

GODALMING TOWN COUNCIL

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107-109 High Street
Godalming
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Sir/Madam

I HEREBY SUMMON YOU to attend the Full Council Meeting of the Godalming Town Council to be held in the Council Chamber, Waverley Borough Council, The Burys, Godalming on THURSDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER 2025 at 6.30pm.

Andy Jeffery

DATED this 29th day of August 2025.

Andy Jeffery
CEO to the Town Council

If you wish to speak at this meeting please contact Godalming Town Council on 01483 523575 or email office@godalming-tc.gov.uk

Where possible proceedings will be live streamed via the Town Council's Facebook page. If you wish to watch the council meeting's proceedings, please go to Godalming Town Council's [YouTube](#) page.

The meeting will be preceded by prayer with the Rev Adam Payne of the Godalming United Church officiating – all who wish to participate in prayers are most welcome to do so; however, anyone not wishing to participate may leave the chamber or sit quietly for the short duration of the prayers. All individuals' decisions in this matter are respected.

A G E N D A

1. MINUTES

THE TOWN MAYOR to sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on the 24 July 2025.

2. APOLOGIES

TO RECEIVE apologies for absence.

3. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER REGISTERABLE INTERESTS

To receive from Members any declarations of interests in relation to any items included on the agenda for this meeting required to be disclosed by the Localism Act 2011 and the Godalming Members' Code of Conduct.

4. PETITIONS/STATEMENTS/QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

THE TOWN MAYOR to invite members of the public to make representations, ask or answer questions and give evidence in respect of the business on the agenda or other matters not on the agenda. This forum to be conducted in accordance with Standing Order 5:

- The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting for a maximum of three minutes per person or 15 minutes overall, unless otherwise directed by the Chair of the meeting,

Members of the Public have the right to attend all meetings of the Town Council and its Committees and are welcome.

A question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The Chair of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given. If a matter raised is one for principal councils or other authorities, the person making representations will be informed of the appropriate contact details.

- Question from Mr Ian Williams a resident of Godalming

If the town council had been aware that the school and hockey club were going to exclude all community-based football group bookings from 1st September before they agreed to the CIL grant for Broadwater astro floodlight replacement, would it have affected the decision? Is there any opportunity to revisit the application and include the condition that these bookings need to be reinstated/honoured as part of the agreement? My group has played there every Thursday for 25 years and contributed over £65000 in pitch fees in that time, the regular Wednesday group also there for over 10 years contributing over £20000 and I am also aware of many other groups with long-standing bookings in a similar position. If this cannot be revisited then can the council suggest alternative local astro pitches for community hire for groups over a certain age please?

5. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

To consider any questions from councillors in accordance with Standing Order 6.

6. RECEIPT OF OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

To receive official announcements, letters, etc.

Members to receive a letter of thanks from ChoirBLAST – attached for the information of Members.

7. RECEIPT OF COMMITTEE CHAIRS' REPORTS

Committee Chairs to update Council on the work of the following Committee's:

Audit Committee

Environment & Planning Committee

Policy & Management Committee

Staffing Committee

Members to receive an update on recruitment and appointments in the exempt session.

8. RECEIPT OF COMMITTEE MINUTES

To receive the minutes of the undermentioned Committees:

	Meetings Dated
Environment & Planning	7 August 2025
Policy & Management Committee	7 August 2025

9. SUPPORT FOR CHOIRBLAST 2026

Purpose of Report

To consider a request from the organisers of ChoirBLAST for grant in kind use of Council facilities and direct financial support towards the delivery of ChoirBLAST 2026, and to make provision within the 2025/26 Arts, Culture & Community Budget.

Background

- ChoirBLAST is a registered charity (No. 1210483) and renowned free-to-attend, non-competitive choral festival.
- In 2025 it featured **78 choirs**, international performers, and singers aged 3–98, drawing **3,000 performers** and **10,000 visitors**.
- The 2026 festival will run from **12–14 June**, with the main event on **Saturday, 13 June**.
- Organisers request in-kind venue use and financial support for essential services and infrastructure.

Policy Context

Council Strategic Alignment

- Supports our **Arts, Culture & Community objectives**: cultural vitality, wellbeing, inclusive participation, and economic vibrancy.
- Reflects the Council's commitment to **Equality and Diversity** through inclusive programming and access.

Martyn's Law (Protect Duty)

- **Timeline**: The **Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025** (Martyn's Law) received Royal Assent on **3 April 2025**. An **implementation period of at least 24 months** is in place, meaning active enforcement is expected **by April 2027**. [ProtectUK+13homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk+13Avigilon+13](#)
- **Tiered Requirements**:
 - **Standard Tier** applies to events or venues with **200–799 persons**, requiring basic terrorism risk assessments, staff awareness training, and public protection procedures (e.g. evacuation routes, lockdown plans, communication protocols). [Brabners+12Avigilon+12The Times+12](#)
 - **Enhanced Tier** applies to events **800+ persons**, adding detailed risk assessments, physical security measures (CCTV, access control), designated compliance officer, and formal documentation/reporting. [ProtectUK+10Avigilon+10safetydocs.org+10](#)
- **Implications for ChoirBLAST**:

Whilst active enforcement is not expected until 2027, it is suggested that ChoirBLAST's organisers should work towards implementation during 2026 so they are prepared for full compliance in 2027. The estimated attendance (~10,000) over the course of the event places it well above the Enhanced Tier threshold, thus requiring a comprehensive security plan. As potential future custodians of The Burys, Officers will seek to encourage organisers to review their current arrangements to ensure future compliance and to identify any additional security measures required under Martyn's Law.

Proposed Use of Council Facilities

The following use of Council venues and facilities is requested:

- **Caudle Hall (Wilfrid Noyce Centre)**: Friday 12 June (2.00pm–11.00pm) for set-up/overnight storage; Saturday 13 June (7.00am–11.00pm) for performances.
- **Wyatt Room**: Friday 12 June (2.00pm–11.00pm) and Saturday 13 June (7.00am–11.00pm) for storage.
- **Oglethorpe Room**: Friday 12 June (2.00pm – Sunday 14 June, 10.00am) for storage.
- **Stage**: erection and use, including steps.
- **Bandstand**: Saturday 13 June (7.00am–9.00pm) with power supply.

- **Licensing:** Burys Field and Jack Phillips Memorial Ground under GTC licence.
- Facilities Support:
 - Support from GTC Facilities/Maintenance Team on Saturday, 13 June for janitorial support across the Wilfrid Noyce Centre and Crown Court areas.
- To enable full-day use of the Wilfrid Noyce Centre on the Saturday, it will be necessary to relocate the Council's regular Saturday morning user at a cost of up to £300 depending on the alternative provision.
- All equipment (with the exception of the stage) is to be cleared from Caudle Hall by 11.00pm on Saturday, 13 June and stored in the Wyatt/Oglethorpe Rooms to ensure Caudle Hall is available for Sunday morning use.

Financial Implications

The organisers have submitted indicative costs for the following items:

- HOPPA accessible transport (2 vehicles) – £700
- Additional bins – £750
- Toilets – £750
- Additional disabled toilets – £200–£300
- Fully accessible disabled toilet with hoist – £600
- Accessibility works for one field stage – £1,000
- Transport for Park & Ride facility – TBC
- Relocation of Saturday morning user – £300

The estimated requirement is **£4,300–£5,300**, subject to quotations.

Final confirmation of financial support can only be given once Council has approved its **2025/26 budget in December/January**.

Economic and Social Benefits

- **Economic:** Using the Association of Town & City Management Event Impact Toolkit, with a conservative assumption of £15 average spend per visitor, ChoirBLAST 2026 could generate £150,000 in additional local economic activity. This supports local retailers, hospitality, and accommodation providers.
- **Social:** ChoirBLAST provides inclusive access to group singing, delivering proven mental health and wellbeing benefits (release of oxytocin, serotonin, endorphins, and dopamine). It is open to participants of all ages and abilities, with free attendance for performers and audiences alike.
- **Reputational:** ChoirBLAST positions Godalming as host to a nationally significant cultural festival, raising the town's profile regionally and nationally.

Equality and Inclusion

ChoirBLAST demonstrates a strong commitment to equality and inclusion, celebrating choirs of all abilities and backgrounds, providing free access to audiences and performers, and ensuring accessibility through adapted venues and facilities.

This supports the Council's Equality and Diversity objectives by promoting inclusive community engagement.

Risk Assessment

- **Financial & Reputational risk:** reputational damage would arise if Council support is withdrawn after initial approval; however, this is mitigated by explicitly noting that final confirmation is subject to budget-setting in December/January.
- **Operational risks:** venue management, health and safety, accessibility are managed by Officers working directly with the organisers.
- **Security compliance risk** addressed by planning for Martyn's Law requirements and working with organisers to ensure full readiness by April 2027.

Conclusion

ChoirBLAST delivers clear cultural, social, reputational, and economic benefits to Godalming. Support in kind and in budgetary provision is consistent with the Council's Arts, Culture & Community objectives.

Support for ChoirBLAST aligns directly with the Council's strategic objectives and demonstrates proactive governance—including preparing for new protective legislation.

Recommendations

If minded to support ChoirBLAST 2026 as set out above, Council is requested to resolve that:

- a. The grant in kind use of Council venues and facilities for ChoirBLAST 2026, as set out in the report, be approved.
- b. Support from the Facilities/Maintenance Team be allocated on Saturday, 13 June 2026 to provide janitorial support across the Wilfrid Noyce Centre and Crown Court areas.
- c. Expenditure up to £300 be approved to relocate the regular Saturday morning user of the Wilfrid Noyce Centre to enable full-day use of the venue for ChoirBLAST.
- d. Council recognises the economic, social, and reputational benefits that ChoirBLAST brings to Godalming, including its contribution to local businesses, its community wellbeing impact, and its role in enhancing the town's cultural identity.
- e. Council further recognises the festival's commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion, noting that ChoirBLAST provides free access for participants and audiences, celebrates choirs of all abilities and backgrounds, and takes practical steps to ensure accessibility for disabled performers and attendees.
- f. The Chief Executive Officer be requested to include provision for direct financial support to ChoirBLAST 2026 within the 2025/26 Arts, Culture & Community Budget at an indicative level of £4,300–£5,300, subject to confirmation of quotations.
- g. It be noted that final confirmation of both financial and venue support can only be given once Council has approved the 2025/26 budget in December/January.
- h. Officers be authorised to liaise with the organisers of ChoirBLAST to finalise operational and financial arrangements in line with this resolution, including consideration of Martyn's Law obligations and security planning.

10. NOTICE OF CONCLUSION OF AUDIT 2024-25

Members to note that the External Auditor's report for the financial year 2024/25 was received on 11 August 2025 and the Notice of Conclusion of Audit published on 12 August 2025. The External Auditor's report is attached for the information of Members and Members are further asked to note that it is an unqualified report, which is to say that there are no findings or recommendations to be addressed.

11. LOSS OF STATUTORY DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE BOOK

Purpose of the Report

To inform Members of the loss of the Council's statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office book, to report the steps taken following its discovery, and to seek endorsement of measures for continuity and future safeguarding.

Background

During the course of the Council's internal audit on 29 August 2025, it was identified that the record book containing signed declarations of acceptance of office could not be located. The last known entries in the book were made at the Annual Council Meeting on 15 May 2025, the current Mayor and Deputy Mayor signed their declarations in the Council Chamber.

Statutory Context

Under **Section 83 of the Local Government Act 1972**, every councillor must make a declaration of acceptance of office before acting in their role. The declaration itself is the statutory requirement. The book functions as the formal record of those declarations but its loss does not invalidate the offices held by Members, provided declarations were duly made at the time.

Actions Taken

- The Chief Executive Officer informed the Monitoring Officer of Waverley Borough Council on 29 August 2025, setting out the position and proposed remedial steps.
- Extensive searches have been undertaken within the Godalming Town Council offices and the Council Chamber. In addition, Waverley Borough Council Democratic Services staff have been asked to check their offices in case the record book had been inadvertently swept up and returned to WBC in error. Despite these efforts, the book has not been found.
- A check of records confirmed that hard copy declarations are held securely up to 2012.
- To ensure continuity:
 - A reconstructed record covering 2012–2025 will be created, based on the Council's knowledge of membership and declarations made at the time.
 - Current serving councillors will be asked to re-sign a declaration for inclusion in the reconstructed book.
 - Former councillors within the 2012–2023 period will be listed by name to acknowledge their service, but will not be asked to re-sign.
- The reconstructed volume will clearly state that the entries are not originals, but recreations due to the loss of the original statutory record.
- A new statutory declarations book has been ordered for use from 2025 onwards.

Future Safeguards

To prevent recurrence and improve resilience:

- Each declaration will, in future, be scanned immediately after signing.
- An electronic copy will be securely retained for the statutory period of office in addition to the signed hard copy.

Risk and Impact Statement

- **Governance Risk:** While the loss of the book does not invalidate councillors' offices, absence of the original statutory record weakens the council's evidence trail of compliance with legislation.
- **Audit Risk:** The internal audit has already identified this issue; without clear corrective action, it could result in negative audit opinion or findings in future inspections.
- **Reputational Risk:** Failure to address the matter transparently and robustly could undermine public confidence in the council's governance arrangements.
- **Continuity Risk:** Without reconstructed records and new safeguards, future Members and Officers may be left without an authoritative record of declarations, complicating governance history and legal compliance.

The remedial and safeguard measures outlined in this report mitigate these risks and provide assurance to both Members and the public that statutory requirements are properly observed.

Recommendation

That the Council:

- i. **Notes the loss of the statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office book and the circumstances reported.**
- ii. **Endorses the remedial steps set out in the report above.**
- iii. **Approves the future safeguard measures outlined in the report above.**

12. AUTHORISATION OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

TO AUTHORISE the Chief Executive Officer to sign or, where appropriate to have sealed on behalf of the Town Council any orders, deeds, or documents necessary to give effect to any of the matters contained in the Reports received at this meeting or in any Resolution passed by the Council.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Full Council meeting is scheduled to be held in the Council Chamber on Thursday, 13 November 2025 at 6.30pm.

14. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Brought forward by permission of the Chair. Requests to be submitted prior to commencement of the meeting.

IN PURSUANCE OF THE PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 S.1(2), THE COMMITTEE MAY WISH TO RESOLVE TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC AND PRESS FROM THE MEETING AT THIS POINT PRIOR TO CONSIDERATION OF AGENDA ITEM 14 BY REASON OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED I.E STAFFING MATTERS.

15. STAFFING MATTERS

Members to receive an update from the Chair of the Staffing Committee on the recruitment and appointment of Staff.

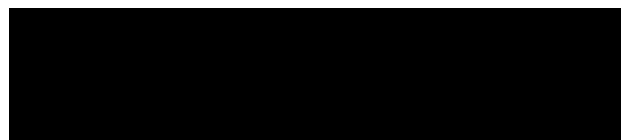


THANK YOU

ChoirBLAST



To GODALMING TOWN COUNCIL,



First of all – a massive thank you for being part of **ChoirBLAST Festival 2025!** Your support meant the world to us, and we can honestly say the Festival wouldn't have been nearly as special without you. From the bottom of my heart (and the whole Team's), thank you for the time, energy, and pure joy you brought with you.

ChoirBLAST 2025 brought together 77 choirs in one place, united by a shared love of group singing. Together, we raised over **£15,000**, which will help us take our vision even further and grow our partnerships with other charities and organisations. It will be used to create and continue the community choirs we are building.

Group Singing – Happy Minds – Healthy Communities.

Our mission is to create more performance opportunities for choirs from all over the world, to bring like-minded people together to sing simply for the joy of it, and to challenge perceptions around diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in group singing.

Beyond the festival, we're committed to making singing accessible to everyone. In the past year, we have launched three community choirs locally – now attended by over 90 singers each week – and we want to do even more. Our goal is to build choir communities that are open to all, especially those who might need a free, welcoming space to connect and boost their mental health.

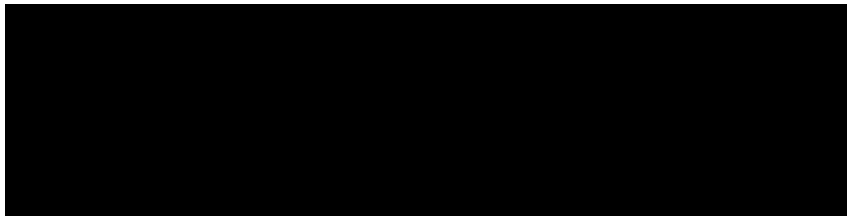




So, your support hasn't just created an unforgettable, joyful event – it's also enabled people to find their voice and their community.

Thank you again for your time, passion, and all the heart you brought to ChoirBLAST. It was a real privilege to work with you, and we truly value the relationship we've built – we're excited to see what might come next.

With so much love, admiration, and gratitude,



Phoebe Gaydon
& the ChoirBLAST Team.

CEO
ChoirBLAST
www.choirBLAST.com



Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2024/25

In respect of **GODALMING TOWN COUNCIL – SU0039**

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/>

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2025; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor’s limited assurance opinion 2024/25

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

None.

3 External auditor certificate 2024/25

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2025.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP		
External Auditor Signature		Date
		08/08/2025

GODALMING TOWN COUNCIL

Disclosure by a Member¹ of a disclosable pecuniary interest or other registerable interest (non-pecuniary interest) in a matter under consideration at a meeting (S.31 (4) Localism Act 2011 and the adopted Godalming Members' Code of Conduct).

As required by the Localism Act 2011 and the adopted Godalming Members' Code of Conduct, **I HEREBY DISCLOSE**, for the information of the authority that I have [a disclosable pecuniary interest]² [a registerable interest (non-pecuniary interest)]³ in the following matter:-

COMMITTEE:

DATE:

NAME OF COUNCILLOR: _____

Please use the form below to state in which agenda items you have an interest.

Agenda No.	Subject	Disclosable Pecuniary Interests	Other Registerable Interests (Non-Pecuniary Interests)	Reason

Signed _____

Dated _____

¹ "Member" includes co-opted member, member of a committee, joint committee or sub-committee

² A disclosable pecuniary interest is defined by the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) regulations 2012/1464 and relate to employment, office, trade, profession or vocation, sponsorship, contracts, beneficial interests in land, licences to occupy land, corporate tenancies and securities

³ A registerable interest (non-pecuniary interest) is defined by Section 9 of the Godalming Members' Code of Conduct.