



## Macclesfield Town Council Full Council

### Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2026 at 7pm at Macclesfield Town Hall.

In Attendance:

Cllr Emma Gilman  
Cllr James Barber-Chadwick  
Cllr David Edwardes  
Cllr Sarah Bennett-Wake  
Cllr Sam Hale  
Cllr Alift Harewood  
Cllr Mike Hutchison  
Cllr Sandy Livingstone  
Cllr Ruth Thompson  
Cllr Mick Warren  
Cllr Chris Wilcock  
Cllr Fiona Wilson

The Chair, Cllr Emma Gilman opened the meeting welcoming attendees and explaining that the extraordinary meeting was called to acknowledge and listen to residents' concerns about the proposed Adlington New Town, while emphasising the Town Council has no planning or decision-making authority over the proposal. The Chair clarified that Councillors present were acting solely as Macclesfield Town Councillors and would not be discussing Cheshire East Council matters. She also raised that concerns had been raised about abuse, threats, and intimidation directed at Councillors, which she firmly condemned, and stated that the Town Council is made up of 12 unpaid volunteers and must remain a safe space. Due to safety concerns, security has been arranged, and if there was any unacceptable behaviour this would result in removal from the meeting.

## **1 Apologies for Absence**

Cllr Sandy Livingstone did not attend for the first 3 items due to a conflict of interest.

## **2 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Fiona Wilson declared that she is Vice Chair of the Northern Planning Committee at Cheshire East Council and may in future be involved in determining other planning applications. She stated her motion was carefully worded to relate specifically and only to Adlington New Town.

Councillor Mick Warren declared that he is Chair of the Northern Planning Committee and also Chair of the Economy and Growth Committee at Cheshire East Council.

Councillor Sarah Bennett-Wake declared that she is also a member of the Northern Planning Committee at Cheshire East Council.

Councillor Sandy Livingstone did not attend the first part of the meeting due to a conflict of interest but attended the second part.

## **Public Questions**

The meeting was adjourned to invite comments and questions from the public.

Chris Walker, a resident of Tytherington, spoke in strong opposition to the Adlington New Town proposal. He highlighted the large scale of the development, which would impact 15 active farms, and raised serious concerns about existing infrastructure, including water, sewage, schools, hospitals, and transport, which would be overwhelmed by the proposed population increase. He criticized the proposal as developer-led, prioritizing profit over genuinely affordable housing, and urged the Council to take strong action to oppose the development.

Brian Puddicombe, a resident of South Ward and the CE Councillor for this ward also addressed the agenda item of Adlington New Town acknowledging residents' concerns about it reinforcing the point that existing infrastructure, particularly hospitals and transport, would not support the proposed development, making it unviable. He also clarified that Cheshire East Council has formally opposed the proposal and encouraged Macclesfield Town Council to support the proposed motion while emphasising that future housing investment should be carefully planned to meet local community needs and emphasising the urgent need for affordable and social housing.

Cllr Fiona Wilson, spoke in response as the proposer and author of the motion on the agenda. She highlighted the housing crisis in Cheshire East and the need for affordable homes, starter homes, and housing for older and vulnerable residents, stating there are nearly 12000 households in Cheshire East on the housing waiting list. She said that large-scale developments, such as Adlington New Town, would overwhelm existing medical, educational, transport, and community

infrastructure. Cllr Wilson stressed the importance of protecting green belt, farmland, established farms, and ecological areas, and prioritising brownfield and town centre regeneration sites. She also noted the lack of formal engagement with Macclesfield Town Council and local parish councils, and called for united, courteous action among councillors and community campaigners to oppose the development.

Cllr Sarah Bennett-Wake highlighted the overcrowding issues in her ward, Hurdsfield, noting multiple generations living in small two-bedroom properties. She said there is an urgent need for social and truly affordable housing in Macclesfield and highlighted the strain on utilities and infrastructure due to decades of underinvestment. She called for housing that is suitably designed to meet residents' needs and urged that advocacy also focus on supporting homeless and vulnerable members of the community, including ex-servicemen.

Cllr Alift Harewood commented on land sales by wealthy owners and stressed that planning decisions should include services and infrastructure from the outset. She noted that housing development can bring positive change—such as new people, services, teachers, and healthcare professionals—if properly planned. She also raised concerns about how land and social value are defined, saying that all homes and residents have societal value, and stressed the importance of maintaining human diversity alongside biodiversity.

Thomas Broadhead of Macclesfield Culture Collective spoke on agenda item 4, the Town of Culture, introducing himself as a local film producer and entrepreneur leading Macclesfield's Town of Culture 2028 bid. He explained the opportunity to secure up to £3 million for arts and culture, the rigorous application process and we are at the expression-of-interest stage with response required by the end of March. He said that the bid is about inclusive, broad culture for all residents, aiming to build pride, social mobility, health, and wellbeing. He described strong public support, viral engagement on social media, and the formation of a highly skilled team, stating that Macclesfield has as strong a chance as any town.

Cllr Fiona Wilson thanked Tom for leading the project and described the bid as an exciting opportunity to secure both initial development funding and, if successful, significant delivery funding.

Cllr Sandy Livingstone said he strongly endorsed the bid, describing culture as central to the town's future and highlighting Macclesfield's creative reputation and ability to deliver high-quality events. He expressed full confidence in the town's chances and offered clear support.

Cllr Sarah Bennet-Wake echoed previous support, referencing attendance at the recent launch meeting and praising the town's diverse cultural strengths, including music, bands, independent shops, countryside, canals, and overall quality of life.

### **3 Adlington New Town**

#### **Resolved:**

The motion submitted by Cllr Wilson as follows was approved:

3.1. Macclesfield Town Council (MTC) notes the report and recommendations to the Government by the Independent New Towns Task Force (NTTF) and the urgent need to provide additional housing to include affordable and social housing along with the medical, educational, public transport and community services to enable sustainable living. Council also notes the requirement in the NTTF report for these to be in the right locations with priority given to affordable housing and have the public services and amenities required from the outset along with climate resilience and protecting, restoring and enhancing biodiversity.

3.2. MTC agrees that we need more housing and also that this must be delivered in the right places. Prioritising developments on brownfield and regeneration areas including Macclesfield Town Centre rather than on valuable green belt and farming land. Government needs to allocate funds to make it easier for brownfield sites to be brought back into use.

3.3. MTC supports the commitment of the NTTF for specific sites to have the support of local communities. We must protect our medium and small settlements from urban sprawl. We are disappointed at the lack of any prior or meaningful engagement by the NTTF with local communities, local businesses and parish councils prior to their announcement of this potential site as one of the 12 identified locations.

3.4. MTC therefore urges the Government to abandon the proposal for a new town in Adlington, Cheshire and to focus on the development of existing brownfield and town centre sites along with the call for new sites as part of the Cheshire East Local Plan process and the involvement of communities in the discussions.

3.5. MTC notes that the publication of the draft proposals and final Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) will be subject to public consultation and will comment in due course through our Planning Committee constitutional process within our governance arrangements.

## **4 Town of Culture**

### **Resolved:**

It was approved for Macclesfield Town Council to be the accountable body for the Town of Culture bid subject to the following caveats:

- Full understanding of evidence requirements: The Council must have a complete understanding of the evidence required by the national government to support the bid.
- Robust partnership agreement: A clear and comprehensive agreement with Macclesfield Culture Collective must be established, defining roles, responsibilities, reporting requirements, and liabilities.
- Full funding of project costs: All project costs for which the Council is accountable, including staffing and operational expenses, must be fully funded.

- Council involvement in decision-making: The Council must have a defined mechanism to participate in the programme's decision-making processes.

## **5 Date/Time and Place of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Full Council will be held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at the Town Hall.

Meeting closed: 7:34pm

Chair: Cllr Emma Gilman

Clerk: Laura Smith