

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE TOWN MEETING 2026

Date of meeting Wednesday 20th May 2026 at 6.30 p.m.

Place of Meeting Atherstone Red Lion, Hotel, Long Street,
Atherstone, CV9 1BB

Present:

Public: 35 members of the public were in attendance.

Atherstone Town Council (ATC) Councillors: Cllr (Chair), J Chambers, C Evans, C Jones, G Short, M Short, D Wilkinson & D Wright, Barnett, M Thomas, T Short, O Dipple. (Apologies received from Cllr S Bishop, R Collins and G Chamberlain)

Warwickshire County Councillor R Gisbourne.

North Warwickshire Borough Council (NWBC) Mayor, Councillor Davina Ridley and Consort, Mr Steve Ridley.

Organisation representatives as listed in the minutes.

Chair: Town Mayor, Councillor Jacky Chambers

Clerk: Deputy Town Clerk, Sally Oldham - Minutes

The Town Mayor opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees.

1. To receive the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of 21st May 2025

It was noted that draft copies of the minutes have been on the Town Council website, in Atherstone Library and are circulated at the meeting.

The minutes of the 21st of May 2025 were presented and approved.

2. Atherstone Town Council's Annual Report

The Town Mayor presented the Annual Report of the Town Council 2025-6 (appendix 1). The main headline items were mentioned by the chair. It was noted that there was a Social Supermarket in the Arcade, Community Safety was being addressed through the Town's CCTV and Townwatch Radio scheme, better use of the parks and play areas

was being planned with improvements to St Mary's Park. Finances were noted including grants issued to local groups. The chair thanked the Deputy Clerk for working in the absence of a Clerk to keep things running smoothly.

3. Any other Business. Electors were invited to ask questions.

Question 1 A resident in the market square asked what could be done about heavy goods vehicles trying to drive through the Archway in the market square. Mr Shaw was concerned as the Archway was weak and had a height restriction in place. As WCC Gisbourne was in the meeting the chair invited him to respond. Cllr Gisbourne said he would take the question away and assist the resident with a reply. Mr Shaw thanked him.

Question 2 A resident what was happening with the extension to the Sheepy Road cemetery. He noted that there had been some objections from statutory bodies. The Deputy Town Clerk responded that the Town Council plans were with NWBC Planning Department and reports that had been submitted previously had required an update due to a change in legislation. Those updated reports should address the concerns raised.

Question 3 A resident asked if graves could be re-used after 100 years. The Deputy Town Clerk responded that this was not currently allowed under current cemetery legislation. She also re-iterated that there are still many years of space in Atherstone Cemetery but that as a statutory body running the Cemetery the Town Council had a duty to plan for the future, which it was doing. Plans and funding would be pursued along with a public consultation in the future.

Question 4 –A resident asked if the clerk would send him the planning reference for the Cemetery Extension Application and this was agreed.

The chair thanked everyone for the questions posed and invited others to share news about activities / events. The chair outlined the local focus on the two parks and encouraging local “ownership” of the areas to tackle anti-social behaviour and vandalism. It would be good to see residents and young people taking a role in organising events and making best use the parks in particular.

Cllr Mick Thomas – a Town Cllr and resident asked those in attendance to consider how youngsters could be encouraged to get involved locally – not just with sport – but getting them together and out and about using

the open spaces.

Other groups then were invited to speak:

A representative of Atherstone Car Show – Thanked the Town Council and others for all the support given to the event. Last year a Spitfire fly-past took place despite the bad weather and another fly-past is planned for 2026. It is hoped to have new activities for the children including Transformers. The chair thanked the Car Show for all their hard work.

The Chair of Dickens - thanked for the Town Council's support towards the fireworks and this year would be the 40th Anniversary of this popular Atherstone Event.

A representative of Ruby's Yard – explained how the organisation contributed to the Town. A derelict and overgrown area had been transformed into a safe and peaceful haven. It was accessible to nature and allowed for socialising outdoors. A firepit and outdoor kitchen was popular along with yoga days. Local SEND organisations used the space along with Scouts and Warwickshire Young Carers. Friendships could be built in what has been called "A little oasis in the heart of our town".

A representative of Atherstone Football Club and Cohort 4 – explained her work with vulnerable women in North Warwickshire. It allowed people to come together in a safe place to enjoy creativity activities or walking. There was also a men's group who met for breakfast.

A representative of Atherstone Partnership – explained how the not-for-profit group worked hosting the upcoming Two Day Big Weekender and Christmas events. They were working in Partnership to promote Atherstone as part of an application to be the UK Town of Culture. Having lived in Atherstone for 19 years himself he said what a great place Atherstone was to live.

A representative of WCAVA spoke to explain how, along with her colleagues, their work involved supporting groups to find volunteers and funding.

The meeting closed at 19:25pm

Date of the next meeting: 19th May 2027

Following the meeting all those in attendance were invited to stay for the presentation of the following awards followed by light refreshments.

The Mayor made the Presentations to:

Honorary Citizen 2026:

Town Cllr Carol Evans spoke about this year's recipient:

Mr Eddie Smallwood of the North Warwickshire Museum.

Ruby Chambers Young Person's Sports Award 2025

Mrs Jill Thomas spoke about this year's recipient:

Miss Ellen Simmons of Atherstone Adders Hockey Club

