

**KENILWORTH TOWN COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Town Assembly Meeting  
held in St Francis of Assisi Church Hall, 110 Warwick Road, Kenilworth  
at 7.04 pm on Tuesday 23 April 2026**

The Town Mayor, Councillor J Kennedy, presided, the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk and twenty one electors attended.

The Mayor opened the meeting by warmly welcoming all present.

TA.10 **MATTERS ARISING**

The Mayor advised that no matters were arising from the last Town Assembly Meeting.

TA.11 **REPORT BY THE TOWN MAYOR ON THE WORK AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE COUNCIL YEAR**

The Mayor provided a comprehensive report on a busy 2025-2026 Council year -

*Kenilworth Town Council is driven by its working groups of councillors, sometimes including members of the community, to achieve things to make our town a better place to live, work and visit. It is often frustrating work, because the Town Council lacks funds and all members are volunteers. Nevertheless we have convening power, and I want to highlight the work of three groups in particular and celebrate what they have achieved over the last year.*

*When the new school opened in 2023 it soon became apparent that access to the school for pedestrians and cyclists was difficult and dangerous. Expertly and tenaciously led by Cllr Zoe Leventhal a group of councillors has worked closely with the school and county council officers to try to rectify this, including commissioning a study by a transport planning consultancy using CIL funding. Thanks to this joint effort we have recently submitted a proposal to the County Council for a project to improve signage and enhance safety at the entrance to the school.*

*The Cycling Delivery Group, led by Cllr Andrew Milton, has continued to advocate for the long-delayed Kenilworth to Leamington cycleway (known as K2L) and the cycle path across Abbey Fields. While both these projects are outside the scope of the town council they are important for the development of active travel in Kenilworth, and the town council has played an important part in ensuring progress on both these projects and other cycling plans.*

*Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding is the only major source of council moneys not directly funded by council tax-payers. The CIL Working Group, led by Cllr Kate Dickson, has considered for approval by Council three major proposals this year: support for the development of a safe road-crossing from Abbey Fields to the Castle, support for safety measures at the school, and a further investment in natural flood management upstream from Kenilworth to reduce the risk of flooding in the town. At the time of writing some £180k of CIL funding remains unallocated, and residents are reminded that the Council welcomes*

*proposals from the public for spending on improving infrastructure in the town: details of how to do this are on the Council's website.*

*Cllr Alan Chalmers' Kenilworth Revealed project to recreate St Mary's Abbey in augmented reality using re-enactors continued through the year and was finally completed in October. With funding from HS2's Business and Local Economy Fund and involving our MP, several councillors and the town clerk among the almost 100 re-enactors the result represents a true community effort. Now that the weather is getting better it is planned to have a big public launch on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> May to which everyone is welcome.*

*2025 marked the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's visit to Kenilworth Castle at the invitation of Robert Dudley from 9<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> June 1575. Community groups joined with English Heritage and the Town Council, supported by Warwick District Council, to deliver a memorable series of events. These included decorating Warwick Road with banners, a community picnic at the Castle attended by almost 1,000 people, art sessions for children, some entertaining theatre productions and a concert of Elizabethan choral music. The Council designed a souvenir pencil, and I went round to every primary school in the town to give each child a pencil and to talk about the anniversary and Queen Elizabeth. I was so impressed by the pupils and their teachers, what they knew and the preparation they had put in to understanding the history of our Castle and Town. Two students on assignment from the University of Warwick carried out an evaluation of the events which they presented to a meeting of councillors, and a book recording all the events is in preparation.*

*The minutes of Council meetings, and the meetings of the planning, and finance and general services committees give a detailed account of a busy municipal year. Two important motions were submitted, debated and passed: Cllr Kira Summers championing the safety, dignity and rights of transgender, intersex and all LGBTG+ residents, and Cllr Richard Dickson addressing the serious safety issues at Kenilworth Gate. We held a new-style Business Forum at the Holiday Inn which was well supported and welcomed by the local businesses attending. In February and April we held two strategy workshops to look ahead at what the Council should and can be doing in the future, in the light of ever-increasing activity over the past few years and the challenges stemming from local government reorganisation and the creation of unitary authorities.*

*I would like to highlight the amount of work that goes on behind the scenes to ensure the good running of the Council and the good management of council-tax payers' money. Over the past two years the staffing committee has worked with the clerk and with external professional advice to regularise officer contracts and ensure that staff are supported by an appropriate pension scheme. Warwick District Council has made significant improvements to Jubilee House, including solar PV on the roof, increased insulation and new double-glazed windows improving working conditions for staff and saving on energy bills. Once again the Council has received an unqualified and timely external audit, which is testimony to excellent financial management and provides members and residents with the assurance that the council's moneys are properly controlled and all expenditure scrutinised. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Maggie, Gemma and Miles for their motivation and flexibility, and all that they do to ensure the Council provides the best possible service for Kenilworth.*

*One of the main functions of the Council is to support local charities and community groups with grants to further their activities, and this year we have awarded grants totalling £52,749. Beneficiaries over the year have been Kenilworth Lions, Kenilworth History & Archaeological Society, Arts uplift, 496 Squadron air cadets, Time4Hope, Myton Hospices,*

*VASA, New Hope, Round table, Citizens Advice, Shakespeare Hospice, the Kenilworth Centre, Parenting Project, Beyond the Bump and Kenilworth School of Embroidery.*

*As well as benefitting the individual organisations these grants support community well-being and community cohesion more generally through the services and entertainment they provide. As mayor it has been my great privilege to participate in many of the events, including the Lions Grand Show, the Carnival, the Round Table Fireworks, Carols in the Castle, the Duck Race (including judging the corporate ducks!) and many other activities, including if I can get fit enough the Kenfest cycle ride.*

*When I was elected Mayor last year I said that I wanted to build the year around three themes: peace, community and service. Sadly it has not been a year of peace internationally. We may not be able to do much internationally, but we can do something locally to promote peace. In Kenilworth I hosted a reception at Kenilworth Castle for our French twinning partners from Bourg-la-Reine, celebrating Kenilworth's peaceful international links. I also took part in an exploratory visit with the Twinning Association to Castiglione dei Pepoli in Italy, a reminder that despite Brexit our people-to-people links across borders are still strong and growing. On Remembrance Sunday and in the surrounding events we honoured those who were killed in conflicts, and we also dedicated ourselves once again to peace and to the commitment of 'never again'. I attended an event organised by the local branch of the United Nations Association in Leamington last year together with our MP and other civic leaders to celebrate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the United Nations – an organisation that is needed today more than ever. On the anniversary of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia it was an honour to raise the Ukrainian flag at Jubilee House together with some of our Kenilworth Ukrainian residents to show solidarity with those who are suffering. On 9<sup>th</sup> May (incidentally Europe Day) I will be joining the Kenilworth Lions to launch the next stage of their appeal for ambulances and medical equipment to send to Ukraine.*

*Instead of the usual civic dinner and receptions I committed the civic hospitality budget to maximise the numbers involved and invited over two hundred people from Kenilworth to the four events I hosted. The first was the International Reception where we welcomed our French friends with English Sparkling Wine and were entertained by Cllr Kira Summers on the Guzheng, a Chinese instrument. The second event was 'Clean and Green' Kenilworth, bringing together all the environmental organisations that work across Kenilworth. Out of an enthusiastic discussion emerged plans for a project to celebrate and support the Finham Brook which runs through our town. Plans are already advanced to create a walking trail, a history of the Brook, naming the Brook on the bridges, eradicating the invasive Himalayan Balsam, reducing the damage to invertebrates in the water from dog flea medicines and limiting access to the brook through Abbey Fields. Coordinated by the Town Council but led by volunteers from the community this project will continue over the coming years. The third event in January was titled 'Healthy and Active Kenilworth', including many of the sports clubs and other groups that support physical and mental health and well-being across the town. Miles compiled a booklet about the participating organisations, which enabled lively conversations, networking and new connections for many of those who took part. The final event was the 'Creative Kenilworth' reception held in March to celebrate the theatres, dance, music and visual artists that make Kenilworth such a great place to live.*

*At the Creative Kenilworth reception I was pleased to give an award of merit to two outstanding people. To Aaron Dudley, English teacher at Kenilworth School and master organiser of the great debates at the school, bringing in people from the community as judges, and teaching students who take part the vital skills, which are needed more than ever, of listening and putting across their own views in a respectful and articulate manner. To Jan Burnell, who has led Kenilworth Altogether Greener for over ten years, a non-party political*

*community group that brings people together to understand more about the climate crisis and nature depletion and consider what we can do here in Kenilworth about these existential threats.*

*My mayoral charity of the year is the Parenting Project, a leading charity based in Kenilworth supporting family health and wellbeing. Their aim is to improve the life experiences and outcomes of children, young people and their families by providing services and support at a time when they are most needed. Together we have raised over £5,000 over the year, with key events including the St Nick's Christmas Tree Festival, the great online reindeer race, a well-attended quiz evening numerous other donations large and small. They are here this evening and it is still not too late to make a donation! It has been a real pleasure to work with Emma and Elaine and their colleagues, including Jane Williams the Chair, and I hope that in addition to the funds raised we have helped to build the profile of the vital work that they do in the town and nearby areas.*

*It remains for me to thank once again our incredible team – Maggie, Gemma and Miles – and my fellow councillors, and to wish Cllr Alison Insley as incoming mayor and enjoyable and rewarding tenure. I am sure she will do an amazing job!*

**TA.12      STRESS & RELAXATION TECHNIQUES WORKSHOP**

Kenilworth Resident, Lisa Cressey, provided a ten minute workshop on how to reduce day to day stress, incorporating three techniques covering breathing, language and a full body scan/check in.

**TA.13      OVERVIEW OF NEW YOUTH COUNCIL PILOT**

Cllr Alison Insley provided a short overview of the new Kenilworth Youth Council pilot recently launched. All information can be found on the Town Council website along with the applications form. The deadline for submissions is 5pm on Friday 1 May 2026.

**TA.14      MOTIONS TO BE MOVED BY MEMBERS OF THE ELECTORATE**

No motions were submitted.

**TA.15      QUESTIONS (Submitted in writing to the Town Clerk prior to the commencement of the meeting).**

No questions were submitted.

The meeting formally closed at 7.34 pm.

**Signed .....**

**Dated.....**