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**RUGELEY TOWN COUNCIL**

**Town Clerk: Mrs Melanie Matthews   
E: clerk@rugeleytowncouncil.gov.uk**

**MINUTES**

Minutes of Full Council Meeting held at

Rugeley Town Council Chamber at **7.00pm on Wednesday 16th July 2025**.

**COUNCILLORS PRESENT:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Cllr P Ansell | A | Cllr K Hart | P | Cllr P Morrell | P |
| Cllr M Sheppard | P | Cllr D Jones | P | Cllr R Newman | P |
| Cllr W Clark | P | Cllr G Kirkham | P | Cllr J Parkes | A |
| Cllr D Foceac | P | Cllr J Leadbeater - Chair | P | Cllr C Rotaru | P |
| Cllr D Galaska | A | Cllr C Meeson | P | Cllr J Wilson | P |
| Cllr D Gaye | P | Cllr A Miller | P |  |  |

**In attendance:-** M Matthews – Town Clerk and RFO

Cllr Pendleton – County Councillor

4 members of public

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|  | Before the meeting commenced, the Chair read a statement confirming that the external HR investigation into the Clerk's conduct found no fault and recommended no disciplinary action. However, it advised the Council to reflect on its overall culture, with particular consideration given to the working environment surrounding the Clerk. |  |
| **107** | **Apologies**  Apologies noted for Cllrs Ansell and Parkes |  |
| **108** | **Declaration of personal & prejudicial interest or requests for dispensation on any item on the agenda**  Cllr Leadbeater – Item 124  **Proposal** to allow Cllr Leadbeater to stay in for item 124. |  |
| **109** | **Chair to close the meeting for public session**  A member of the public asked whether the Council Chamber is now a more inclusive space. Several councillors responded that they believed progress had been made and that the chamber was becoming more inclusive, although acknowledged there was still work to do.  A further query was raised regarding the security of the Rose Theatre website. It was confirmed that the website is secure, with more detailed information to be provided at the next meeting.  The Town Crier congratulated the Clerk and the Council on their ongoing hard work, stating that the positive impact is being recognised by many residents. He commended the Clerk’s insight, drive, and leadership.  A question was raised regarding progress with the former Clintons site. It was confirmed that the matter falls outside the remit of the Town Council but is understood to be under consideration by the District Council.  A concern was expressed about a perceived lack of notifications for upcoming events. The Council noted that steps are being taken to increase advertising through various channels, though this is an ongoing process and may take time to fully implement.  An update was requested on the proposed cycle store. It was reported that the original funding from Cannock Chase District Council had been withdrawn, and delays had occurred due to an eight-month wait for the land lease. The Council is now seeking quotes with a view to using Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding to progress the project. |  |
| **110** | **Chair to re-open the council meeting**  Reopened |  |
| **111** | **Minutes**  **Agreed** to confirm and accept the minutes of Full Council on 18th June 2025 as true and accurate record. |  |
| **112** | **Full Council Chair and Vice Chair reports**  The Chair welcomed the newly elected County Councillor, Jon Pendleton, to the meeting.  It has been a busy period of civic engagement. On 22nd June, the Chair attended the Lea Hall Summer Concert alongside Cllr Ansell. Although it was not as well attended as the Christmas concert, it remains a valuable community event, and councillors are encouraged to attend future performances where possible.  On 5th July, the Chair and Vice Chair attended the Cannock Chase District Civic Service, which proved to be a successful occasion and an opportunity to engage with fellow councillors from across the district.  On 13th July, the Chair attended the Stone Mayor’s Civic Service with the Town Crier. The event offered an excellent opportunity to build relationships and make valuable connections with representatives from other towns and parishes across the county.  During the Clerk’s recent annual leave, the Chair has remained in contact with the office to ensure everything has continued to run smoothly and appropriately.  The Vice Chair has also been in contact with several Chairs of other councils around the country to explore different practices and initiatives that may be beneficial to adopt in Rugeley. |  |
| **114** | **Clerk Report**  The Clerk reported that two in-house payroll runs have now been successfully completed. A funding bid has been submitted for the National Town Criers Competition. Thanks were extended to Lucia, who recently completed work experience with the Council, for her valuable contributions, particularly in enhancing Facebook marketing.  Following Lucy’s recent appraisal, one of the identified targets has been actioned with the organisation of a community drop-in event.  The Clerk has provided Mazars with all required supporting evidence for the external audit.  It was also noted that Lucy has successfully passed her Introduction to Local Council Administration (ILCA) qualification.  During the remainder of July and throughout August, the Clerk and staff will focus on completing the Council’s strategic plan for devolution, progressing any outstanding proposals, and finalising a presentation on Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding, which is currently around 80% complete. The Clerk also aims to progress towards completing her CiLCA qualification during this period.  The Clerk thanked local businesses for their support in installing a new statue in the Mindfulness Garden.  Finally, the Clerk addressed a query raised at the previous meeting regarding agenda wording, confirming that the use of the term "Proposal" is acceptable.**Bottom of Form** |  |
| **Finance** | | |
| **115** | **Bank Reconciliation**  **Agreed** to confirm and accept bank reconciliation for June |  |
| **116** | **Income and Expenditure**  **Agreed** to confirm and accept income and expenditure report for June  GK asked for staff salary comparison.  **Deferred** to confirm and accept progress to budget to date due to not understanding what was required. |  |
| **117** | **Payments**  **Agreed** to accept and process payments for July. |  |
| **Planning** | | |
| **118** | **Planning Applications within the last month**  Noted |  |
| **Health and Safety** | | |
| **119** | **Health and Safety report**  Noted and update that the Solar has now been fixed and turned back on. |  |
| **Policies** | | |
| **120** | **Update Policies**  **Deferred** to approve the Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy and Community Engagement Policy as per the policy tracker as councillors have not read documents. |  |
| **Rose Theatre Task and Finish Group** | | |
| **121** | **Chair to update**  The Chair was unable to attend the meeting due to ill health. The Vice Chair agreed to convene a meeting to address any urgent matters requiring attention in the interim. |  |
| **Community Engagement Task and Finish Group** | | |
| **122** | **Chair to update**  The Community Chair confirmed that the Connect event is fully organised. The Christmas lights are currently in production, and plans are progressing for a celebration to honour Kevin Lee, which is under consideration.  Invitations have been issued for both VJ Day and Remembrance Day commemorations.  The Cars in Town event is also being reviewed, with a full proposal and supporting information to be brought back to Council for consideration in due course. |  |
| **General Business** | | |
| **123** | **Town Crier National Championships**  The Clerk reported that she submitted a bid to host The Ancient and Honourable Guild of Town Criers National Championships, and it has been successfully awarded to Rugeley. The event will take place alongside the Charter Fair on Saturday, 6th June 2026.  It was noted that the Guild described Rugeley’s bid as the best application they have received in years, and another area has requested to use it as a template for future submissions. |  |
| **124** | **Town Crier Livery**  **Agreed with named vote as per Cllr Gaye request** to allow the Town Crier to purchase new livery within budget limit.  **For** Cllrs Hart, Jones, Clark, Miller, Meeson, Wilson, Morrell, Shepperd, Newman and Kirkham  **Abstain** Cllr Foceac  **Against** Cllr Gaye |  |
| **125** | **Heritage Steering Group**   1. **Deferred** Whether to allocate a budget to support the Hagley Fields drainage project and/or further work on the Heritage Trail until more information is available. 2. **Agreed** that Cllr Kirkham should take the lead role in attending the Heritage Steering Group and reporting back decisions or recommendations to Full Council. 3. **Agreed** the Town Council rooms may continue to be used free of charge for Heritage Steering Group meetings. 4. **Agreed** that future meetings must only take place when staff are available on site to ensure appropriate access and safeguarding. |  |
| **126** | **Canva Upgrade**  **Agreed** to approve the cost of upgrading to Canva Pro at £100 for a 12-month subscription, to support efficient and professional design output for council materials. |  |
| **127** | **Local Government Reorganisation for Staffordshire**  It was reported that a letter has been sent and a meeting requested with Cannock Chase District Council regarding the ongoing local government reorganisation.  The latest response from central government regarding the area’s proposal indicated that further detail and development is required.  In the background, work is ongoing to explore how certain district-held assets could gradually be transferred to the Town Council. A detailed plan will be presented to Council after the August break, enabling a more informed discussion and decision on how best to proceed.  The Clerk advised against rushing into proposals prematurely, noting that Staffordshire is in the second wave of reorganisation. There is an opportunity to learn from the experiences, both successes and mistakes of areas that have already transitioned to unitary authorities. |  |
| **128** | **Markee and Flooring Opportunity**  **Agreed with named vote as per Cllr Kirkham request** that the Town Council purchases the marquee and NEC matting from Lucy and Kevin at a total cost of £600 from the Christmas events budget. |  |
| **129** | **Date of next meeting**  The next meeting of the Town Council will be on Wednesday 3rd September 2025 at 7pm. |  |
| **Exclusion of the Public**  The public to be excluded because of the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 Section 2. | | |
| **Councillors please see next page for confidential minutes.** | | |
| **130** | **Declaration of personal & prejudicial interest or requests for dispensation on any item on the agenda**  Cllr Newman – Item 133 |  |
| **131** | **Minutes**  **Agreed** to confirm and accept the confidential minutes of Full Council on 18th June 2025 as true and accurate record | **Attached** |
| **132** | **Caretaker Vacancy**  **Agreed** on re advertise the caretaker position with set interview date and to also look into outsourcing options. |  |
|  | **Agreed** to remove standing orders on time limit for 15 minutes  Cllrs Kirkham, Gaye, Miller and Clark left the meeting |  |
| **133** | **Bar Lead**  **Agreed** that the Council authorises the Clerk and Operations Manager to develop and apply a suitability scoring matrix to assess the two candidates for the position, and that the position be offered to the candidate who receives the highest overall score. |  |
| **134** | **Croner Update**  Nothing more to report than was already said in main meeting |  |
| **End of Meeting** | | |