climate and Ecology Working Group meeting held on the 26th January 2026
SPC56	**Public Participation** Members received comments from a member of the public regarding street naming schemes and conventions. West Oxfordshire District Council often consults the Town Council when new developments are planned for Chipping Norton, however, in their policy they cannot accept any names from residents unless they have been deceased for over 20 years. Cllr Coleman reported that she has had conversations with a number of officers from WODC and reported that they are trying to move away from naming streets after individual people. There is no way to ensure that this is a fair and equitable process and does not just represent a small number of people who have lived in the town for many years. It needs careful thought and a fair and transparent process. Cllr Festa also noted that women are underreported in the streets, which is why the most recent names of the Ascott Martyrs were chosen. Cllr Walker noted that this has been discussed a few times over the years. Members requested that a list is drawn up in conjunction with the Museum with robust reasoning set out.

SPC57	**Committee action plan** Members reviewed the ongoing committee action plan for the municipal year 2025-26.
SPC58	**Correspondence** No other correspondence was received
SPC59	**Chipping Norton Development** a. Members considered a response to the Local Government Reorganisation consultation from central government Discussion arose about the unitary council proposals. Cllr Festa raised concerns about having an Oxford-centric unitary council under the two councils proposal. The establishment of neighbourhood health committees and their ambiguity was also listed as a concern. Cllr Coleman noted that under the two council model, there would be more councillors from the rural districts than Oxford city, so the rural areas should be represented fairly. Cllr Walker noted that he is in favour of the two unitary model – as this is a government mandated scheme to improve efficiencies there are some economies of scale set out by central government. The two council model appears to be the option which fulfils this mandate and offers some economies of scale, which does not come with the smaller three council model. Cllr Ritsperis spoke in favour of the single unitary model, noting possible efficiencies with economies of scale. Cllr Finney proposed to move forward in favour of the two-council unitary model, seconded by Cllr Walker. Against – Cllr Ritsperis Abstained – Cllr Rickard **RESOLVED:** That the Council formally supports the two-council unitary model, and that Cllr Cahill is delegated to collate responses from Cllrs and submit a response on behalf of the Council. b. Members considered a list of priorities to inform S106 contributions in Chipping Norton Cllr Rickard noted that the full-size football pitch needs to be in considered including all required amenities such as changing facilities and toilets. Members agreed to amend this item. Cllr Coleman noted that the list could be fleshed out and that a further conversation with S106 leisure officers was to be held the following week with herself and the Town Clerk. Members agreed that this list should be circulated with S106 officers in advance of this meeting to be discussed. Members agreed that this list should be brought to Full Council for consideration and adoption.
SPC60	**Cemetery** a. Members received an update report on Worcester Road Cemetery and the Closed Churchyard at St Mary the Virgin Church from the Assets and Operations Officer. The maintenance team were due to start a spring clean up of the town centre and flowerbeds now that the cemetery is looking tidy and has been cut back. Some service disruptions have occurred to a fault with one of the vehicle batteries – Ford have investigated and have not found the reason for the failure.

	b. Members considered the Cemetery and memorials fees and charges for 2026-27 Members noted that the nil-charge rate for interments currently stands at only being allowed for under-12's. All agreed to charge the nil-rated banding to under-17's, with 18+ being charged as an adult. Members agreed to raise the charges by a standard 3.5%. Cllr Walker proposed to accept the amendments to the Cemetery and Memorials Fees and Charges 2026/27 as above, seconded by Cllr Coleman. All in favour, motion carried. **RESOLVED:** That the nil-charge rate for interments is raised to under-17's and that all other standard charges for cemetery and memorials fees are increased by 3.5%
SPC61	**Grounds Maintenance** Members received an update from the Assets and Operations Officer. The Council had a difficult situation with the e-transit, which lead to the vehicle being out-of-service for 3 weeks. The Assets and Operations Officer noted that this has to be monitored closely. The Maintenance Operatives are undertaking training every Monday morning and have completed Lone Working training. Cllr Finney noted that the Town Centre is looking very untidy – the Assets and Operations Officer noted that this is being done this week.
SPC62	**Planning Applications** 1. **APPLICATION NO:** 25/03167/HHD **PROPOSAL:** Conversion of garage to create additional living space **LOCATION:** 23 William Bliss Avenue Chipping Norton Oxfordshire No comment 2. **APPLICATION NO:** 26/00306/LBC **PROPOSAL:** Replace 3 first floor front metal sash windows with new wooden sashes. **LOCATION:** 4A West Street Chipping Norton Oxfordshire No comment 3. **APPLICATION NO:** 26/00125/FUL **PROPOSAL:** Installation of six twin electric vehicle (EV) charging towers along with associated landscaping to form sixteen parking bays to replace existing parking bays to the South facade of the Weaving Shed **LOCATION:** Former Weaving Shed Bliss Mill Chipping Norton Support Licencing application – The Beer Exchange: Comment – provision of parking is poor
SPC63	**Confidential Session** **RESOLVED:** That the Council resolves to move into a Confidential Session to discuss Separate Business, pursuant to s.1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. The public and press should leave the meeting during the consideration of item SPC64.
SPC64	**Pool Meadow**

	Members received a report from the Clerk outlining the project resurfacing the footpaths at Pool Meadow. The Town Clerk has met with 2 local contractors on site and spoken to one further local contractor via telephone – all contractors have raised concerns about the access to Pool Meadow and feasibility of dropping hardcore for paths. Pool Meadow has 3 entry points, but only one is suitable for vehicle access. The vehicle access is further restricted due to the narrow lane, which means that material must be delivered further up the lane close to St Mary's Church and then mini-dumper loaded to site, which increases expenditure. Therefore only one formal quote has been submitted, above the Council's earmarked reserve for the Pool Meadow project. The Clerk will work to resolve access issues on site and continue discussions with contractors, to be brought for consideration at the next Full Council meeting.
SPC65	**Date of Next Meeting** – Monday 6th July 2026

The Chair closed the meeting at 8:12pm.

SIGNED______________

DATE_________________