



Macclesfield Town Council Annual Council Meeting

**Minutes for the Annual General Meeting and Mayor Making held on Monday
18th May 2026 at 7pm at Macclesfield Town Hall.**

In attendance:

Cllr James Barber-Chadwick
Cllr Sarah Bennett-Wake
Cllr Emma Gilman
Cllr Sam Hale
Cllr Alift Harewood
Cllr Mike Hutchison
Cllr Mick Warren
Cllr Chris Wilcock
Cllr Fiona Wilson

1. Election of the Mayor of Macclesfield for 2026/27

Cllr James Barber-Chadwick was elected as the Mayor of Macclesfield for 2026/27

2. Election of the Deputy Mayor of Macclesfield for 2026/27

Cllr Sarah Bennett-Wake was elected as the Deputy Mayor of Macclesfield for 2026/27

The retiring Mayor adjourned the meeting whilst the newly elected Mayor and Deputy Mayor receive their insignia of office.

The Town Clerk called upon the Mayor of Macclesfield to read and sign their declaration accepting the office of Mayor of Macclesfield.

The Town Clerk called upon the Deputy Mayor of Macclesfield to read and sign their declaration accepting the office of Deputy Mayor of Macclesfield.

The meeting was then re-convened.

3. Retiring Mayor of Macclesfield Remarks

Cllr Emma Gilman reflected on what an absolute privilege it had been to serve the people of Macclesfield and to attend so many community events and meet so many inspiring people. Highlights included supporting local groups and organisations, attending festive and charity events, presenting her Civic awards to young people, and taking part in community celebrations across the town. She also reflected on the moving occasion of presenting the Freedom of the Town to Rob Smethurst and Macclesfield FC. A significant focus of the year was supporting her chosen charities, Friends of Park Lane Special School and CRY, which she said were very close to her heart, and she thanked everyone who had contributed to helping both organisations throughout the year. She also spoke about the recent charity dinner, which successfully raised £4,000 for her chosen charities.

The Mayor paid tribute to the many people who had supported her during her term of office, including fellow councillors, council staff, friends and family, with particular thanks to Nicola, Abi, Laura and Adrian, who had served as her cadet throughout the year, for their support and guidance. A special mention was also made of her husband, whose support behind the scenes had made the year possible. In closing, she gave heartfelt thanks to the children of Macclesfield, saying that her mayoral year had been all about them and that they had made the experience truly memorable.

4. Tribute by the Incoming Mayor of Macclesfield to the Retiring Mayor of Macclesfield and Consort

Cllr James Barber-Chadwick, the newly elected Mayor, paid tribute to outgoing Mayor Cllr Emma Gilman for her dedication and leadership over the previous twelve months. He acknowledged the personal adversity and health challenges she had faced during her mayoral year, particularly in recent months, and praised her for remaining authentic and committed throughout her time in office. Referring to comments from residents describing her as “the best Mayor ever”, he remarked that she had left “big shoes to fill” for both himself and future mayors.

Councillor Barber-Chadwick highlighted the Mayor’s strong focus on young people during her term of office, noting that her introduction of awards centred on young people had been a particularly positive development. He also commended her fundraising efforts for her chosen charities, describing the amount raised as “absolutely amazing”, and noted that he was proud to continue supporting one of those charities, CRY, during his own mayoral year.

In closing, Councillor Barber-Chadwick thanked Councillor Gilman for her support during his time as Deputy Mayor and said it had been a privilege to attend events alongside her and learn more about the role. He praised the care and commitment she had shown towards both the community and the town, offering his sincere thanks on behalf of the Council.

5. Appointment (if known) of the Mayor's Honorary Chaplain, Mayor's Cadet, Introduction to the Mayor's Charity/ies to be Supported and Plans for the Year

Mayor James Barber-Chadwick said it was a great honour to be elected Mayor of Macclesfield, describing it as something he had never expected when first elected to the Town Council in 2019. He spoke of his pride in serving the town in which he was born and paid tribute once again to outgoing Mayor Emma Gilman for her outstanding year in office.

Cllr Barber-Chadwick also thanked his former ward colleague, Sandy Livingstone, who had recently stepped down from the Council following a new job role. He described former Cllr Livingstone as an important mentor during his years on the Town Council.

The Mayor announced that his chosen charities for the forthcoming year would be CRY and My CWA. He explained that his support for CRY was deeply personal following the loss of his cousin Daniel the previous year and said he hoped to raise significant funds and awareness for the charity. He also highlighted the important work undertaken by My CWA in supporting victims of domestic abuse across Cheshire East.

Cllr Barber-Chadwick outlined that his mayoral theme would focus on Macclesfield as a strong and united town that continues to overcome challenges and adversity. He spoke positively about the town's achievements, including the success of Macclesfield FC, and said his theme would centre on unity, resilience and civic pride, particularly as the town looks ahead to its UK Town of Culture bid. In closing, he stated his intention to be "a people's Mayor", focused on supporting communities across Macclesfield and remaining accessible and engaged throughout his mayoral year.

6. Apologies for Absence

Cllr David Edwardes

Cllr Ruth Thompson

7. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Mick Warren declared an interest as a long term associate of Aoife Middlemass, speaking on item 16.

Public Questions

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

Aoife Middlemass from Disability Information Bureau spoke on item 16.

The meeting was then reconvened.

8. Minutes of the Meeting of Full Council 9th March 2026

Resolved: The draft minutes were approved as a true record of the meeting.

9. Governance Review

9.1 Risk register

Resolved: The Risk Register was approved.

9.2 Financial Regulations

Resolved: The Financial Regulations were approved.

9.3 Committee Membership

Resolved: The Committee Memberships were approved.

9.4 Rangers Policy

Resolved: The Rangers Policy was approved.

10. Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the year ended 31 March 2026

Resolved:

- The Internal Audit was noted.
- The Annual Governance Statement Section 1 of the AGAR was approved.
- The Accounting Statements 2025/26 Section 2 of the AGAR were approved.
- The Accounting Statements were signed and dated by the person presiding at the meeting at which that approval is given.
- The asset register was noted.
- To consider the movements in Ear marked Reserves (EMR)

11. Internal Auditor

Resolved: JDH Business Services as internal auditor 2026/27 was approved and the following was noted.

The Council's Internal Auditor is independent of the Council's financial management and decision-making processes. Although the Internal Auditor also undertakes the role of Data protection advisor, this function is administrative and advisory in nature and does not involve financial control, accounting, or operational decision-making. The Council is satisfied that this dual role does not compromise the independence of the internal audit function

12. External Support Services

Resolved:

- Wirehouse Employer Services for HR and H&S support was approved.
- Shires Pay Services Ltd for Payroll Services was approved.
- Blain Boland & Co Solicitors for legal support was approved.
- John Greenhall & Co for finance and accountancy support was approved.
- Zurich for Insurance were approved.

13. Cheshire Association of Local Councils (Chalc)

Resolved: ChALC membership was approved.

14. Other Memberships

Resolved: The following memberships were approved:

- National Allotment Society
- SLCC for Clerk and Assistant Clerk

15. Annual report

The 2026/27 Annual Report of the Town Council was noted.

16. Disability Information Bureau Grant Request

Resolved: The grant proposal was approved.

17. South Park Pavilion

Resolved: The proposals in the report were approved as follows:

Notes the appointment of Stephen Hooker as Project Manager and the completion of the tender process.

- Acknowledges that all tender submissions significantly exceed the available budget and that the current pavilion scheme is not financially deliverable.
- Approves that the Council does not proceed with the current pavilion project.
- Approves that the Council does not draw down the approved loan for this scheme.
- Supports engagement with Cheshire East Council to explore a hybrid, collaborative delivery approach for a park hub facility.

18. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting of Macclesfield Town Council is 7pm, 20th July 2026 at Macclesfield Town Hall.