



Serving Our Community

ANNUAL MEETING

GREATER WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

22nd May 2025

IN ATTENDANCE

Chair - Councillor D Hales

Councillor Elgie, Councillor C Hales, Councillor Logan,

Councillor Savage, Councillor Smith,

Emma McCann, Town Clerk (TC)

3 residents

Meeting started at 6.40pm.

WELCOME

Prior to the start of the main Agenda, the outgoing 2024-2025 Town Mayor, Councillor D Hales welcomed everyone to Greater Wellington Town Council's Annual Meeting 2025.

Councillor D Hales then stood down.

1-2526 APPOINTMENT OF TOWN MAYOR FOR THE YEAR 2025-2026

The TC asked for nominations for the position of Town Mayor.

Councillor Smith nominated Councillor D Hales

Councillor Savage seconded the nomination.

No other nominations received.

Resolved 1. That Councillor D Hales is appointed as Town Mayor for the year 2025-2026.

i. Declaration of Acceptance of office by the Town Mayor

After reading the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, Councillor D Hales passed the signed and dated forms to the TC who witnessed the signature.

2-2526 APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR FOR THE YEAR 2025-2026

Councillor Savage nominated Councillor Smith.

Councillor C Hales seconded the nomination.

No other nominations received.

Resolved 1. That Councillor Smith is appointed as Deputy Town Mayor for the year 2025-2026.

i. Declaration of Acceptance of office by the Deputy Town Mayor

After reading the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, Councillor Smith passed the signed and dated forms to the TC who witnessed the signature.

Signed by the Chair _____

Dated: 12th June 2025

- 3-2526 DECLARATIONS OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**
It is confirmed that all councillors had signed their Declarations of Acceptance of Office in advance of this meeting.
- 4-2526 NOTICE OF MEETING**
It was confirmed that a Public Notice of the Meeting has been given in accordance with Schedule 12, paragraph 10(2) of the LGA 1972.
- 5-2526 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
Apologies were received from Councillor Currah and Councillor Jackson.
Proposed Councillor Smith
Seconded Councillor Elgie
- 6-2526 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
None received.
- 7-2526 MEMBERS DISPENSATIONS**
None requested.
- 8-2526 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON THE 21ST MAY 2024**
(For Information Only)
In order to facilitate business, the minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 21st May 2024 had been ratified at the next available meeting on the 13th June 2024.
- 9-2526 ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 13TH MARCH 2025**
- i. Matters arising**
None
 - ii. To approve the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 13th March 2025**
The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on the 9th April 2024, as written, and circulated were agreed as a true record.
Proposed Councillor Savage
Seconded Councillor C Hales
 - iii. Chair of the Council to sign the minutes of the 13th March 2025 as a true record**
Councillor D Hales signed the minutes as a true record.
- 10-2526 STRUCTURE, COMPOSITION AND DELEGATED POWERS OF THE COUNCIL**
- i. To approve Steering Groups as and when required**
The TC said this approach had been effective in previous years and suggested it continues.
This was agreed.
Proposed Councillor Elgie
Seconded Councillor Savage
Resolved 1. To establish Steering Groups as and when required to develop projects.

Signed by the Chair _____
Dated: 12th June 2025

ii. To appoint staffing sub-committee members

Resolved 1. To appoint staffing sub-committee members. Consisting of Councillor Elgie, Councillor D Hales, Councillor C Hales, Councillor Savage and Councillor Smith.

The committee will make recommendations to full Council following consultations.

Proposed Councillor Elgie

Seconded Councillor Savage

Resolved 1. To appoint staffing sub-committee members as listed above who will make recommendations to full council for approval.

iii. To approve to appoint external board representatives as and when required

This has proved effective when approving steering groups, so it is suggested to do the same for external board representatives.

This was approved.

Proposed Councillor Smith

Seconded Councillor C Hales

Resolved 1. To appoint external board representatives as and when required.

11-2526

DRAFT ACCOUNTS 2024-2025 OF GREATER WILLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL (APPENDIX 1)

i. To receive the Internal Auditors Report

Internal Auditor, Geoff Siddle was welcomed to the meeting, and he reported as follows;

This short report highlights some of the major of expenditure shown in the financial reports.

Year on year comparisons of income and expenditure in total are difficult as the council embarks on different projects and activities.

1) Total income was over £100K higher than the previous year with £75K from UKSPF grants and £29K VAT refund

2) UKSPF expenditure was £49,865 offset by grant income of £75,285 with the remaining £25K being spent early April 2025

3) As in previous years the council provided Christmas lighting at a cost of £15,585 which was slightly higher than the previous year.

4) The accounts show expenditure of £13,926 relating to the Family Fun Day 2024.

5) Payroll was £13K lower than the previous year due to reduction in sick pay (HC)

6) Little Brass Bash expenditure of £2,173 was offset by £1,964 in income

7) Increase in allotment income included a £4K grant for renewal of fencing.

A lot of money has gone through the Council for 2024/2025. The projects and activities are different year on year. Some costs have been committed in 2024/2025 but will clear in April/May 2025.

This report shows the amount of work going on within the Council and community.

Councillor Smith thanked Geoff for all the work in completing the internal audit.

Signed by the Chair _____

Dated: 12th June 2025

ii. To approve the draft accounts 2024-2025

The information contained in the draft accounts is summarised in the Annual Return and will be submitted as part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

The TC said the accounts were a true record of income and expenditure and recommended that the accounts are approved.

This was agreed.

Proposed Councillor C Hales

Seconded Councillor Smith

Resolved 1. That the draft accounts represent a true record of income and expenditure.

12-2526

**CONSIDERATION OF THE GREATER WILLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL
2024/2025 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN**

i. Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2024/2025 (Appendix 2)

The TC said it is the Council's responsibility to ensure that there is a sound system of internal control when dealing with financial matters and the arrangements for the preparation of the accounting statements included within the Annual Governance and Accountability Return. AGAR.

She can confirm that the council has taken measures to address items 1 – 9 within the Annual Governance Statement

This was approved.

Proposed by Councillor Smith

Seconded by Councillor Logan

Resolved 1. that the Annual Governance Statement supports the council's Financial Regulations policy.

ii. Section 1 Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/2025 (Appendix 3)

The TC said during the financial year ended 31 March 2025, the Council's internal auditor acted independently, and based on an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2024/2025 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. Based on the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in the table.

Listed are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions.

With reference to Items A – M and O in all significant respects, the control objectives have been achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority. Item N was noted that to comply with the Regulations, the Council will make sure to comply with this objective of providing the electors with 30 working days to inspect the accounts.

This was approved.

Proposed Councillor Logan

Seconded Councillor Elgie

Resolved 1. That the annual internal audit evidence that the required controls and procedures are in place to ensure effective financial management for 2024-2025 and that we comply fully with the Regulations going forward.

Signed by the Chair _____

Dated: 12th June 2025

Resolved 2. That the Annual Return submission process is implemented in accordance with timescale agreed with the auditor Mazars.

The submission of AGAR to Mazars is the 30th June 2025. The deadline by which the unaudited AGAR must be approved and published is also 30th June 2025.

The financial information will be available to residents for the exercise of their public rights, by appointment to commence on the 17th June 2025 for thirty working days which will end on 28th July 2025. A public notice will be published to advertise the period of public rights, including the submitted AGAR at least one day before the commencement of the 30 day period which will be the 16th June 2025.

Resolved 3. The deadline for publishing audited accounts and Notice of Conclusion of Audit is 30th September 2025.

Resolved 4. Unaudited Accounts are approved at this meeting and published within the Annual Report.

Resolved 5. Final audited accounts will be added to the Council Website.

iii. Section 2 Accounting Statements 2024/2025 (Appendix 4)

The TC said that for the year ended 31 March 2025 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

This was approved.

Proposed by Councillor Logan

Seconded by Councillor D Hales

13-2526 FINANCIAL MATTERS

i. To endorse the Financial Regulations Annual Review (Appendix 5)

The Financial Regulations Policy has been made available to Members and no comments received.

Financial Regulations are a key document which all councils should have. They govern, set out and detail, how your council conducts, controls and manages its financial affairs.

NALC released a new updated version of the Financial Regulations last year and a couple of amendments have been made since. These are highlighted in red in the document that was circulated.

Resolved 1. That the Financial Regulations amendments are approved.

Proposed by Councillor Smith

Seconded by Councillor Elgie

ii. To review and agree cheque signatories

A review of the banking arrangements has been undertaken following the elections.

Resolved 1. That the cheque signatories be updated. The following will be cheque signatories; Emma McCann TC, Councillor D Hales, Councillor Smith, Councillor Elgie

Proposed Councillor C Hales

Seconded Councillor Savage

Resolved 2. To continue with the two signatories per cheque rule.

Signed by the Chair _____

Dated: 12th June 2025

iii. To appoint an Internal Auditor

Geoff Siddle has been the Internal Auditor for several years and provides a robust financial service.

The TC proposed that he is retained for 2025/2026.

Proposed by Councillor Logan

Seconded by Councillor Savage

Resolved 1. That Geoff Siddle continues to be the Town Council's Internal Auditor.

14-2526 THE TOWN CLERK'S/RFO DELEGATED RESPONSIBILITIES AND POWERS

i. To approve the RFO's delegated powers to update the insurance policies as and when required

Insurance Policies need to be reviewed on a regular basis for the effective management of the Council.

Resolved 1. The TC asked for approval to update the insurance policies when necessary.

Proposed by Councillor Smith

Seconded by Councillor Logan

ii. To review the RFO's delegated powers of expenditure

Previously, the delegated powers of expenditure was agreed at £500.

Following a review, it is suggested that this increase to £1,000.

Resolved 1. To increase the RFO's delegated powers of expenditure to £1,000.

Resolved 2. To make this amendment to the Financial Regulations Policy.

Proposed Councillor C Hales

Seconded Councillor Logan

15-2526 TO APPROVE THE ANNUAL RISK ASSESMENT REPORT (Appendix 6)

The TC reported on the Risk Management Statement which is reviewed on an annual basis to inform the council's insurance policy. The Insurance Policy is renewed on 1st June each year. The Council uses Zurich Municipal for insurance cover.

Last years' insurance cover was £2,442.70. This year's quotation has been received and is £2,112.37. This includes a renewal quote from last year of £2,032.49 and an adjustment premium of £79.88. This is due to adding new furniture, equipment and replacement costs of the new ground floor kitchen to a total of around £19,000.

The TC has contacted other insurers for quotes. None received yet. It is suggested to continue with Zurich Municipal.

This was agreed.

Proposed by Councillor Savage

Seconded by Councillor Elgie

Resolved 1. That the Risk Management Statement provides an accurate and appropriate assessment of risk.

Resolved 2. That Zurich Municipal provide insurance for 2025-2026.

16-2526 TO APPROVE THE STANDING ORDERS ANNUAL REVIEW (Appendix 7)

Standing Orders have been made available to members and no comments have been received.

Signed by the Chair _____

Dated: 12th June 2025

Members are requested to endorse the Standing Orders Policy in May each year.

Proposed by Councillor Smith

Seconded by Councillor Elgie

Resolved 1. Unless affected by changes in statutory powers that the Standing Orders will continue to be subject to an annual review.

Resolved 2. The Standing Orders Annual Review is complete, and the amendments approved.

17-2526 TO APPROVE COUNCIL POLICIES

The TC said that the annual audit and review of council policies had been undertaken. Councillors are able to access these documents at any time and they were made available prior to the meeting. They are also available on the website.

- Allotment Policy
- Anti-fraud and Corruption
- Code of Conduct
- Community Engagement
- Complaints Procedure
- Councillor and Employee Expenses
- Diversity Statement
- Equal Opportunities
- Freedom of Information Charging Policy
- GDPR Data Retention and Disposal Policy
- GDPR Information and Data Protection Policy
- GDPR Privacy Policy
- Policy on Reserves and Restricted Funds
- Protocol for member/officer relations
- Publication Scheme
- Safeguarding Policy
- Public Participation Policy

Resolved1. To approve the annual review of the policies identified and as described above.

Proposed by Councillor Logan

Seconded by Councillor C Hales

18-2526 TO APPROVE THE ANNUAL REPORT

The Annual Report was circulated prior to the meeting. No comments were received.

Proposed Councillor Elgie

Seconded Councillor Smith

Resolved 1. That the 2024/2025 Annual Report is approved.

19-2526 TO APPROVE THE SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR 2025/2026 (Appendix 9)

Council meetings usually take place on the second Thursday of the month and does not clash with any other meetings held at the office. The schedule of meeting dates had been circulated prior to the meeting. No comments received.

Proposed by Councillor Logan

Signed by the Chair _____

Dated: 12th June 2025

Seconded by Councillor Savage

Resolved 1. To meet the second Thursday of the month.

Resolved 2. To have a recess in January and August.

Resolved 3. To display the schedule in public spaces

20-2526

GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE

The General Power of Competence (GPC) was introduced by the Localism Act 2011 and took effect in February 2012. In simple terms, it gives councils the power to do anything an individual can do provided it is not prohibited by other legislation. It replaces the Power of Well Being in England.

The freedom of GPC is available to local councils that meet two criteria for eligibility (Localism Act 2011 s8) set out in a statutory instrument known as the parish councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012 that came into force in April 2012.

There are two criteria that must be met to meet the eligibility.

One is that at least two thirds of the members have been elected. At this meeting, the Council has 8 elected members. The other criteria is that the Town Clerk is suitably qualified. Our Town Clerk is qualified by passing the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA).

Resolved 1. The Council is eligible and has resolved to adopt the GPC.

Proposed Councillor Smith

Seconded Councillor D Hales

21-2526

TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON ONGOING COUNCIL BUSINESS

i. Future Events

Miners Gala – Saturday 12th July 2025

Discussions regarding the upcoming Miners Gala now that we have the banner in the office. This has been insured and will be covered for up to 4 outings a year. The banner has been carried in the past by family who have a history with mining.

Little Brass Bash – Wednesday 16th July 2025

The event was successful last year and well attended despite the wet weather.

Family Fun Day – Saturday 16th August 2025

A donation has been received from William Clark Shows towards this years fun day. The TC is currently working on Funding applications. Already agreed with the Fun Experts for the Giant Inflatables, Cavepod, North East Play Bus and Blackberry Donkeys.

Remembrance Sunday – Sunday 9th November 2025

A well-attended Service at the War Memorial. We will be looking at the same procedures as last year as it worked well.

Remembrance Day – Tuesday 11th November 2025

A short commemoration service at the George Burdon McKean Memorial site.

Pantomime – Sleeping Beauty – Saturday 15th November 2025

This will be held at Willington WMC again.

Civic Carol Service and Christmas Tree Switch On – Thursday 27th November 2025

This year it will be held at Our Lady and St Thomas RC Church

Signed by the Chair _____

Dated: 12th June 2025

ii. Councillor Training

The TC circulated a list of Training and dates to all Councillors. If Councillors would like to attend any of them, email the TC and she will book places.

22-2526

PLANNING

i. To consider valid planning applications that have been received

- **DM/25/00442/FPA** - Land To The East Of 169 New Row, Page Bank - Change of use from agricultural land to residential curtilage including the construction of a triple garage, driveway and 1.2m high post and rail fence and hedge
Standard Consultation Expiry Date - Mon 02 Jun 2025
 - **DM/25/00499/FPA** - 42 Armstrong Drive, Willington - Retrospective planning permission for the replacement of a 2m high fence and for 0.7m raised decking with a 1m glass safety rail
Approved 09 May 2025 - BNG Not Required
 - **DM/25/00761/FPA** - 14 Institute Street, Oakenshaw - Single storey porch and heat pump in rear yard (Retrospective)
Approved 30 Apr 2025 - BNG Not Required
 - **DM/25/00849/FPA** - Stockley Lodge, Stockley Lane, Oakenshaw - First floor extension with rooflights, Juliette balcony to gable.
Approved 14 May 2025 – BNG Not Required
 - **DM/25/00992/FPA** - Land Between Elm Close And Willington South Dene, Hunwick Lane, Sunnybrow - Erection of 142no. dwellings, provision of access, landscaping and ancillary works
This application has received many concerns from residents. We agreed that the TC will collect all residents and councillors comments by Wednesday 28th May 2025 in preparation for submitted a planning objection by Monday 2nd June 2025.
 - **DM/25/01039/FPA** - Land Adjacent To 42 Denewood Close, Willington - Change of use of land from open space to domestic and enclosure with 1.85m timber fencing to side (Retrospective)
Standard Consultation Expiry Date - 02 Jun 2025
 - **DM/25/01242/DRC** - Land North Of Croft Way, Low Willington Industrial Estate, Willington - Discharge of conditions 3 (Construction Management Plan) and 4 (Habitat Creation and Management Plan) pursuant to DM/23/00966/FPA
Standard Consultation Expiry Date - 02 Jun 2025
 - **DM/25/01276/DRC** - Brancepeth Colliery Reclamation Site, East Of Dunelm Industrial Estate, Willington - Discharge of Condition 6 (Construction Management Plan) and 7 (Biodiversity Gain Plan) pursuant to planning permission DM/25/00104/FPA
Standard Consultation Expiry Date - 10 Jun 2025
- #### ii. To acknowledge any decisions on previous planning applications received
- **DM/24/02750/FPA** - 6 Luxmoore Avenue Willington - Side and frontage extension
Approved 03/04/2025 – BNG Not Required
 - **DM/25/00498/FPA** - Stockley View Stockley Lane - Field shelter and battery storage building with solar panel roof

Signed by the Chair _____

Dated: 12th June 2025

Decided 17/04/2025 - Refused

- DM/25/00537/PNA - Tanners Hall Farm Stockley Lane Oakenshaw -
Erection of steel portal frame building for the storage of grain/ feed straw
and machinery

Decided 21/03/2025 - Prior Approval Not Required

23-2526

CO-OPTION

i. To review and adopt the Co-Option Policy (Appendix 10)

Discussions regarding the draft Policy resulted in some amendments to be made. These included removing Appendix A (Criteria) and to change Policy number 6 from Meeting to Informal Chat.

ii. To agree to advertise a Casual Vacancy for the three Town Councillors at Greater Willington Town Council

It was agreed to advertise the vacancies week commencing 2nd June 2025 for a two week period.

iii. To agree the timetable of events in the Co-option Process

The co-option process will be implemented using the co-option policy and be advertised for two weeks. If no or few applications are received, we will then advertise again for a period of one month.

Proposed Councillor Savage

Seconded Councillor Logan

24-2526

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Ordinary Meeting – 12th June 2025

Annual Meeting – 21st May 2026

Councillor D Hales thanked the residents for attending the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 7.50pm.

Signed by the Chair _____

Dated: 12th June 2025