

Cherwell District Council

Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 20 October 2025 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Dorothy Walker (Chair)
Councillor Nigel Simpson (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Tom Beckett
Councillor Rebecca Biegel
Councillor Gordon Blakeway
Councillor Chris Brant
Councillor Besmira Brasha
Councillor John Broad
Councillor Phil Chapman
Councillor Mark Cherry
Councillor Becky Clarke MBE
Councillor Jean Conway
Councillor Grace Conway-Murray
Councillor Gemma Coton
Councillor Nick Cotter
Councillor Dr Isabel Creed
Councillor Andrew Crichton
Councillor Dr Henry Elugwu
Councillor Donna Ford
Councillor Ian Harwood
Councillor David Hingley
Councillor Frank Ideh
Councillor Harry Knight
Councillor Simon Lytton
Councillor Kieron Mallon
Councillor Fiona Mawson
Councillor Lesley McLean
Councillor Zoe McLernon
Councillor Ian Middleton
Councillor Julian Nedelcu
Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke
Councillor Rob Pattenden
Councillor Chris Pruden
Councillor David Rogers
Councillor Les Sibley
Councillor Dr Kerrie Thornhill
Councillor Dom Vaitkus
Councillor Linda Ward
Councillor Amanda Watkins
Councillor John Willett
Councillor Douglas Webb
Councillor Barry Wood

Present Virtually (no voting rights):

Councillor Robert Parkinson

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Fiaz Ahmed

Councillor Nicholas Mawer

Councillor Lynne Parsons

Councillor Edward Fraser Reeves

Councillor Alisa Russell

Officers:

Gordon Stewart, Chief Executive

Ian Boll, Executive Director Place & Regeneration

Nicola Riley, Interim Executive Director Neighbourhood Services

Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance & S151 Officer

Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

33 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

34 **Communications**

Councillor Eddie Reeves

At the Chair's discretion, on behalf of Council, Councillor Kieron Mallon congratulated Councillor Reeves and his wife on the recent birth of their daughter.

Former Councillor Gordon Ross

On behalf of Council, the Chair paid tribute to former Councillor Gordon Ross who had passed away last month. Former Councillor Ross was a Labour Group member, who had represented the Banbury Ruscote ward from 2012 to 2014. Former Councillor Ross also represented the Banbury Ruscote ward on Banbury Town Council and served as Town Mayor in 2016/17.

Prior to becoming a Councillor, former Councillor Ross had worked for Banbury Borough Council and Bicester Urban District Council. He joined Cherwell District Council in 1968, remaining until he retired as Assistant Chief Environmental Health Officer in 1992.

Councillor Cherry and Councillor Mallon paid tribute to former Councillor Ross.

On behalf of Council, the Chairman extended condolences to former Councillor Ross' family.

Former Councillor Anthony Kempton

On behalf of Council, the Chair paid tribute to former Councillor Tony Kempton who had recently passed away. Former Councillor Kempton was a member of the Conservative Group who represented the Bicester East ward during the 2002-2003 municipal year. He served on North and South Area Planning Committees and Environment Select Committee.

Councillor Wood and Councillor Cotter paid tribute to former Councillor Kempton.

On behalf of Council, the Chairman extended condolences to former Councillor Kempton's family.

Council observed a minutes' silence.

Members' Allowances Survey

The Chair referred to the annual survey on Members' allowances. A paper copy had been given to all Members and a link to complete the survey online would be emailed.

All Members were encouraged to complete the survey as the feedback was valued by the Independent Remuneration Panel when considering its recommendations on Members' Allowances. The Panel's recommendations for the 2026/27 Scheme would be submitted to the Budget Council in February 2026.

Chair's Engagements

A copy of the events attended by the Chair or the Vice-Chair was published with the agenda.

The Chair highlighted the CEO Sleepout she had participated in with Councillors McLean and Brant on 9 October in Oxford. The event's aim was to raise awareness of the homelessness crisis across Oxfordshire, as well as funds for local homeless charities and projects. The page for donations was still currently open for anyone wishing to donate and she would share the link.

The Chair advised that her Charity lunch would take place on Sunday 30 November at Exeter Hall, Kidlington. Further details would be circulated in due course.

Meeting Etiquette

The Chair reminded Members that all requests to address the meeting should be through the Chair. Members should remain in their seat during items and, if needed, she would adjourn the meeting to allow for a comfort break at a suitable point.

Special Council

The Chair reminded Members that that a single item Special Council is being held on Monday 10 November. The next scheduled Council meeting was on Monday 15 December.

Members' Pigeon Holes

Members were reminded to check their pigeon hole and take any post.

35 **Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

36 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

37 **Minutes of Council**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

38 **Minutes**

a) Minutes of the Executive, Portfolio Holder Decisions and Executive Decisions made under Special Urgency

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Executive and Portfolio Holder decisions as set out in the Minute Book be received and that it be noted that since the last meeting of Council on 21 July 2025 no decisions have been taken by the Executive which were not included in the 28 day notice.

b) Minutes of Committees

Resolved

That the minutes of Committees as set out in the Minute Book be received.

39 **Questions**

a) Written Questions

There were no written questions.

b) Questions to the Leader of the Council

Questions were asked and answers received on the following issues:

Councillor Vaitkus: Rodent infestation levels in the Cherwell district

Councillor Rogers: Local Government Reform

Councillor Okeke: Community safety

Councillor Rogers: Cherwell Local Plan

Councillor Sibley: Christmas free parking in CDC operated car parks

Councillor Mallon: Banbury Borough Council Minute Books

c) Questions to Committee Chairs on the Minutes

There were no questions to Committee Chairs on the minutes of meetings.

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Review of Proportionality and Committee Membership

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report for Council to note the amendments to the constitution of political groups and amendments to the proportionality calculations and committee membership arising from a change to political Group membership.

Resolved

- (1) That the amended constitution of Political Groups be noted.
 - Liberal Democrat (17 Members, all Liberal Democrat party members)
 - Group Leader: Councillor David Hingley
 - Deputy Group Leader: Councillor Lesley McLean
 - Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance (13 Members, all Conservative Group members and 1 Independent Member, Councillor Ford)
 - Group Leader: Councillor Eddie Reeves
 - Deputy Group Leader: Councillor David Rogers
 - Labour (11 Members, all Labour and Labour & Co-operative party members)
 - Group Leader: Councillor Amanda Watkins
 - Deputy Group Leader: Councillor Andrew Crichton
 - Green and Independent Alliance (5 Members, comprising 4 Green members and 1 Independent Member, Councillor Broad)
 - Group Leader: Councillor Ian Middleton
 - Deputy Group Leader: Councillor Tom Beckett
 - Independent (2 Members, comprising 2 Independent Members)
 - Group Leader: Councillor Les Sibley

- (2) That the amended allocation of seats on committees that are subject to the political balance requirements (Table 1 of the report) be noted.

	Liberal Democrat Group	Labour Group	Cherwell Conservative & Independent Alliance	Green & Independent Alliance Group	Independent Group	Total
% entitlement	35.4%	22.9%	27.1%	10.4%	4.2%	100%
Accounts, Audit & Risk Committee	3	2	2	1	0	8
Appeals Panel	4	2	3	1	0	10
Budget Planning Committee	4	3	3	1	1	12
General Licensing Committee	5 (+1)	2 (-1)	4 (+1)	1	0 (-1)	12
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	4	3	3	1	1	12
Personnel Committee	4	3	3	1	1	12
Planning Committee	6	4	5	2	1	18
Standards Committee	3	2	2	1	0	8
Proportional Entitlement by Committee	32	22	24	9	5	92
Aggregate Entitlement	33	21	25	9	4	92
Adjustment Required	+1	-1	+1	0	-1	0

- (3) That the amended allocation of seats on committees that are not subject to the political balance requirements be noted.

	Liberal Democrat	Labour	Cherwell Conservative & Independent Alliance	Green & Independent Alliance	Independent	Total
Licensing Acts Committee	5	2	4	1	0	12

- (4) That the following Cherwell Conservative and Independent Alliance committee membership amendments be noted:

- Budget Planning Committee
 - Remove Councillor David Rogers
 - Add Councillor Zoe McLernon
- General Licensing Committee

- Add Councillor Douglas Webb
 - Licensing Acts Committee
 - Add Councillor Douglas Webb
 - Overview and Scrutiny Committee
 - Remove Councillor Zoe McLernon
 - Add Councillor David Rogers
 - Planning Committee
 - Add Councillor David Rogers as a full committee member (currently a named substitute, therefore creating a named substitute vacancy)
 - Add Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke as named substitute (vacancy arisen as per above)
- (5) That the following Labour Group committee membership amendments be noted:
- Appeals Panel
 - Add Councillor Mark Cherry
 - General Licensing Committee
 - Remove Councillor Andrew Crichton
 - Licensing Acts Committee
 - Remove Councillor Andrew Crichton
 - Overview & Scrutiny Committee
 - Add Councillor Dom Vaitkus
 - Planning Committee
 - Remove Councillor Rebecca Biegel as full committee member
 - Add Councillor Rebecca Biegel as a named substitute

Motions

The Chair advised that two motions had been submitted. In accordance with Procedure Rule 4.18, as the detail of both submitted motions fell within the remit of Executive, there would be no Council debate on the motions. The proposer of the motion would propose the motion and address Council, the seconder would confirm their seconding, and the Leader, Councillor Hingley, would respond to the motion. The motions would then be referred to Executive for consideration.

Motion One: Supporting young women's community action for safe public spaces

Councillor Dr Thornhill proposed and presented the following motion, which was duly seconded by Councillor Brasha. Councillor Hingley, Leader of the Council, responded to the motion.

"Young women in Cherwell District have reported long-standing concerns related to their right to be free and safe in public spaces, especially after dark. In 2025, local women have started organising, both formally and informally, to put a stop to gender-targeted harassment and assaults. Some emerging initiatives include: young women who work at night clubs organising to make

their industry better at preventing harassment and assault, young women setting up peer support networks in the community, and women seeking the creation of dedicated spaces in town centres for peer support for young women and LGBTQ+ residents and visitors.

Community action from young women leaders is commendable. It benefits all of society, and it deserves strong support from Councils.

Cherwell District Council recognises that our goal to promote a thriving night-time economy must be inclusive of young women's safety and freedom in these spaces. We will ensure young women leaders are consistently engaged as stakeholders in implementing this aspect of the 2042 Local Plan.

Cherwell District Council pledges to encourage local businesses and other private sector stakeholders to support and sponsor young women's community initiatives for safety.

Cherwell District Council will identify low cost out-of-use sites that are suitable for proposals from women-led initiatives for the community benefit, and ensure these sites are financially accessible for community-based initiatives."

Motion Two: Planning support for Town and Parish Councils

Councillor Rogers proposed and presented the following motion, which was duly seconded by Councillor McLernon. Councillor Hingley, Leader of the Council, responded to the motion.

"Council notes with concern the significant development pressures arising from recent announcements, including: the proposed new town at Heyford Park, the Puy du Fou theme park, large-scale warehousing at Baynard's Green, and the rail freight interchange.

Council recognises that these proposals will have far-reaching impacts on local communities, infrastructure, and the environment, and that Town and parish councils play a vital role in representing residents' views.

However, these councils often lack the specialist planning expertise and resources required to respond effectively to complex applications of this scale. Council therefore resolves:

1. To provide accessible planning-related advice and support to councils within the affected areas, ensuring they are equipped to understand, scrutinise, and respond to major development proposals.
2. To establish a dedicated point of contact within the Planning Department for councils seeking guidance on strategic developments.
3. To explore options for training sessions and briefing notes tailored to councils, delivered in advance of key planning consultations.

This Council believes that empowering town and parish councils with expert advice will strengthen democratic participation, improve the quality of local

input into the planning process, and help ensure that growth is managed responsibly and sustainably.

This officer-time could be funded from the unused heating fund which was in the Conservative budget amendment.”

The meeting ended at 7.23 pm

Chair:

Date: