

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the proceedings of the hybrid meeting of the General Purposes Committee, held on Monday the 16th June 2025.

Before the opening of the meeting the Mayor invited Reverend K. Hall to lead all present in prayer.

PRESENT: Councillor M. Buckley (in the Chair).

Councillors: D. Challenger, R. Davies, C. Griffiths, M. Hanson, E. Jones, M. Moore, M. Perfect, J. Stoneley and M. Whittaker.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors: P. Cunningham, N. Davies, D. Jones, V. Perfect and I. Roberts

IN ATTENDANCE: L. Wood, Town Clerk, N. Thornton, Support Officer, Mr. S. Jones BCUHB, Associate Director Primary Care, BCUHB and Mr. S. Taylor BCUHB, Primary and Community Care.

15. PUBLIC ENQUIRY ITEM

There were no public enquiry items.

16. TO ELECT A CHAIR FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2025/26

Councillor M. Perfect proposed Councillor M. Buckley as Chair of the General Purposes Committee and this was seconded by Councillor J. Stoneley.

RESOLVED: That Councillor M. Buckley was elected as Chair of the General Purposes Committee for the Municipal Year 2025/26.

17. TO ELECT A VICE CHAIR FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2025/26

Councillor M. Perfect proposed Councillor N. Davies as Vice Chair of the General Purposes Committee and this was seconded by Councillor D. Challenger.

RESOLVED: That Councillor N. Davies was elected as Vice Chair of the General Purposes Committee for the Municipal Year 2025/26.

18. DECLARATION OF INTEREST – MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT

There were no declarations of interest.

19. LOCAL PRIMARY CARE PROVISION

Mr. S. Jones, Associate Director Primary Care, BCUHB, and Mr. S. Taylor, Primary and Community Care, BCUHB, were in attendance and gave a presentation on local primary care provision in the Northwest Flintshire cluster, which consists of a GP collaborative made up of seven GP surgeries, a pharmacy collaborative with nine pharmacies, and an optometry collaborative consisting of two practices.

They highlighted key health indicators and outlined six cluster priorities. It was noted that Flint's three practices have varying list sizes and different operational models, including two independent practices and one Health Board-managed practice, the Laurel's Surgery.

Updates were provided on patient feedback and operational improvements at the Laurel's Surgery, including figures on compliments and complaints received. It was noted that comparisons with pre-COVID scores are needed for full context.

They discussed demand management efforts, including urgent primary care services, the remote triage model, care navigation training for receptionists, and recruitment and retention strategies.

In relation to the Laurels Surgery access and appointments, figures were for appointment availability, patients seen and patients that did not attend their appointments. This figure was over 1,500 patients that did not turn up and cancel, we need to urge patients, if they cannot attend, please cancel appointments.

Improvements in the telephony system were noted, with figures provided on the number of calls received, answered, and abandoned. A stacking system has been implemented, allowing callers to hear their position in the queue and receive updates, which patients find useful. Care navigation training has also been introduced for reception staff.

A National Patient Experience Survey for 2024/25 was conducted by the Laurel's Surgery. The results were mostly positive; however, a concern was raised that only 53% of patients felt the time between needing and receiving an appointment was about right or shorter than expected, highlighting an area for improvement.

Recruitment at the Laurel's was discussed, and it was confirmed that six GPs had been recruited, enabling more consistent care and better collaboration with Clinical Leads and Nursing Teams.

Patient engagement sessions have been arranged by the surgery, though attendance remains a challenge, with only one attendee at the most recent feedback meeting.

Councillor M. Buckley requested patient experience figures dating back to 2019 and further information on the receptionist training programme. Mr. S. Taylor responded that he could forward this information and confirmed that the training is part of a nationally recognised programme. Monthly whole-practice training sessions are held to reflect on performance and support continuous improvement.

Councillor C. Griffiths raised concerns regarding the difficulty patients face in making appointments and also, proposed a notice board displaying relevant practice information, including doctor names and working days and times, to help patients make informed choices. She also raised concerns about inappropriate laminated signs at the reception. Mr. S. Jones agreed the information board was a good suggestion but noted that displaying doctors' working hours may not be practical. He acknowledged patient challenges and said the practice is working to improve demand management. He also committed to reviewing the reception signs and removing any deemed inappropriate.

Councillor M. Hanson addressed the Flint Health Cluster Strategic Planning, requested updated cluster plans online, and highlighted difficulties in accessing primary care, including travel issues, GP availability, and the inverse care law. She noted Flint's growing population and that it is among the least served areas by the Health Board.

Mr. S. Jones explained the strategic planning process, emphasising limited resources and a focus on urgent care to reduce hospital admissions therefore the aim is to unblock

secondary care by focusing primary care, to avoid bed blocking in hospitals. He noted that the inverse care law is a function of system design and resource allocation.

He clarified that Wellbeing Centres are separate from GP clusters and acknowledged ongoing budget pressures on social care. Mr. S. Taylor added that the Board regularly discusses workforce planning with GPs to anticipate retirements and ensure timely recruitment.

Councillor M. Hanson said that when Flint lost its hospital, a comprehensive primary care centre was promised. Currently, patients must travel for laboratory services, and a previously available musculoskeletal service was discontinued. Mr. S. Jones confirmed plans to restart the musculoskeletal physiotherapy service in July and stressed the importance of cross-agency collaboration to improve health outcomes.

Councillor D. Challenger shared his positive experience with the Laurels practice and acknowledged improvements over recent years. He suggested adding pharmacy signposting to the telephone waiting system and proposed implementing an e-consult system to reduce call volumes.

Councillor C. Griffiths raised concerns for patients without phone access and suggested reserving some appointments for walk-in patients. Mr. S. Jones responded that the method of contact should not be a barrier to booking an appointment.

Councillor R. Davies questioned the low number of formal complaints and suggested the system be reviewed. He also raised parking concerns, noting the surgery car park is often full despite few visible patients, and questioned if staff were using patient spaces. Mr. S. Taylor clarified that only formally submitted complaints are recorded and that informal resolutions directly with staff are not documented. He said he would remind staff of designated parking areas.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted, and that further information be provided to the Town Council. Feedback from this meeting will be conveyed to BCUHB for consideration.

20. MINUTES

Councillor M. Moore proposed the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 28th April 2025 and the minutes of the special meeting held on Monday 2nd June 2025 be approved, which was seconded by Councillor R. Davies.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 28th April 2025 and the minutes of the special meeting held on Monday 2nd June 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

21. FLINT FESTIVAL & TOWN EVENTS

Councillor M. Perfect reminded Councillors that the Flint Festival will take place next month. Many events have already sold out, and a couple of new events have been added to the programme, namely a Car Boot Sale and a Truck Pull RNLI fundraising event.

Councillor M. Perfect also informed the Council that she is currently in discussions with local businesses regarding sponsorship opportunities and will report back with updates at the next meeting.

The Mayor, Councillor R. Davies, reminded Councillors that an Armed Forces Day ceremony will be held at the Cenotaph on Saturday, 28th June. He also announced that he will be hosting the Mayor's Charity Ball on Friday, 27th February, 2026.

RESOLVED: That the reports be noted.

22. TRANSPORT BRIEFING

The Chair provided an update on behalf of Councillor N. Davies. Following the recent meeting held on 16th May, the Station Manager advised that the lighting columns at the station have been upgraded to Network Rail's new LED standard. The movement-sensitive columns may appear dim when viewed from outside the station, but they automatically brighten when individuals are present in the immediate area. This design minimises light pollution while enhancing energy efficiency. The installation complies with required lux level standards, and surveys have been conducted to confirm compliance.

Councillor M. Moore added that the new lift at the station is now in full operation.

RESOLVED: That the report was noted.

23. MATCH FUNDING SCHEME – IMPROVEMENTS TO CHILDREN'S PLAY AREAS 2025/26

The Council considered the proposed plans for the Kiln Close play area submitted by Mr. R. Roberts, Gwella Play Design Officer.

Councillor M. Perfect was pleased to see the plans included adaptive play equipment for all to enjoy and proposed that the Council accept the proposed plan, and this was seconded by Councillor M. Hanson.

RESOLVED: That the Council accepts the proposed plans for the Kiln Close play area and that Mr. R. Roberts, Gwella Play Design Officer, will be informed accordingly.

24. WELSH WATER

Councillor C. Griffiths proposed that the Council write to Welsh Water to request clarification on whether residents in Flint living in Band D and Band E properties are being charged the same water rates across different wards in the town. This was seconded by Councillor J. Stoneley.

The majority of Councillors objected to the proposal, and it was not carried.

RESOLVED: That the proposal to write to Welsh Water regarding water rate charges for Band D and E properties across Flint wards was not carried.

25. COUNCIL TAX

Councillor C. Griffiths proposed that a letter be sent to Flintshire County Council to enquire whether all Band D and Band E properties in each area of Flint are charged the same Council Tax rate, or whether the rates vary between different areas.

Councillor R. Davies responded that this information is readily available online.

Councillor M. Perfect proposed an amendment that, rather than writing to Flintshire County Council, the Town Clerk finds the information online and shares it with Councillor C. Griffiths. This amendment was seconded by Councillor M. Hanson.

As there was no seconder for Councillor C. Griffiths' original proposal, it was not carried.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk will source the relevant Council Tax information online and share it with Councillor C. Griffiths.

Date of Council Meeting	Monday 16 th June, 2025
..... Chair	