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HIGHWORTH SN6 7FB
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www.highworthtowncouncil.gov.uk

FULL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY 29TH SEPTEMBER 2026

Present:	
Councillors:	J Murphy (Chairman), M Apps, S Apps, T Draper, I Durnin-Duffy, F Freeman-Inglis, N Gardiner, P Heaton, A Houghton, N Key, K Saunders, S Weisinger, R Williams and P Wood
Town Clerk:	D Rose
Assistant Town Clerk:	C Haines
Representatives:	Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN)
Members of the Public:	6
Apologies:	V Manro (Away)

		Action
73	**DECLARATION OF INTERESTS:** None	
74	**PUBLIC QUESTION TIME & CORRESPONDENCE (Maximum 10 Minutes):** a. A member of the public raised the following matters: • Concerns about the deteriorating condition of footpaths in the High Street and Sheep Street. • A request for an update on when the proposed railings by the Podium steps would be installed. • A suggestion that signage be placed on the Podium directing visitors to the Post Office. • A request for an update regarding the closure of Coventry Building Society. • Concerns that the proposed interactive tourism information board would not be in keeping with the town or its proposed location. An alternative was suggested comprising a brief history of Highworth, together with QR codes linking visitors to practical information about public toilets, accommodation, dining and local walks. Verbal updates were provided at the meeting in response to the matters raised. The Town Clerk read the following correspondence:	

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	b. **Climate Emergency Briefing:** Correspondence from a resident proposing that the Environment & Leisure Committee be renamed the "Climate Emergency, Environment & Leisure Committee" and that Sustainable Highworth be adopted as a theme informing all Council decisions, rather than re-establishing the dormant working group. c. **Swindon Local Plan 2043** is now at Regulation 19 Publication Stage. d. **Safer Together – Free Online Training:** Information was shared about the availability of free online training. e. **Interactive Tourism Sign:** Correspondence from a local resident and business owner providing feedback on the proposed interactive tourism sign.	
75	**SCOTTISH AND SOUTHERN ELECTRICITIY NETWORKS (SSEN):** Councillors received a presentation from SSEN's Community Liaison Officer on the support available to residents during power outages and the Priority Services Register. The presentation outlined eligibility for the Register, including people who: • Are deaf or hard of hearing. • Have a disability. • Live with children under five year olds. • Are blind or partially sighted. • Have a chronic illness. • Use medical equipment or aids reliant on electricity. • Are aged 60 years old or over. • Temporarily require additional support. SSEN advised that calling "105" provides a free, 24-hour connection to the local electricity network operator to report power cuts or electrical hazards, or to seek advice.	
76	**MINUTES OF THE MEETING:** **RESOLVED** to confirm and sign the Minutes of the Extra Ordinary Full Council Meeting held on Tuesday 25th August 2026.	
77	**COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES:** a. Environment & Leisure – 9th June 2026 b. Planning – 17th July 2026 & Extra Ordinary Planning – 11th August 2026 The Committee Meeting Minutes were noted.	
78	**4-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN:** Councillors noted the update from the 4-Year Strategic Plan Working Party. **RESOLVED** by Councillors to adopt the identified Community Infrastructure priorities within Neighbourhood Plan 2 as the Council's priority projects while the Four-Year Strategic Plan is being developed, and to work towards their delivery for the benefit of Highworth residents, subject to appropriate funding, feasibility, permissions and available resources. These projects will receive particular consideration when planning and allocating Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds and will be incorporated into the Four-Year Strategic Plan where they remain consistent with the Council's agreed strategic priorities. Adoption of the priority list does not authorise expenditure on individual projects, each of which will require	

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	the appropriate Council approval. Voting was 11 in favour, 1 against and 1 abstention. The resolution was carried.	
79	**SIX-MONTH MORATORIUM ON NEW PROJECTS:** **RESOLVED** by Councillors to approve a seven-month moratorium on the acceptance or commencement of new projects, including the exceptions and staffing-capacity review arrangements set out in the report. Voting was unanimous and the Resolution was duly carried.	
80	**OUTSTANDING ACTIONS:** The outstanding actions were unable to be reviewed at this time.	
81	**ACCOUNTS:** The Accounts listed on pages FC.51 to FC.75 were accepted and the payments of Bills were duly authorised.	
82	**EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT:** Councillors noted the External Auditor's Report and Certificate for 2025/26, including the matters raised within the report.	
83	**INTERNAL AUDITOR 2026/2027:** **RESOLVED** by Councillors to re-appoint Auditing Solutions Ltd as the Council's Internal Auditor for 2026/27, confirmed their independence from the Council's decision-making and financial recording processes, and authorised the Town Clerk to sign the Letter of Engagement. Voting was unanimous and the resolution was carried.	
84	**3G CONTRACT:** Councillors noted the 3G Pitch project update report. Councillor J Murphy thanked the Town Clerk and her team for all the work involved in getting to this point, and stated what a great asset the 3G Pitch is for Highworth. **RESOLVED** by Councillors to authorise the Town Clerk to execute, on behalf of Highworth Town Council, the contract between the Council, S & C Slatter Ltd (sub-contractor) and FieldTurf Tarkett SAS (supplier). Voting was unanimous and the resolution was carried.	DR
85	**HALO FUNDING AGREEMENT:** Councillors received a verbal update from Councillor S Weisinger on the proposed funding agreement for Highworth Recreation Centre. VWV Solicitors had been instructed to advise, with an initial report expected by 5th October 2026 and the legal work estimated to take 8–12 weeks. Halo's proposed deadline of 16th October was considered unachievable, with signing anticipated in early December 2026. Confirmation was awaited from Halo on extending its existing contract until the end of December. Without an extension, Highworth Town Council (HTC) may need to instruct VWV to cease work. If agreed, the Town Clerk would arrange a meeting with the trustees and Halo to review the draft agreement once available.	DR
86	**YOUTH:**	

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	RESOLVED by Councillors to approve the continuation of the detached youth work project with Young Swindon and Wiltshire at an annual cost of £15,130.00 and the hire of the Highworth Town Junior Football Club (HTJFC) facility, including the associated hire charges, to support delivery of youth provision. The Town Clerk was authorised to sign the associated Service Level Agreement, and finalise and implement the necessary arrangements. Voting was unanimous and the resolution was carried.	DR
87	**INTERACTIVE TOURISM SIGN:** Councillors received a presentation and considered the report and recommendations from the Interactive Tourism Sign Working Party. *Councillor N Gardiner arrived 19.59pm* *Following the discussions, Councillor M Apps left the meeting.* **RESOLVED** by Councillors not to proceed with the proposed Interactive Tourism Sign project at a cost of up to £18,174.00 funded from the Community Infrastructure Levy receipts. Voting was 5 in favour, 4 against, 4 abstentions and the Resolution was duly carried. *Councillor S Apps left the meeting.*	
88	**MAYORAL ACTIVITIES UPDATE:** Councillors noted the Mayoral Activities update.	
89	**CONCERNS AND COMPLIMENTS:** Councillors noted the concerns and compliments received from May to 23rd September 2026.	
90	**CIL AND GRANT BIDS:** Councillors noted that no report has been received from the Highworth Jazz Festival following receipt of a grant. **RESOLVED** by Councillors to instruct the Town Clerk to write to Highworth Jazz Festival requesting repayment of the grant due to the failure to submit the required report. Voting was 11 in favour, 1 against and the Resolution was duly carried.	DR
91	**POLICIES TO BE APPROVED:** **RESOLVED** by Councillors to adopt the following policies: a. Accessibility Statement b. Cookie Policy c. Privacy Notice Voting was 11 in favour, 1 abstention and the Resolution was duly carried.	
92	**MEMBERS' BUSINESS:** <u>Councillor P Wood</u>: Asked whether the map on the Podium could be reconsidered before six months had elapsed, the Town Clerk advised an alternative paper map could be explored.	

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	Councillor P Heaton: Expressed concern about the cancellation of the meeting with Fairford but acknowledged the reasons in the current circumstances. Councillor S Weisinger: Advised that the Highworth Neighbourhood Plan 2 will be presented to Swindon Borough Council Full Council on 22nd October 2026 for approval to proceed to referendum. Councillor N Gardiner: Apologised for his late arrival due to attendance at another meeting and complimented the new 3G football pitch. He provided an update on aligning the B4000 weight restriction with the proposed highway design changes and advised that a temporary traffic order would be in place outside Warneford School during half term. Councillor T Draper: Reported difficulties making contact to arrange a meeting regarding Fairtrade and requested that the matter be included on a future agenda. Councillor K Saunders: Reported that the History Themed Market on 25 September 2026 had been successful and reminded Councillors of the Halloween Themed Market on Saturday 31 October 2026. Councillor I Durnin-Duffy: Thanked everyone who helped with the History Themed Market, noting the Town Clerk's participation in the stocks. He advised that a quiz would be held in February in aid of the Mayor's charity, The Roxi Foundation. Two teams had been reserved, with space for a third if required, and Councillors were asked to confirm their interest as soon as possible. Councillor J Murphy: Thanked everyone who assisted with the History Themed Market. She advised that Ghost Trails would take place on Saturday 31st October 2026 at 6.30pm and 8.00pm, with a maximum of 20 participants per trail and a minimum donation of £5 in aid of The Roxi Foundation, with thanks given to Councillor P Wood for providing the sessions.	DR
	MEETING CLOSED AT 21:04 PM	

Signed: …….. Date: …….

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