



Serving Our Community

ANNUAL MEETING

GREATER WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

21st May 2026

IN ATTENDANCE

Chair - Councillor D Hales

Councillors Elgie, C Hales, L Jackson, S Jackson

Logan, Savage, Smith,

Emma McCann, Town Clerk (TC)

WELCOME

Prior to the start of the main Agenda, the outgoing 2025-2026 Town Mayor, Councillor D Hales welcomed everyone to Greater Wellington Town Council's Annual Meeting 2026. Councillor D Hales then stood down.

1-2627 APPOINTMENT OF TOWN MAYOR FOR THE YEAR 2026-2027

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

Councillor Smith nominated Councillor D Hales.

Councillor L Jackson seconded the nomination.

No other nominations received.

Resolved 1. That Councillor D Hales is appointed as Town Mayor for the year 2026-2027.

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.

Councillor D Hales resumed chairing the meeting.

2-2627 APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR FOR THE YEAR 2026-2027

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 2026-2027.

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.

3-2627 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.

Signed by the Chair _____

Dated: 11th June 2026

- 4-2627 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
Apologies were received from Councillor Hall, County Councillor C Hunt and Internal Auditor G Siddle.
Proposed Councillor Smith
Seconded Councillor Guthrie
- 5-2627 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
None received.
- 6-2627 MEMBERS DISPENSATIONS**
None requested.
- 7-2627 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON 22ND MAY 2025**
(For Information Only)
In order to facilitate business, the minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 22nd May 2025 had been ratified at the next available meeting on the 12th June 2025.
- 8-2627 ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 9TH APRIL 2026**
- i. Matters arising**
None
 - ii. To approve the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 9th April 2026**
The minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on the 9th April 2026, as written, and circulated were agreed as a true record.
Proposed Councillor Guthrie
Seconded Councillor L Jackson
 - iii. Chair of the Council to sign the minutes of the 9th April 2026 as a true record**
Councillor D Hales signed the minutes as a true record.
- 9-2627 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 Smith
Seconded Councillor Savage
Resolved 1. To establish Steering Groups as and when required to develop projects.
 - ii. To appoint staffing sub-committee members**
This sub-committee also covers any HR matters so it has been renamed to HR sub-committee.
Resolved 1. To appoint HR sub-committee members. Consisting of Councillors D Hales, C Hales, Smith, S Jackson, L Jackson.
The committee will make recommendations to full Council following consultations.
Proposed Councillor Smith
Seconded Councillor Logan

Signed by the Chair _____
Dated: 11th June 2026

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 Guthrie

Seconded Councillor L Jackson

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

10-2627 DRAFT ACCOUNTS 2024-2025 OF GREATER WILLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL (APPENDIX 1)

i. To receive the Internal Auditors Report

Following his submission of apologies, the TC gave the Internal Auditors Report, and reported as follows;

The following short report highlights some of the major items in the 2026 financial statements.

Year on year comparisons can be difficult as the council embarks on different projects.

1) Total income was over £82K Lower than the previous year due to £75K from UKSPF grants in 2025. VAT of £16748 was recovered.

2) UKSPF expenditure was £25929 offset by grant income received the previous year.

3) As in previous years the council provided Christmas lighting at a cost of £12672. £15585 in the previous year.

4) The accounts show expenditure of £16692 relating to the Family Fun Day 2025 with associated income of £3311.

5) Payroll was £13k lower than the previous year due to having one member of staff.

6) GWTC expenditure on the Little Brass Bash was £3161.

Proposed Councillor S Jackson

Seconded Councillor Logan

ii. To approve the draft accounts 2025-2026

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.

11-2627 CONSIDERATION OF THE GREATER WILLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL 2024/2025 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN

i. Section 1 Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/2026 (Appendix 3)

The TC said during the financial year ended 31 March 2026, the Councils internal auditor acted independently, and based on an assessment of risk,

Signed by the Chair _____

Dated: 11th June 2026

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 2025/2026 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 Smith

Seconded Councillor Guthrie

Resolved 1. That the annual internal audit evidence that the required controls and procedures are in place to ensure effective financial management for 2025-2026 and that we comply fully with the Regulations going forward.

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 2026. The deadline by which the unaudited AGAR must be approved and published is also 30th June 2026.

The financial information will be available to residents for the exercise of their public rights, by appointment for thirty working days. 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 working day period.

Resolved 3. The deadline for publishing audited accounts and Notice of Conclusion of Audit is 30th September 2026.

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.

ii. Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2024/2025 (Appendix 4)

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 C Hales

Seconded by Councillor Savage

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

Signed by the Chair _____

Dated: 11th June 2026

iii. Section 2 Accounting Statements 2025/2026 (Appendix 5)

The TC said that for the year ended 31 March 2026 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 L Jackson

12-2627

FINANCIAL MATTERS

i. To endorse the Financial Regulations Annual Review (Appendix 6)

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.

Resolved 1. That the Financial Regulations as circulated are approved.

Proposed by Councillor Guthrie

Seconded by Councillor C Hales

ii. To review and agree cheque signatories

Current cheque signatories are Emma McCann TC, Councillors D Hales, Smith and Elgie.

Proposed Councillor S Jackson

Seconded Councillor Logan

Resolved 1. That the cheque signatories remain the same.

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

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 2026/2027.

Proposed by Councillor S Jackson

Seconded by Councillor C Hales

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

13-2627

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 L Jackson

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

Previously, the delegated powers of expenditure was increased to £1,000.

Signed by the Chair _____

Dated: 11th June 2026

Resolved 1. To increase the RFO's delegated powers of expenditure to remain the same.

Proposed Councillor Guthrie

Seconded Councillor Logan

14-2627

TO APPROVE THE ANNUAL RISK ASSESMENT REPORT (Appendix 7)

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 with Zurich Municipal for £2,112.37. The costs for this year is £2,763.81.

Other insurers have been contacted for quotes. None received yet.

Proposed by Councillor L Jackson

Seconded by Councillor Guthrie

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

Resolved 2. To contact Zurich Municipal to see if there is scope for a reduced quote due to the number of years with the company and no claims.

Resolved 3. For the Town Clerk to approve the insurance following this review.

15-2627

TO APPROVE THE STANDING ORDERS ANNUAL REVIEW (Appendix 7)

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

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

Proposed by Councillor Guthrie

Seconded by Councillor C Hales

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.

16-2627

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
- Co-Option Policy
- 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

Signed by the Chair _____

Dated: 11th June 2026

- GDPR Privacy Policy
- Policy on Reserves and Restricted Funds
- Protocol for member/officer relations
- Publication Scheme
- Public Participation Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

Proposed by Councillor Smith

Seconded by Councillor Savage

Resolved 1. To approve the annual review of the policies identified and as described above with the exception of the Allotment Policy.

Resolved 2. To review the Allotment Policy and update and approve at the next meeting in June 2026.

Resolved 3. The HR Policies are to go to DCC as agreed in previous meetings. Then they will come to the Town Council for approval/adopting.

17-2627 TO APPROVE THE ANNUAL REPORT

The Annual Report was circulated prior to the meeting. No comments were received. The Chairmans Report had been read in the Annual Parish Meeting prior to this meeting.

Proposed Councillor Guthrie

Seconded Councillor L Jackson

Resolved 1. That the 2025/2026 Annual Report is approved.

18-2627 TO APPROVE THE SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR 2026/2027 (Appendix 10)

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 C Hales

Seconded by Councillor S Jackson

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

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

Resolved 3. To hold the Annual Meeting on the third Thursday in May

Resolved 4. To display the schedule in public spaces

19-2627 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON ONGOING COUNCIL BUSINESS

i. Future Events

Miners Gala – Saturday 11th July 2026

Big Brass Bash – Wednesday 15th July 2026 6pm – 9pm

Big Brass Bash this year with five bands and Aycliffe and Brancepeth Brass Band. The banner and publicity material has been delivered and will be displayed.

Family Fun Day – Saturday 15th August 2026 10am – 4pm

Halloween Disco – Saturday 30th October 2026 1.30pm – 3.30pm

Remembrance Sunday – Sunday 8th November 2026

Armistice Day – Wednesday 11th November 2026

Pantomime – Jack and the Beanstalk – Saturday 14th November 2026 at 3pm.

This will be held at Willington WMC again.

Signed by the Chair _____

Dated: 11th June 2026

Civic Carol Service and Christmas Tree Switch On – Thursday 26th November 2026 at 6pm. This year it will be held at Willington Open Door Methodist Church. The Christmas Tree will be lit at 7pm on the Town Green. This is a provisional date. It will be confirmed at a later date.

ii. Councillor Training

The TC said she will keep checking for any relevant training and will update councillors accordingly.

20-2627

PLANNING

i. To consider valid planning applications that have been received.

- DM/26/00860/CEU - Land To The East Of 169 New Row, Page Bank - Certificate of Lawfulness for the existing use of the land for general storage purposes, including the keeping of materials, tools, vehicles and equipment, together with incidental animal-related activities and domestic storage, forming a single mixed use of the land
For Information Only
- DM/26/00875/PNA - Land South East Of Whitworth Lane, Brancepeth - Prior notification under Schedule 2, Part 6 Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) for 4 Bay open sided pole barn constructed from lightweight timber poles with box profile sheet roof (anthracite grey) and access
For Information Only – Approved 1 May 2026
- DM/26/00893/FPA - 13 Dunelm Avenue, Willington - Single detached garage
For Information Only
- DM/26/01117/FPA - 29 Armstrong Drive, Willington - Proposed Fencing Crook

ii. To acknowledge any decisions on previous planning applications received.

- DM/26/00493/FPA - Granary Cottage, 5 Stockley House Farm, Oakenshaw - Construction of sun room, removal of external steps, enlarge 2 windows, internal ground floor alterations, internal first floor alterations including installation of roof light & convert garage into a bedroom and en-suite annex
Approved 19 May 2026 BNG Not Required
- DM/26/00586/FPA - 18 Bainbridge Avenue, Willington - Demolition of existing outbuilding and replacement with a rear extension, removal and rebuilding of the brick boundary wall, and replacement of the kitchen window with patio doors
Approved 12 May 2026 BNG Not Required
- DM/26/00616/TPO - Springfield House, Springfield Terrace, Willington - Fell to ground Ash (T1), removal of 4 lowest limbs of Sycamore (T2), reduce laterals by 2 metres and reduce height by 2.5 metres of Sycamore (T3) and cut back Yew tree to boundary wall to clear obstruction of footpath (T4) protected by TPO WVDC-2-1989
Approved 6 May 2026

The Town Clerk confirmed that submissions had been made to the Licencing Department at DCC regarding the alcohol licence for the new shop at 61 High

Signed by the Chair _____
Dated: 11th June 2026

Street, Willington. She has subsequently received an Agenda pack as this application will be heard through the Committee at County Hall on Friday 29th May 2026 at 1.30pm. The Town Clerk was informed that the Clerk of a Council don't attend these meetings and it should be Councillors. The Town Clerk asked if any Councillors would like to attend this hearing, to contact her by lunchtime on Friday 22nd May 2026. If no councillor wants to go, we will submit our apologies.

21-2627

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Ordinary Meeting – 11th June 2026 at 6pm.

Annual Meeting – 20th May 2027 following the Annual Parish Meeting.

The meeting concluded at 6.58pm.