

MINUTES of the meeting of **ROYSTON TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Heritage Hall, Town Hall, Royston at 7.30pm on Monday 30 June 2025.

PRESENT: Councillor Haugh (Mayor) in the Chair
Councillors Adams, Antony, Beardwell, Brown, Freeman,
Harrison, Jani, Johnson, Lockett and Squire-Smith

In attendance: Paul Arnill MBE (Chief Officer)
John Rees (Office Manager)
Philip Truppin (CHRGs Consultant)

The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting and informed those present that the meeting was being recorded. The Chair also reminded Members to be mindful of the Climate and Biodiversity Emergency declared by Royston Town Council when making decisions on behalf of the Council.

13/26 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

There was none.

14/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies were received from Councillors Inwood and Langdon

15/26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS:

Members were advised to declare any interests at the commencement of the relevant item on the agenda. No requests for dispensations were received.

16/26 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Mayor detailed the engagements and events that he had attended:

- Royston Museum's Green Festival
- Bow Books Second Anniversary
- Studlands School Summer Fayre
- Twinning Committee AGM
- Buntingford Mayor's Civic Reception
- Royston Indian Society's Food Festival

17/26 MINUTES:

Members **RESOLVED** to approve as a correct record the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 12 May 2025 (minutes 01/26 to 12/26).
The minutes were signed by the Chair.

18/26 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES:

It was **RESOLVED** that the following minutes, which have not already been adopted as a correct record, be adopted into the workings of the Council:

- a) The meeting of the Finance Committee held on:
- 23 June 2025 (minutes 01/26 to 15/26)

19/26 NOTES OF WORKING PARTY MEETINGS

The Council noted the notes of the inquorate meeting of the Events Working party held on 27 April 2025

It was **RESOLVED** that the following minutes, which have not already been adopted as a correct record, be adopted into the workings of the Council

A) Events Working Party 1 April 2025

B) Climate & BioDiversity Working Party 5 June 2025, resolved subject to Cllr Beardwell being removed and Cllr Freeman added

It was also **AGREED** to record thanks to Rob Mills, Markets Manager, for the hard work he undertook to ensure that the May Fayre went ahead as planned

20/26 The following items were postponed until the following Full Council Meeting as the Internal Auditors had not yet submitted their reports :

Internal Audit Report

Accounts 2024-2025

Annual Return 2024-2025

Annual Report 2024-2025

The Chief Officer stated that we had asked for an extension for the submission of the necessary documents for approval for the Annual Return. This is because we have had great difficulty in finding everything. A lot of the files have been missing, and those that we have found have been in boxes tucked away underneath things. We have had a hard time trying to find the information. Both Julia and John have worked tirelessly going through many, many boxes and files to find what we need. We do have the vast majority now. There are a couple of things still outstanding, that we are dealing with at the moment. The intention is to finalise the remaining elements of the accounts and associated reports in the coming weeks. That's the next four weeks, allowing for the Internal Audit Report, annual accounts, and AGAR to be presented for Full Council approval of the next scheduled meeting on 21st July, which will be within the four-week time frame.

21/26 PRAYERS AT FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS

Members **RESOLVED** that the rota for prayers at Full Council meetings for the Civic year would be Royston Parish Church, Royston Evangelical Church and Trinity Life Church.

22/26 ROYSTON & DISTRICT TOWN TWINNING ASSOCIATION

Members **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Royston & District Town Twinning Association meetings held on 9 April 2025 and 24 May 2025 be received into the workings of the Council.

23/26 ROYSTON DAY CENTRE

The proposed motion was withdrawn

24/26 HIGH STREET PLANTERS

Members **AGREED** to pay £250 towards replanting and maintain the planters the High Street

25/26 SUB-COMMITTEE & WORKING PARTY VACANCIES

Members **AGREED** that, following the resignation of Cllr Rees, Cllr Adams be appointed to the Events Working Party and Cllr Johnson be appointed to the HR Committee.

26/26 ESTABLISHMENT OF A CROSS-PARTY WORKING PARTY

Members **AGREED** to the establishment of a cross-party working party to review the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and the three Standing Committees (Finance, Planning and GP & Highways), the working party to report its findings to a future meeting of Full Council. It was **AGREED** that Cllrs Haugh, Harrison, Brown and Lockett would comprise the Working Party and that the Chief Officer would take the Chair.

27/26 CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT

The Chief Officer gave the following report - we're all here for one reason, and that is to serve the people of Royston to the best of our ability. That common purpose must always be at the forefront, working collaboratively to make decisions that support the well-being and future of Royston. As chief Officer, it is my intention to restore balance and ensure that this council a price with mutual respect, professionalism, and a shared commitment to progress. Let's pull together as one team and focus on what truly matters and that's delivering positive outcomes for Royston.

It has been an eventful and productive start. It's my role as Chief Officer, and whilst there is much to be done, I am encouraged by the growing cohesion within the existing team. And this renewed sense of collaboration is laying the groundwork for strong, capable workforce, as we begin to rebuild and strengthen the operations at the town hall. Several key initiatives have already been progressed and ratified by the Finance Committee, including. The approval of an HR support package, the approval to upgrade the pay rate for the Finance Assistant role, the approval to recruit a full-time Caretaker and the approval of additional hanging baskets in the town centre in partnership with Royston Bid. In addition, I'm currently overseeing the following projects and improvements. We're looking at IT infrastructure, that's including the implementation of Outlook, Sharepoint and shared calendars, so we can all start sharing documents amongst ourselves. The commission of the Cinema Feasibility Study, staff training in first day the manual handling, the development of a key tracking system and the review of the security systems and CCTV, the review and implementation of a staff structure, the routine fire and security alarm testing, the introduction of booking systems for the Town Hall and Market Hill Rooms, and the approved staff induction procedures.

Rebuilding key relationships has also been a priority. I've begun re-engaging, Royston Bid, and other key stakeholders and businesses across town. Despite the challenges inherited from the previous administration, we are making strong and positive strides towards re-establishing Royston Town Council as a trusted, professional, and proactive presence in the community.

In response to a question about the Cinema feasibility study, the Chief Officer stated - David Lim is coming to see me soon to have a look around and start to his study. He expects to make probably three or four visits and will hopefully have something by around September.

Cllr Harrison asked about the proposed Pantomime to be held at the Town Hall, to which the Chief Officer replied – I met with CADS last week and they have, I believe, after 30 years decided to come back to the Town Hall for the Panto. There is a meeting to be had with CADS and Royston Bid, with regards to equipment, sound equipment, etc. We are in the process of setting that meeting up, they are looking to have a minimum two years, and hopefully, they can then extend that to coming back every year and do their Panto. There is a certain amount of money that they are willing to put into it, and hopefully us and the Bid will support that as well.

28/26 OTHER BUSINESS

Cllr Johnson thanked the Mayor – Cllr Luke Haugh – for his touching tribute to the late Gerry The Ice Cream Man at the previous day's Royston-In-Blue event, and his suggestion of a one-minute applause in Gerry's honour.

MEETING CLOSED AT 8.11PM

DATE OF NEXT MEETING : 21 JULY 2025

Signed: _____

Date _____

Chairman