

NORTHWICH TOWN COUNCIL
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
MONDAY 18TH MAY 2026

Present: Councillor Julie Macdonald – Town Mayor

Councillors:

Cllr J Callaghan	Cllr K Cernik
Cllr B Cernik	Cllr R Waterman
Cllr J MacDonald	Cllr G Emmett
Cllr S Naylor	Cllr J Illidge
Cllr O Dean	Cllr S Harcombe

Also Present: Chris Shaw – Chief Officer
Cath Kirwan – Deputy Chief Officer/RFO

Guests: Invited guests of the incoming Mayor

The Town Mayor opened the meeting at 6.30 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the Council.

26/01 TOWN MAYOR CHARITIES CHEQUE PRESENTATION

Councillor Julie Macdonald award cheque to her chosen charities this year to Changing Lives Buddy and Befriending and The Joshua Tree.

26/02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr T Melville, Cllr C Fox, Cllr P Parkes, and Cllr A Neil, Cllr L Siddall, Cllr C Stewart and Cllr A Kent.

26/03 NOMINATIONS FOR THE OFFICE OF TOWN MAYOR

The Town Mayor, Cllr Julie Macdonald called for nominations for the Office of Town Mayor for the forthcoming year. Cllr Rachel Waterman proposed the Motion that Cllr Robert Cernik be elected as Town Mayor for the coming year. Cllr. Jo Callaghan seconded the Motion. The Town Mayor called for any other nominations, and the Motion was put to the vote. There were no further nominations. Motion carried, All in favour.

RESOLVED

That Cllr Robert Cernik be elected as Town Mayor of Northwich for the ensuing year. The Town Mayor, Cllr Julie Macdonald, Town Mayor elect, and the Deputy Chief Officer then left the meeting to exchange Mayoral Robes and Chain of Office. The new Town Mayor then returned to the meeting, read and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

All agreed

Date.....

.....
Cllr Robert Cernik
Town Mayor

26/04 TOWN MAYOR - VOTE OF THANKS

Councillor Sam Naylor proposed a vote of thanks to the retiring Town Mayor, Councillor Julie Macdonald Cernik, stating that it had been both a privilege and an honour to deliver the vote of thanks. Councillor Naylor commented that Councillor Macdonald had blossomed in her role during her year of office and had achieved a great deal throughout her term. He added that this was a credit to her family, the Town, and most importantly to herself. He also thanked all those attending. Cllr Graham Emmett seconded the vote and added her thanks. Cllr Julie Macdonald responded to the vote of thanks, and delivered her own closing speech, in which she highlighted some of the main functions and events she had attended during her year in Office.

26/05 ELECTION OF DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR 2025-2026

The Town Mayor called for nominations for the office of Deputy Town Mayor for the forthcoming Civic Year. Cllr Sam Naylor proposed the Motion that Cllr Rachel Waterman be elected Deputy Town Mayor for the coming year. Cllr. Olwyn Dean seconded the Motion. The Town Mayor called for any other nominations before putting the Motion to the vote. No further nominations made. Motion carried. All in favour.

It was proposed by Cllr Jo Callaghan that Kate Cernik become the Mayors Consort and Cllr Emma Guy seconded the proposal. All agreed.

RESOLVED

That Cllr Rachel Waterman be elected for the Deputy Mayor of Northwich for the ensuing year. Cllr Rachel Waterman was then presented with the Chain of Office, read and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, and gave thanks for her election.

Cllr Kate Cernik to become the Mayors Consort and proposed by Cllr Jo Callaghan and second by Cllr Janet Illidge.

All agreed.

25/06 MEMBERS OF COMMITTEES

List of Members of Committees and Representatives on Outside Bodies had been previously circulated to members and are as follows. These were proposed by Councillor Emma Guy and seconded by Cllr Graham Emmett. Approved en bloc. All in favour.

Approved

Date.....

.....
Cllr Robert Cernik
Town Mayor

Northwich Town Council Committees 2026-2027

Finance, General Purpose & Amenities Committee

This meeting is to be held the third Monday of each month at 5.30 p.m.

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Julie MacDonald | 2. Catherine Fox |
| 3. Kate Cernik | 4. Bob Cernik |
| 5. Andy Kent | 6. Catriona Stewart |
| 7. Sam Naylor | 8. Rachel Waterman |
| 9. Tom Melville | 10. Olwyn Dean |

Planning & Environment Committee

This meeting will be held every fourth Monday of the month at 5.00 p.m.

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Olwyn Dean | 2. Graham Emmett |
| 3. Emma Guy | 4. Andy Stott |
| 5. Robert Cernik | 6. Brian Holland |
| 6. Stephen Harcombe | 8. Patricia Parkes |
| 9. Joanne Callaghan | 10. Janet Illidge |

Grants Committee

Meetings will be held on the following dates at 5.30 p.m.

Dates to be confirmed (2 meetings each year)

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Andy Kent | 2. Catriona Stewart |
| 3. Julie MacDonald | 4. Kate Cernik |
| 5. Cathrine Fox | 6. Patricia Parkes |
| 7. Janet Illidge | 8. Brian Holland |
| 9. Sam Naylor | 10. Emma Guy |

Date.....

.....
Cllr Robert Cernik
Town Mayor

Policy & Operations Committee

Chair & Vice from all the above Committees, meetings as requested.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Town Mayor | 2. Deputy Town Mayor |
| 3. Chair of Planning & Environment | 4. Vice Chair of Planning & Environment |
| 5. Chair of Grants | 6. Vice Chair of Grants |
| 9. Chair of Finance & Amenities | 10. Vice Chair of Finance & Amenities |

Personnel Committee to be agreed at first meeting of Policy & Operations

- | | |
|----|----|
| 1. | 2. |
| 3. | 4. |

Chairs and Vice Chairs of all Committees to be elected at their first Committee meetings.

26/07 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 applies to all principal councils (district, county and unitary councils etc). It also applies to eligible¹ parish and town councils. It replaces the wellbeing powers in England that were provided under the Local Government Act 2000.

The scope – and some limitations – of the General Power are set out in sections 1 to 6 of the Localism Act 2011.

In summary, the GPC enables councils to do things:

- an individual may generally do
- anywhere in the UK or elsewhere
- for a commercial purpose or otherwise, for a charge or without a charge
- without the need to demonstrate that it will benefit the authority, its area or persons resident or present in its area (although in practice councils will want to realise such benefits).

But there are some limitations on General power, either because they are not things which an individual can do or because they are excluded by the Act. The GPC will not:

- provide councils with new powers to raise tax or precepts or to borrow
- enable councils to set charges for mandatory services, impose fines or create offences or byelaws, over and above existing powers to do so
- override existing legislation in place before the Localism act 2011, so-called 'pre-commencement limitations' (however powers enacted after commencement of the GPC will only limit the GPC if this explicitly stated in the legislation).

Date.....

.....
Cllr Robert Cernik
Town Mayor

Where using the GPC for charging or trading purposes, the recipient should agree to the service being provided, the income from charges should not exceed the cost of provision and, where things are done for commercial purposes, this must be done through a specified type of company.

Notwithstanding the limitations outlined above, the GPC remains a broad power.

As part of the Government's wider localism agenda, the GPC is intended not only to increase local authority powers but to give greater confidence in the scope of those powers and to signal that how those powers are used is a matter for local authorities (Department for Communities and Local Government, November 2011).

It should encourage more managed risk taking by councils. In enacting the GPC, the Government intended to remove the uncertainty which had arisen around the scope of the previous wellbeing powers – to promote the economic, environmental and social wellbeing of a council's area – where the courts had found that these powers did not enable councils to enter some arrangements such as a mutual insurance company across several councils – the so-called London Authorities Mutual Ltd (LAML) case in 2009.

Cllr Emma Guy proposed that we adopt the General Power of Competence, and this was seconded by Cllr Stephen Harcombe

All agreed
Approved

26/08 ATTENDANCE AT COUNCIL MEETINGS 2025/2026

Schedule of Councillor's attendances was submitted for members information, previous to this meeting, and were noted.

26/09 MEETING CALENDAR 2025/2026

Members were requested to agree the Calendar of Meetings for the forthcoming year, Cllr. Julie Macdonald proposed a Motion to accept; this was seconded by Cllr Kate Cernik.

All agreed.

Approved

26/10 SECOND INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT – JDH BUSINESS SERVICES

DCO/RFO discussed the AGAR figures with members which were approved to be sent off to the External Auditors.

Proposed by Cllr. Julie Macdonald this was seconded by Councillor Sam Naylor

All agreed
Approved

Date.....

.....
Cllr Robert Cernik
Town Mayor

26/11 YEAR END AUDIT – JDH BUSINESS SERVICES

The internal audit from JDH Business Services for 2025/26 issues, recommendations and follow ups were discussed in detail with members, which were accepted.

Proposed by Cllr Julie Macdonald seconded by Councillor Jo Callaghan

All agreed

Approved

26/12 AGAR 2025/2026

Members approved Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/2026

Proposed by Cllr Councillor Sam Naylor seconded by Councillor Catriona Stewart

All agreed

Approved

At the conclusion of the Annual General Meeting, and Mayor making ceremony, the newly elected Town Mayor joined fellow members, family and friends for celebratory refreshments in the Council Chambers.

Meeting Closed at 7.35pm.

Date.....

.....
Cllr Robert Cernik
Town Mayor