



Tuesday 21st July 2026

Full Council Meeting

The Trinity Centre

7:00pm

Present

Cllrs Raut, Allen, Auton, Briggs, Cooper, Clarke, Fieldhouse, Griffiths-Hughes, Horrocks, Hunt, Parkin, Pawson, Pears, Perks, Puri, Singla, Sam Ward, Simon Ward, Wood and Yip.

In Attendance

Olive O'Sullivan—Chief Executive Officer, and Mary Kidner-Head of Finance.

There were 8 members of the public and no press present.

The Mayor welcomed all to the meeting and opened Public Question Time.

A resident asked about the justification, benefit and impact of the Heritage Welcome Signs that were approved at Planning and Highways Committee and stated that at the Committee meeting it had been suggested that there were some signs in storage.

Cllr Simon Ward confirmed that there were no signs in storage and that this was the first negative feedback that had been received regarding the new Gateway Heritage Signs. He said that the signs were emblematic of the identity of Royal Sutton Coldfield, its 500-year history, and that it was a special place to live. The Town Council considers carefully how the precept is allocated and that it delivers additionality or above and beyond what is delivered by the Principal Authority – celebrating the unique identity of the town does just this and helps to make the area distinctive from the wider Birmingham area.

The resident also asked how the Town Council is making Sutton Coldfield Town Centre feel safer.

Cllr Simon Ward responded that the Town Council, alongside the Police and other statutory organisations, take very seriously the responsibility of making residents feel safer everywhere in the town. The Town Council had campaigned to keep Sutton Coldfield Police Station open, although the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner ultimately did close it and opened a cottage police station instead. The regeneration in the town centre is making it a better place to be, and the Town Council has been working closely with the Sutton Coldfield Pride in Place Programme (PiPP) Board. Cllr Ward said that he was very pleased that PiPP funding had been approved to provide CCTV in the town centre, and that this was tangible evidence of the Town Council being financially responsible and taking the safety of residents seriously.

A resident asked who is leading on development of the Fairer Futures Fund Healthy Ageing Safe at Home Project reported to Amenities, Leisure and Community Services Committee and if there could be a report to Full Council on the obstacles, plans and progress.

The CEO responded that two local organisations had been identified to deliver home safety improvements as part of the project, which would include home visits that assess the home environment and additional support that could include; signposting to social activities, energy support, benefit etc. The discharge team at Good Hope Hospital is leading on the project and full details of the project will be reported to Amenities,



Leisure and Community Services Committee in due course. The CEO further responded that residents would be able to carry out a self-assessment for falls prevention via the Steady on Your Feet Platform and self-refer for a home visit to assess minor home adaptations needed.

A resident asked if the Town Council could assist in removing the last of the torn flags attached to lampposts.

Cllr Simon Ward responded that removal of flags from lampposts is the responsibility of Birmingham City Council (BCC) as the Highways Authority and any requests to remove flags are referred to BCC for their action.

The resident also stated that rumours were circulating that single-sex changing facilities would be replaced by a changing village at Wyndley Swimming Pool and asked if the Town Council could lobby Birmingham Leisure Trust and Serco to consult with swimmers before any works are implemented.

Cllr David Pears said he had some discussions with Birmingham City Council (BCC) regarding planned works on the leisure centre at Wyndley but was not aware of planned works for the swimming pool changing facilities, and that he would raise with BCC.

The CEO read out a question, submitted by a resident not in attendance, welcoming a cultural strategy and asking if the next step is an implementation plan and how residents could be involved in the process.

The CEO responded that the next step would be an implementation plan and that the groups involved in the development of the Culture Strategy would be also be included in the development of the delivery plan.

The CEO read out a series of multi-part questions, submitted by a resident not in attendance, regarding a Community Grant application from Boldmere Futures CIC that the Amenities, Leisure and Community Services Committee had recommended to be declined.

Cllr Horrocks responded by initially outlining the process for submitting a grant application to the town council, which is:

- Information is available on the Town Council website and applicants can talk to the team in the Town Council office with any questions, prior to application.
- The Grants Panel consists of a number of councillors representing each Ward in Sutton Coldfield and the applications are circulated to all Councillors for any questions and comments before the meeting. The Grants Panel is not held in public as each of the applications discussed contain private and confidential information of each the organisations (e.g detailed accounts etc). The Grants Panel vote and decide to recommend to support in full, support in part or decline each application.
- These recommendations are presented to Amenities, Leisure and Community Services Committee, which is held in public, grants up to £10,000 can be approved at this Committee meeting, all other recommendations are taken to Full Council for approval.

All Committees of the Town Council and Full Council meetings are held in public, and residents are welcome to attend and see how Councillors vote on each item. A named vote is not routinely carried out or recorded in the minutes and can only be requested by a Councillor at the meeting.



Cllr Horrocks commented that all community grant applications are considered objectively and cross party. After a decision has been made by Committee / Full Council each applicant is advised in writing of the decision and offered the opportunity to engage with the officer team on the outcome.

Cllr Horrocks said that she was unable to comment on the individual application as Full Council was yet to make a decision and it could amount to pre determination of the outcome.

The Mayor gave an update on his first few months as Mayor and reported having dinner with the Consulate General of India, Birmingham, attending a production of Beauty and the Beast, celebrating the opening of Livewell Health in Boldmere, Celebrating 10 years of Sutton Park Grange Care Home, recognising the work of civic leaders, local organisations and volunteers at this year's Civic Sunday service, attending a screening of Cardiac Risk in the Young, celebrating International Yoga Day at two events, attending the induction of Rev Reeve's at Holy Trinity Parish Church, attending an awards ceremony for those who successfully completed various training courses hosted by Embark Learning, meeting with scouts and scouts leaders at this year's Raft Race, a tour of Holy Trinity Parish Church alongside the High Sheriff of The West Midlands, attending The Bridge Schools' summer fayre, attending the Festival of Chariots in Birmingham, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Jain Ashram, meeting with volunteers of the Sutton Coldfield Beekeepers association at their annual BBQ and visiting residents' open gardens to raise money for The Cancer Support Centre.

The Mayor extended his thanks to the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Pears, for attending the 100-year celebration of scouting in Sutton Coldfield and the opening of Grow Family Services.

25 Apologies for Absence

The CEO reported apologies from Cllrs Cook, Parmar and Roberts.

Resolved to accept the apologies.

26 Declarations of Interest

No declaration of interest were reported.

27 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on Friday 22nd May 2026 be signed as a true record.

28 Matters Arising

No matters arising were reported.

29 Questions from Members

No questions from members had been received.

30 Minutes of Committees

a) **Planning and Highways** held on 2nd June 2026

c) **Planning and Highways** held on 7th July 2026



Resolved to approve £5,500 from the Four Oaks Community Infrastructure Levy to install a Vehicle Activated Sign on Four Oaks Road.

Resolved to approve £34,000 from the Trinity Ward Community Infrastructure Levy to install and maintain double kerbs on the Tamworth Road.

b) **Strategy and Resources** held on 16th June 2026

Resolved to approve the Royal Town of Sutton Coldfield Culture Strategy 2026 – 2036.

Resolved to approve the regular expenditure payments and the use of BACS and variable direct debit as detailed in the report to Strategy and Resources Committee.

d) **Amenities, Leisure and Community Services** held on 14th July 2026

Resolved to approve Community Grants to Boldmere St Michaels Football Club in the amount of £14,440, the Cancer Support Centre in the amount of £20,000, Our Place Support in the amount of £19,997 and St James Church in the amount of £20,000.

Cllr Auton asked for the rationale behind the recommendations to decline Community Grant applications. The CEO responded that procedurally, the reason why a grant application is declined is not given in the public domain. This is to protect organisations as sometimes it is not in their best interests for the reasons to be publicly shared, as it could affect them when seeking funding from other sources. The CEO said that each applicant was provided with this information after a decision by Council. Cllr Horrocks added that she was happy to answer Councillors questions before meetings and reiterated that it was the best practise of grant giving organisations across the country to maintain confidentiality for applicant organisations.

Resolved to approve that community grant applications from Boldmere Futures CIC, BSL Silver CIC, The Gap and Successful Ageing CIC be declined.

Resolved to approve that Cllrs Fieldhouse, Sam Ward and Yip to support and champion the work of the Sutton Coldfield Youth Panel.

31 **Minutes of the Pride in Place Board Meeting**

Resolved to note the minutes of the Pride in Place Board Meeting held on 21st May 2026.

32 **Casual Vacancy**

Resolved to note that Alex Cowley resigned from the Office of Councillor and a Public Notice of the casual vacancy this created in the Vesey Ward, was published on Tuesday 7th July 2026.

33 **By Election Date**

In response to a question from Cllr Parkin the CEO advised that the cost of the by election was not yet known but based on other by elections in 2019 and 2021, it was estimated to be in the region of £40,000.

Resolved to note that ten electors from the Vesey Ward have written to Birmingham City Council requesting a by election and that this has been fixed by the elections office for Thursday 3rd September 2026.



34 **Petition**

Cllr Simon Ward responded to the petition requesting that the Town Council commit to reopen a town centre library service, stating that the Town Council should be very proud of what it had already achieved in regard to the library and community centre provision across Sutton Coldfield. He said that Boldmere Library, Walmley Library, Walmley Community Centre and Mere Green Community Centre would have all been closed by Birmingham City Council and Mere Green library opening hours, had the Town Council not stepped in and saved them. The Town Council had asked residents, via a consultation, if they wanted the Town Council to raise the precept to fund these services and was pleased to report that the service was now flourishing, and that improvement works have been carried out.

Cllr Simon Ward said the Town Centre library was closed without any prior warning to the Town Council, despite a Town Council investment of £2.2m to keep the service open over the preceding 10 years. A sustainable Town Centre library is something that the Town Council does support, in a purpose-built building as part of the Town Centre regeneration. The Town Council's precept is relatively limited and the Town Council must ensure value for money; in the longer term substantial section 106 funds could be made available as part of the regeneration of the Town Centre that could be used towards a town centre library as included in the Sutton Coldfield Town Centre Masterplan.

Cllr Horrocks commented that while the precept increase of 16% sounds high, this on average equates to an annual contribution of £10 per household, which is the average cost of purchasing a book. The library service in three locations across the town gives access to borrow books for free all year round, saving families money and giving access to every age group.

Cllr Parkin added that the Town Council Royal Sutton Coldfield Library and Community Centres Service means that a library is open six days every week (except Sunday) across the town.

Cllr Auton said he fully supports the petition and that the need to reopen library provision in the town centre is paramount.

35 **Councillor Recognition Award**

Cllr Puri said that Rob Pocok had served as Town Councillor for ten years, had been part of the original campaign to establish the Town Council and that his contribution to Sutton Coldfield was worthy of recognition.

Resolved to approve that a Councillor Recognition Award be presented to former Town Councillor Rob Pocock.

36 **Members Allowances Panel**

Resolved to approve that Cllrs Fieldhouse, Horrocks, Parkin and Simon Ward be appointed to the Members Allowances Panel.



37 Use of Chief Executive Officer's Delegated Powers

The CEO reported use of delegated powers to instruct Freeths Consultants to undertake an appraisal of Birmingham City Council's Green Belt Assessment at a cost of £14,100 and issuing of printed Poll Cards for the upcoming Vesey Ward By-election. The CEO added that the cost to provide Poll Cards had not yet been confirmed by the elections office, but that it is really important to have them to ensure that all Vesey Ward residents are informed of the by-election.

38 Accounts for Payment

Resolved to note the delegated payments, approve the accounts and appoint Cllrs Briggs and Horrocks to complete authorisation.

39 Date of the Next Scheduled Meeting

The next meeting will take place on 29th September 2026 at the Trinity Centre.

The meeting ended at – 7:50pm