MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE

ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC AMENITIES COMMITTEE

HELD ON MONDAY 7th SEPTEMBER 2026 AT 7.00PM

*	Cllr Stephen Skinner (Chair)	*	Cllr Yvonne Estop
*	Cllr Martin Adams	*	Cllr Richard Townsend
*	Cllr Matthew Bird	*	Cllr Miriam Swainston
	Cllr Holly Drake		

* denotes attendance

In attendance:
Karen Burton (BID) [EPA16 – 19]
Madeleine Lees (BID) [EPA16 – 19]
Paul Dean (Bishop's Stortford Civic Federation) [EPA16 – 19]
Dave Webber (Bishop's Stortford and District Footpaths Association) [EPA16 – 19]
Alister Barclay (HCC Strategy & Programme Manager, Implementation) [EPA16 – 19]
Ian Richardson (HCC Team Leader, Community Design Team) [EPA16 – 19]
Matthew Bendell (HCC Strategy & Programme Manager, Strategy) [EPA16 – 19]
David Burt (HCC Group Manager, Implementation) [EPA16 – 19]
One Member of the Press [EPA16 – 22]
Cllr Richard Bower
Dale Phillips - Chief Operations Officer (BSTC)
Huw Jones - Chief Executive Officer (BSTC)

EPA16. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and approved as follows:

Member	Reason
Cllr Holly Drake	Family Commitments

Minutes Approved
Signed (Chairman):
Date:

EPA17. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were none.

EPA17. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No Member of the Public sought to address the Committee at this meeting.

EPA18. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 6th JULY 2026

Cllr Yvonne Estop raised a point of accuracy relating to the previous Minutes and two matters arising. The CEO advised that the points raised were not matters which could properly be considered at the meeting under the Council's Standing Orders. It was noted that, should Cllr Estop wish to set out her concerns in writing following the meeting, the CEO would seek to respond within five working days.

It was RESOLVED that:

the Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 6th July 2026 be approved as a true record and duly signed by the Chair.

EPA19. NORTH STREET IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

The Committee received a presentation from Hertfordshire County Council Officers on the proposed North Street Improvement Project.

Members were advised that the proposed scheme was intended to support local businesses and help the town centre to thrive, whilst also addressing a range of existing issues including anti-social behaviour, parking pressures and unnecessary through-traffic. It was anticipated that the proposals would create greater opportunities for businesses, markets, events and wider community activity and would complement work associated with Purple Flag accreditation. It was also noted that the BID's objectives for North Street aligned closely with the Town Council's Strategic Plan 2023–2027.

Minutes Approved
Signed (Chairman):
Date:

The initial proposal was to introduce an experimental scheme in order to test how the arrangements operated in practice, with the intention that, subject to the outcome of the trial and subsequent evaluation, the improvements could ultimately form part of a permanent public realm scheme.

HCC Officers explained that a key consideration would be whether the proposals functioned effectively from a traffic and access perspective whilst also creating a more attractive and active street environment. Examples of comparable schemes elsewhere in Hertfordshire, including George Street, St Albans and Fore Street, Hertford, were cited as demonstrating the potential benefits of such an approach.

The emerging design would broadly involve North Street operating on a one-way basis, with provision for an informal cycle contra-flow.

Members noted that servicing and loading arrangements would need to be carefully considered, including the practical difficulties associated with larger vehicles, particularly vehicles of approximately 7.5 tonnes, turning into Water Lane.

It was noted that basic traffic modelling had been undertaken and that a formal road safety audit would also be required before implementation. The experimental period itself would provide an opportunity to assess the operation of the scheme in practice. In response to a Member query, HCC Officers advised that an experimental traffic arrangement could operate for a period of up to 18 months.

Members also discussed consultation arrangements. It was explained that the process would be informal in nature and that the experimental scheme would itself form an important part of the consultation process by allowing a live trial before any decision was taken on whether to make the arrangements permanent. A communications plan would be developed to accompany the trial.

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HCC Officers advised that a possible commencement date could fall between Autumn 2026 and Spring 2027. The BID representatives and Town Council Members expressed a preference for the scheme to commence at the earlier end of that period in order to maintain momentum.

Cllr Yvonne Estop asked whether HCC would assess the potential effect of the proposals on Bells Hill, which she considered was already under pressure and subject to incidents of road rage. Cllr Miriam Swainston advised, in her capacity as an HCC Member, that she would co-ordinate any further questions arising from the meeting with HCC Officers.

The CEO confirmed that the Town Council would do all reasonably within its power to deliver the terms of the draft Memorandum of Understanding, which related principally to the opening and closing of the proposed access gate. The CEO also suggested that, subject to agreement with HCC, the Town Council might be able to provide higher-quality planters than those used at some other HCC locations.

The longer-term objective remained to develop the proposals beyond a temporary traffic arrangement into a more comprehensive and permanent public realm improvement scheme for North Street.

It was noted that further joint meetings between HCC Officers, the Town Council and other relevant stakeholders would take place as the scheme progressed, and that Members would be kept informed of developments.

EPA20. BID UPDATE

Cllr Richard Townsend provided a comprehensive update on recent BID activity, covering:

- Shop Safe alerts;
- town centre trees and Christmas lights;
- enforcement charges at the Waitrose car park;
- health and safety training courses provided through SEEDL; and
- the Summer 2026 BID Business Meet-Up held in July at Thirst Youth Café.

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Members noted that the Business Meet-Up had been well attended and had provided an opportunity for local businesses to network, share information and explore potential collaboration. The positive engagement of the local business community was welcomed, particularly given the challenging trading environment.

The contribution of Thirst Youth Café in hosting the event was also noted, together with the wider work undertaken by the organisation within the community and local schools.

EPA21. S.106 REPORT FROM EHDC

The Committee received and noted the August 2026 s.106 Report prepared by East Herts District Council.

It was agreed that EHDC be advised that the Committee considered it would be appropriate for the District Council to establish its own forum or meeting at which s.106 matters could be considered in greater detail, noting that there was currently no equivalent forum within that Authority for consideration of the type of report produced by the s.106 Officer for the Town Council.

EPA22. PROJECTS UPDATE REPORT

The CEO reported on progress with a number of current projects.

<u>Walking and Cycle Route North</u>

Members received an update on the Walking and Cycle Route North, noting that the planning application was expected to have been submitted by the date of the meeting. The application had been delayed slightly whilst information was awaited in relation to Biodiversity Net Gain requirements, principally concerning the River Report.

It was noted that the application had proceeded on the basis of a segregated route following advice from the Walk, Wheel and Cycle Trust, as this would preserve the option of future shared use whilst also allowing for potential upgrading should additional funding become available through the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

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Members also noted that WWCT had been asked to provide a fee proposal for assistance with preparing separate tender documents for the bridge works and the route and track works, subject to planning permission being obtained.

The revised route was considered capable of being accommodated through modest reductions to pitch sizes and associated repainting works. The need to protect the mature oak tree at the southern end of the route was also noted. Subject to the planning process progressing satisfactorily, a Summer 2027 construction start remained achievable.

BMX Track and Multi-Use Sports Facility

Members noted that trial holes had been completed to establish the position of underground water infrastructure and that Affinity Water was considering the resulting information and Ground Penetrating Radar documentation in order to design the required diversion.

The cost of the diversion works was currently estimated at approximately £80,000, with the overall project anticipated to be delayed by approximately five to six months. Ground works were currently expected to commence in January 2027, with completion targeted for Spring/Summer 2027.

It was noted that Biodiversity Net Gain and other environmental matters had been addressed through the planning process.

Members also considered proposals for a formal launch event on completion of the facility.

It was RESOLVED that:

a provisional budget of £10,000 be included in the 2027/28 Draft Budget (subject to Council approval) for a formal launch event for the BMX Track and Multi-Use Sports Facility, to be included within the Council's 2027 events programme.

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Environment Day 2027

Members noted that, following the success of the 2026 event, a further Environment Day was planned for Market Square on Wednesday 21st April 2027, following a similar format with information and educational stalls, activities and displays.

Bench Replacement Programme

The Committee noted the programme for the replacement of five benches during the following six weeks at Lindsay Road, Hadham Road, Parsonage Lane, Bells Hill and Dunmow Road/Parsonage Lane. A further three benches at Southmill Road/London Road, Rye Street/Stane Close and Barrells Down Road were proposed for replacement during 2027, subject to budget provision.

EPA23. SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT SUB-COMMITTEE

The Committee received the update report from Cllr Stephen Skinner and the Notes of the meetings held on 26th June and 24th July 2026.

EPA24. ALLOTMENTS SUB-COMMITTEE

The Committee received the Notes of the Allotments Sub-Committee meeting held on Friday 31st July 2026.

EPA25. FRIENDS OF THE CEMETERY

The Committee received the Notes of the Friends of the Cemetery meeting held on Friday 17th July 2026.

EPA26. WATERSIDE STORTFORD

Cllr Stephen Skinner reminded the Committee of the potential grant request from the Canal & River Trust towards towpath resurfacing works.

Members suggested that the Canal & River Trust should also consider whether s.106 funding might be available as a potential source of support for the works, subject to eligibility.

Minutes Approved
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Date:

EPA27. ITEMS REQUESTED FOR CONSIDERATION BY MEMBERS

Cannons Close Play Area

Members considered the request for Town Council support in relation to Cannons Close Play Area.

It was agreed that the matter should be referred to East Herts District Council as the responsible authority for the site.

Members who had inspected the play area considered that the existing provision was sufficient and, whilst improvements could always be considered, the condition of the site was not regarded as being as poor as that of some other play areas.

The Committee agreed that, going forward, the Town Council should focus its attention and resources on play areas for which it had direct responsibility.

It was further noted that the Town Council's previous grant contribution towards improvements at Waytemore Park should not be regarded as establishing a precedent for Town Council funding of play areas owned and managed by East Herts District Council.

EPA28. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

Some Members proposed a number of items for consideration at future meetings, including:

- Update on development plans for Coopers;
- Proposed opening of the Bridge Street entrance to Jackson Square;
- Millennium Bridge;
- Bishop's Stortford Conservation Order; and
- Woodland adjacent to the play area near Sworders Field.

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The CEO advised that a number of these matters fell outside the Terms of Reference of the Committee and, in some cases, outside the direct remit of the Town Council. Their suitability for inclusion on a future agenda would therefore be considered further before any item was added.

It was agreed that Events Feedback and Market Improvements be included as items for a future meeting.

EPA29. CLOSURE OF MEETING

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.15pm.

It was noted that the next Environment and Public Amenities Committee meeting was scheduled to take place on Monday 16th November 2026 at 7.00pm.

Minutes Approved
Signed (Chairman):
Date: