

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Council held at 2.30 pm on Tuesday, 23 June 2026

Present:

Members: Councillor R Bailey (Chair)

Councillor N Akhtar	Councillor J Innes
Councillor P Akhtar	Councillor T Jewell
Councillor S Akhter	Councillor S Jobbar
Councillor A Albert	Councillor J Jones
Councillor F Beechey	Councillor A Kaur
Councillor L Bigham	Councillor L Kelly
Councillor J Blundell	Councillor S Keough
Councillor L Boyle	Councillor AS Khan
Councillor R Brown	Councillor M Lapsa
Councillor A Bryant	Councillor J Lepoidevin
Councillor A Bullock	Councillor J McNicholas
Councillor K Caan	Councillor B Mosterman
Councillor D Clark	Councillor M Mutton
Councillor A Cole	Councillor S Nazir
Councillor P Cowley	Councillor J Odje
Councillor W Davies	Councillor C Phillips
Councillor G Duggins	Councillor P Reddy
Councillor J Fearn	Councillor E M Reeves
Councillor M Fogden	Councillor H Rehman
Councillor J Gardiner	Councillor E Ruane
Councillor S Gray	Councillor K Sandhu
Councillor M Greenhalgh	Councillor R Singh
Councillor M Gregory	Councillor D Stainton
Councillor G Hayre	Councillor A Tucker
Councillor M Heaven	Councillor J Wells
Councillor P Hetherton	
Councillor A Hopkins	

Honorary Alderman: D Batten

Apologies: Honorary Alderman M Hammon

Public Business

14. Minutes of the Annual Meeting Part One and Part Two held on 21 May 2026

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting, Parts 1 and 2, held on 21 May 2026 were agreed and signed as a true record.

15. Coventry Good Citizen Award

On behalf of the City Council, the Lord Mayor and Her Honour Judge Montgomery KC, Honorary Recorder, presented Barry Price with the Good Citizen Award. His citation read:

“For over 10 years Barry has served Coventry through his leadership of Coventry Motorcycle Action Group.

Barry has organised numerous charity events including Christmas Toy Runs, Easter Egg Runs, pet food deliveries to animal sanctuaries and annual fundraising events. These have brought joy to children, supported young carers, and aided vulnerable animals across the region.

Through his efforts, over £100,000 has been raised for local causes, making a significant difference to communities and services throughout Coventry.

Barry also supports motorcyclists by coordinating “Biker Down” first-aid training and welcoming new riders, helping promote safety, confidence, and responsible riding. His commitment has created a vital social network for members, fostering friendships and support for those who need it most.

Barry is widely respected for the way he brings people together, strengthens his community, and works for the good of others and he is a truly deserving recipient of this Coventry Good Citizen Award.”

16. **Correspondence and Announcements of the Lord Mayor**

1. **Galati**

The Lord Mayor referred to the tragic drone attack on the City’s twin city of Galati on the evening of 28–29 May 2026. On behalf of the City Council, he and the Leader of the Council had written to the Mayor of Galati to express the City Council’s heartfelt condolences.

2. **Death of Harry Noble**

The Lord Mayor referred to the recent death Harry Noble. Harry served the City with great dedication for many years as the City Architect and Planning Officer.

Harry would be fondly remembered by all who had the privilege of working with him.

3. **Death of Honorary Alderman David Skinner MBE**

The Lord Mayor referred to the recent death of Honorary Alderman David Skinner.

David was a Member of the City Council for 16 years representing Westwood Ward from 2006-2022. During that time, he served on Ward Forums, Licensing and Regulatory Committee, Planning Committee and Scrutiny Boards and represented the City Council on a number of outside bodies and charities.

He was awarded an MBE in 2020 for services to Coventry communities and was made an Honorary Alderman in 2022.

David would be warmly remembered by all who knew him and the City Council's thoughts were with his family at this difficult time.

A letter of condolence had been sent to his family on behalf of the City Council.

Members paid tribute to David and the contribution he had made to the Council and the City.

In respect of items 2 and 3 above, the Council observed a Minute's silence as a mark of respect for Harry and David.

4. **Kiel**

The Lord Mayor referred to his recent visit to the City's twin City of Kiel where he and the Lady Mayoress had attended the International Cities Forum. He reported that it had been very informative event and had been attended by delegates from Kiel's Twin and Partner Cities.

5. **King's Birthday Honours**

The Lord Mayor referred to the recent announcement of King's Birthday Honours List. Six individuals connected to Coventry had been recognised:

- Sukriti Sen, Director of Children and Education Services, Coventry City Council had been awarded a CBE for services to Children's Social Care.
- Michael Akers, Founder of Mikey's Wish Foundation had been awarded an MBE for services to Special Educational Needs.
- Andrew Cooper, Managing Director of GE Verona had been awarded an MBE for services to Manufacturing and Defence.
- Annette Hay, Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, De Montfort University had been awarded an MBE for services to Higher Education.
- Becki Coombe had been awarded a BEM for services to the community in Coventry and Warwickshire.
- Hitesh Mehta, Special Constable, West Midlands Police and Charity Trustee, Shree Krishna Temple had been awarded a BEM for services to Policing, to Charity and to Volunteering in Coventry.

It was also noted that Martin Reeves, former Chief Executive of Coventry City Council, had been awarded an OBE for services to Local Government.

On behalf of the City Council, the Lord Mayor congratulated all recipients on their Awards.

17. **Petitions**

RESOLVED that the following petitions be referred to the appropriate Cabinet Member, City Council body or external organisation:

1. Request that the Council resurface and provide road safety measures on Widdrington Road – 14 signatures, presented by Councillor A Hopkins.
2. Request that the Council introduce 20 mph zones on Whoberley Avenue and Maudsley Road – 38 signatures, presented by Councillor Innes.
3. Request that the Council install traffic calming measures at the Brookside Road/Wildcroft Road junction – 146 signatures, presented by Councillor P Akhtar.
4. Request that the Council introduce ‘safe play’ surfaces and a children’s playground on the grassland between Buckingham Rise and Brookside Avenue – 104 signatures, presented by Councillor J Jones.
5. Request that toilet facilities be provided for all at Coundon Hall Park – 397 signatures, presented by Councillor J Wells.
6. Request the implementation of a residents parking permit scheme in the CV1 4HU and CV 4HT area – 53 signatures, presented by Councillor S Nazir.
7. Request that the Council stop using bailiffs to collect Council Tax debt – 112 signatures, presented by Councillor S Gray.

18. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

19. **Acceptance of Grant Funding - Local Authority Housing Fund Round 4**

In accordance with Part 3F of the Constitution, the City Council received a report of the Chief Executive which set out decisions undertaken by the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and Resources (Section 151 Officer) in accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules as set out in the Constitution and following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities and the Leader of the Council in relation to the Local Authority Housing Fund Round 4.

20. **Amendment to Allocation of Executive Functions within Cabinet and Appointment of Deputy Cabinet Members**

In accordance with Paragraphs 9.4 and 9.6 of Part 2B of the Constitution, the Council received a report of the Leader of the Council informing Members of a change made in relation to the allocation of Executive Functions within Cabinet, together with the appointment of two Deputy Cabinet Members as follows:

- a) That the function of Strategic Energy Partnership had been included in the Cabinet Portfolio of Community Safety and Cohesion
- b) That Councillor P Akhtar had been appointed as the Deputy Cabinet Member for City Services
- c) That Councillor G Hayre had been appointed as the Deputy Cabinet Member for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing

The amended allocation of Cabinet Portfolios for 2026/27 was appended to the report submitted.

21. Exercise of Emergency Functions

In accordance with Paragraph 4a of Part 2M of the Constitution, the City Council received a report of the Chief Executive which informed Council of a decision undertaken by the Chief Executive, in accordance with the Constitution and following consultation with the Leader of the Council, Councillor G Duggins, to exercise emergency functions to approve a budget of £400k, funded from corporate contingencies, to support activities associated with the City's celebrations to mark Coventry City Football Club securing the Championship title and promotion to the Premier League.

The above decision, including the reasons for the decision taken, had been published on the City Council's website.

22. Annual Report from the Leader to the Council on Key Decisions made under Special Urgency Provisions 2025/2026

In accordance with Part 3B of the Constitution, the City Council received a report of the Director of Law, Governance and Safer Communities on the annual submission from the Leader of Key Decision made in the previous municipal year where the Special Urgency provision had been used. The report indicated that there were no such cases during the 2025/26 municipal year.

23. Question Time

Councillors P Hetherton, L Kelly and J McNicholas provided written answers to the questions set out in the Questions Booklet, together with oral responses to supplementary questions at the meeting. The following Members answered oral questions put to them by other Members as set out below, together with supplementary questions on the same matters:

	Questions asked by Councillor:	Question put to Councillor:	Subject matter
1	Councillor A Hopkins	Councillor J McNicholas	Coventry Pride Weekend
2	Councillor M Lapsa	Councillor J McNicholas	Illegal bike riding in parks
3	Councillor A Bullock	Councillor P Hetherton	Completion of Clifford Bridge Road cycle lane
4	Councillor D Stainton	Councillor P Hetherton	Food waste bins
5	Councillor M Fogden	Councillor L Kelly	Coventry swimming baths regeneration
6	Councillor D Clark	Councillor K Caan	Potential relocation of Triumph Boxing Club
7	Councillor J Lepoidevin	Councillor R Brown	Breakdown of income/expenditure relating to the £400k withdrawn from

			the contingency budget.
8	Councillor A Tucker	Councillor AS Khan	Assurance that Coventry Libraries will not be removing books with LGBT+ references
9	Councillor A Tucker	Councillor J McNicholas	Powers to tackle organised crime syndicates using high-street storefronts for criminal activities.
11	Councillor P Hetherton	Councillor L Kelly	Clarify checks on fire hydrants
12	Councillor F Beechey	Councillor L Kelly	Measures taken to secure the closed Belgrade Plaza NCP car park
13	Councillor A Kaur	Councillor K Caan	Advice on heatwave
14	Councillor M Gregory	Councillor J McNicholas	Fixed penalty notices

24. **Statement**

The Leader, Councillor G Duggins, made a Statement which summarised the City Council's achievements over the past year and highlighted the following:

- The Parks and Open Spaces Teams' Green Flag Award
- The Councils' Purple Flag status, recognising the City was a safe, entertaining and diverse destination after dark.
- The Department for Transport's 'green' rating – which was the highest rating for road maintenance.
- 'Digital Council of the Year' for the second year running.
- Recognition for the Council's pledge in respect of tackling anti-social behaviour
- High attendance at the recent Coventry Job Fest in Willenhall
- Adult Social Care Services' 'Good' rating by Ofsted in February 2026
- Children's Services 'Outstanding' rating by Ofsted in May 2026

Councillor J Gardiner, Leader of the Reform UK Group, responded to the Statement.

Councillor J Blundell, Leader of the Conservative Group, responded to the Statement.

Councillor E Reeves, Leader of the Green Group, responded to the Statement.

The Leader made a short reply.

25. **Debate - Recent Achievements of Coventry City Council's Children's Services and Adult Social Care Services**

The following debate was moved by Councillor M Mutton and seconded by Councillor L Bigham:

“This Council notes with immense pride the recent achievements of Coventry City Council’s Children’s Services and Adult Social Care Services.

Council welcomes the decision by Ofsted to award Coventry Children’s Services an “Outstanding” rating, recognising the exceptional work carried out to safeguard, support and improve the lives of children and young people across our city.

Council also welcomes the recent Care Quality Commission (CQC) assessment which awarded Coventry ’s Adult Social Care services a “Good” rating, reflecting the high-quality care, professionalism and dedication shown to vulnerable adults, older residents and families throughout Coventry.

These achievements are a testament to years of hard work, strong partnership working and a shared commitment to delivering the very best outcomes for residents.

Council places on record its sincere thanks and appreciation to:

- All frontline staff, social workers, care workers, support staff and managers within Children ’s Services and Adult Social Care;**
- Senior officers and directors whose leadership, professionalism and vision have driven continuous improvement;**
- Cabinet Members and political leadership for their commitment, support and strategic direction;**
- Partner organisations, schools, NHS colleagues, voluntary sector organisations and all those who work collaboratively to support Coventry residents.**

Council recognises that these ratings are not simply inspection outcomes but represent real positive impacts on the lives of children, young people, vulnerable adults and families across our city.

Council further acknowledges the dedication shown by officers and staff during challenging times, including increasing demand on services, financial pressures and the lasting impacts of the pandemic and wider social inequalities.

Therefore, this Council resolves to:

- 1. Formally congratulate everyone involved in achieving these excellent outcomes;**
- 2. Continue supporting investment in high-quality Children ’s Services and Adult Social Care;**
- 3. Ensure Coventry continues striving for excellence in protecting and supporting its residents;**

4. Request that the Chief Executive conveys the Council's appreciation and congratulations to all relevant staff and partner organisations."

RESOLVED that the Motion as set out above in bold be adopted.

26. Debate - Equality, Fairness and Confidence in Policing

The following debate was moved by Councillor J Gardiner and seconded by Councillor F Beechey:

"This Council believes in the equality of all before the law. In the light of the appalling death of Henry Nowak in police custody, this council calls upon the government to take urgent steps to reform national police guidance, training and practice to enable police officers to be sceptical of claims of racism made by ethnic minorities.

As a multicultural city, Coventry's citizens want to know that if they are attacked and injured and say that they have been stabbed or cannot breathe, that a police officer will prioritise their welfare over fears that their police career could end for questioning claims of racism by an ethnic minority. All lives matter and one race is not of a higher priority than another."

The following amendment was moved by Councillor J McNicholas, seconded by Councillor AS Khan and accepted by Councillor J Gardiner thus becoming the substantive motion (in accordance with paragraph 15.1.7 of the Constitution):

"That the Motion as set out as Item 13(b) on the agenda be amended as follows:

That in the second line, after the words "this Council calls upon" delete the rest of the Motion and insert the following words:

"West Midlands Police to consider the findings of the impending investigation into Hampshire Police by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and the outcomes of any national reviews of Police race guidance to address any potential matters of racism, whilst also taking into account both the Government's request that the perpetrator's 21 year sentence be reviewed as unduly lenient and the Nowak's family's sincere wish that their son's murder not be exploited for political purposes.

The Council further believes that public confidence depends upon policing being impartial, with allegations of discrimination being investigated fairly on the basis of evidence, while ensuring that officers responding to emergencies prioritise the preservation of life and public safety above all else and that every victim deserves the same protection and every suspect the same standard of justice."

The amended Motion now to read:

"This Council believes in the equality of all before the law. In the light of the appalling death of Henry Nowak in police custody, this Council calls upon West Midlands Police to consider the findings of the impending

investigation into Hampshire Police by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and the outcomes of any national reviews of Police race guidance to address any potential matters of racism, whilst also taking into account both the Government's request that the perpetrator's 21 year sentence be reviewed as unduly lenient and the Nowak's family's sincere wish that their son's murder not be exploited for political purposes.

The Council further believes that public confidence depends upon policing being impartial, with allegations of discrimination being investigated fairly on the basis of evidence, while ensuring that officers responding to emergencies prioritise the preservation of life and public safety above all else and that every victim deserves the same protection and every suspect the same standard of justice."

RESOLVED that the amended Motion as set out in bold above, be adopted.

27. **Debate - St Mary's Guildhall**

The following debate was moved by Councillor M Heaven and seconded by Councillor J Blundell:

"This Council recognises that St Mary's Guildhall is one of Coventry's most important historic landmarks and believes it should be accessible to all.

Council further believes that free entry would promote civic pride, support tourism, increase city centre footfall, and help make Coventry a more welcoming city.

Therefore, Council resolves to request that the Cabinet Member and relevant officers bring forward proposals for the removal of admission charges at St Mary's Guildhall and report on the financial implications and implementation of free public access."

The following amendment was moved by Councillor J Gardiner, seconded by Councillor M Lapsa and **lost**:

In the first paragraph, after the words "and believes it should be" delete the words "accessible to all" and insert the words "free for Coventry Citizens to enter."

In the second paragraph, delete the word "further" in the first line and after the words "believes that" add the word "such". After the words "civic pride" insert a full stop and then add the words "Council further suspects that free entry to all visitors could"

In the third paragraph, after the words "St Mary's Guildhall" delete the rest of the sentence and replace with the following:-

"which set out the viability of removing admission charges for Coventry residents and the viability of removing the admission charges for all other visitors including tourists. These proposals and viability reports should be

brought to Full Council when prepared, for each proposal to be voted upon by Full Council.”

The proposed amended Motion now to read:

“This Council recognises that St Mary’s Guildhall is one of Coventry’s most important historic landmarks and believes it should be free for Coventry Citizens to enter.

Council believes that such free entry would promote civic pride. Council further suspects that free entry to all visitors could support tourism, increase city centre footfall and help make Coventry a more welcoming city.

Therefore, Council resolves to request that the Cabinet Member and relevant officers bring forward proposals for the removal of admission charges at St Mary’s Guildhall which set out the viability of removing admission charges for Coventry residents and the viability of removing the admission charges for all other visitors including tourists. These proposals and viability reports should be brought to Full Council when prepared, for each proposal to be voted upon by Full Council.”

RESOLVED that the Motion as set out above in bold be adopted.

28. **Debate - The use of Palantir Technology in Council Services**

The following debate as set out on the Council agenda was moved by Councillor M Greenhalgh with a specified alteration in accordance with Part 3A, Paragraph 14.5 of the Constitution as follows:

“that resolution number 5 at the end of the Motion as set out on the agenda be deleted and the following alternative number 5 be inserted:

5) Request a report at the Cabinet Member for Finance and Strategic Resources’ next Cabinet Member Meeting on the practicalities of ending the current Palantir contract at the next lawful opportunity subject to contractual requirements.”

The Motion as set out below, including the specified alteration detailed above, was seconded by Councillor E Reeves:

“This Council notes the findings of the House of Commons Science, Innovation and Technology Committee report published earlier this month, which identifies data security, vendor lock-in and technology sovereignty as critical concerns for public sector digital transformation. The report expresses particular concern about Palantir’s growing role in the UK public sector and recommends that Government exercise the break clause in the NHS Federated Data Platform contract, publish a costed exit plan, and pursue in-house or UK-based alternatives where possible.

Additionally, this Council believes that the actions of the organisation and beliefs held by the leadership of Palantir are not compatible with the

expectations of morality, integrity and accountability that befit the award of any contract for local public services. With social care and children's data being among the most sensitive information held by the Council, any party granted exposure to this data must be subject to the highest levels of scrutiny and only be considered when measured against an ethical framework consistent with the values of humanity and democracy.

Given the findings of the report and widespread public concern, this Council resolves to:

- 1. Immediately publish the findings of the Council's earlier review into the use of Palantir technology in Council Services.**
- 2. Ask officers to provide an additional briefing to all groups within council on the current and future intended usage of Palantir technologies prior to the September council meeting.**
- 3. Ask officers to examine alternative options, including in-house development, open-source tools, UK-based suppliers, public sector collaboration, and locally based trainee or apprentice-supported administrative models, with appropriate safeguarding and data protection controls.**
- 4. Require any future AI related contracts to be assessed against ethical practice, the potential for vendor lock-in and expected social value.**
- 5) Request a report at the Cabinet Member for Finance and Strategic Resources' next Cabinet Member Meeting on the practicalities of ending the current Palantir contract at the next lawful opportunity subject to contractual requirements."**

RESOLVED that the Motion as set out above in bold be adopted.

(Meeting closed at 8.15 pm)