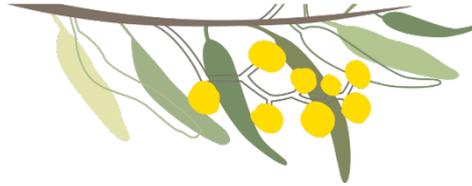




# SHIRE OF WOODANILLING



## ANNUAL ELECTORS MEETING Amended Minutes 10 February 2026

### Disclaimer

The recommendations contained in the Minutes are subject to confirmation by Council. The Shire of Woodanilling warns that anyone who has an application lodged with Council must obtain and should only rely on written confirmation of the outcomes of the application following the Council meeting, and any conditions attaching to the decision made by the Council in respect of the application. No responsibility whatsoever is implied or accepted by the Shire of Woodanilling for any act, omission or statement or intimation occurring during a Council Meeting.

Agendas and Minutes are available on the Shire website [www.woodanilling.wa.gov.au](http://www.woodanilling.wa.gov.au)

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Ray Kowald

Annabel Paulley (7.06pm)

***APOLOGIES***

Nil

**3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

That the minutes of the 2023/2024 Annual Electors Meeting held on Tuesday 11 February 2025 as attached be confirmed to be a true and correct record.

**ITEM 3.1. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES – 2023/2024 ANNUAL ELECTORS MEETING**

**Moved: Lesley Trimming**

**Seconded: Dale Douglas**

That the minutes of the 2023/2024 Annual Electors Meeting held on Tuesday 11 February 2025 as attached be confirmed to be a true and correct record.

**CARRIED 10/0**

## 4. OFFICER'S REPORT

### 4.1. ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2025

<b>File Reference</b>	ADM0017
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Anika Serer, Chief Executive Officer
<b>Author of Report</b>	Anika Serer, Chief Executive Officer
<b>Disclosure of any Interest</b>	No Officer involved in the preparation of this report has an interest to declare in accordance with the provisions of the <i>Local Government Act 1995</i> .
<b>Attachments</b>	<b>Attachment 4.1.1</b> - Shire of Woodanilling Annual Report 2024/2025

In accordance with S5.27 of the *Local Government Act 1995* a general meeting of electors is to be held once every financial year, not more than 56 days after the local government has accepted the annual report.

Regulation 15 of the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996* specifies that the matters to be discussed at the general electors meeting are, firstly, the contents of the Annual Report for the previous financial year and then any other general business.

At its meeting held 16 December 2025 Council resolved to accept the Annual Report for the financial year ending 30 June 2025, inclusive of the Audited Financial Report 2024/2025.

Council resolved to hold the Annual Meeting of Electors on Tuesday 10 February 2026 commencing at 7pm in the Council Chambers.

*Annabel Pauley entered the meeting at 7.06pm.*

### 4.1. SHIRE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Shire President will ask for a mover and seconder to receive the Shire President's report. A mover and seconder can be from the public, and all are asked to vote.

#### **ITEM 4.1. SHIRE PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

**Moved: Ray Baxter**

**Seconded: Colette Annice**

That the Shire President's Report for the year ending 30/06/2025 be received.

**CARRIED 14/0**

### 4.1. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

The Shire President will ask for a mover and seconder to receive the Chief Executive Officer's report. A mover and seconder can be from the public, and all are asked to vote.

The CEO provided an overview of key activities during the reporting period, including:

- Commencement in May 2025 and acknowledgement of former CEO Paul Hanlon and Acting CEO Mark Hook.
- Delivery of capital works including upgrades to Robinson Road West and Oxley Road, resheeting and maintenance works on Leggoe, Gorn and Burt Roads, and ongoing road maintenance programs.
- Completion of Stage 1 of the Centenary Park upgrades and progress on Stage 2.
- Community events including the Bloom Art Exhibition and Australia Day celebrations.
- Acknowledgement of outgoing and incoming Councillors following the October elections.
- Appointment of the Executive Manager Corporate Services and continued focus on governance and compliance.
- Upcoming infrastructure works and development of a non-potable water strategy.
- Appreciation to staff, Council and community volunteers for their contributions.

**ITEM 4.1. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT**

**Moved: Marj Winstanley**

**Seconded: Damian Shackley**

That the Chief Executive Officer's Report for the year ended 30/06/2025 be received.

**CARRIED 14/0**

**4.1. AUDITOR'S REPORT**

The Shire President will ask for a mover and seconder to receive the Auditor's report. A mover and seconder can be from the public, and all are asked to vote.

**ITEM 4.1. AUDITOR'S REPORT**

**Moved: Lesley Trimming**

**Seconded: Mike Vermeulen**

That the Auditor's Report for the year ending 30/06/2025 be received.

**CARRIED 14/0**

**4.1. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR 2024/2025**

The Shire President will ask for a mover and seconder to receive the 2024/2025 Annual Financial Statement as shown in the Shire of Woodanilling 2024/2025 Annual Report. A mover and seconder can be from the public, and all are asked to vote.

**ITEM 4.1. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR 2024/2025**

**Moved: Dale Douglas**

**Seconded: Mike Vermeulen**

That the Financial Statements for the year ending 30/06/2025 be received.

**CARRIED 8/0**

## 4 GENERAL BUSINESS

### PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Questions from members of the public were directed to the Presiding Member in accordance with the procedure outlined prior to the commencement of the meeting.

#### 4.1 ANNABEL PAULLEY

Annabel Paulley requested clarification regarding the Shire's current financial position, noting the Annual Report did not clearly outline the overall financial standing.

Cr Thomson advised the current budget is balanced and the Shire holds approximately \$700,000 in reserves, including plant and long service leave provisions. He stated the Shire is not in financial difficulty but must continue to manage finances carefully, particularly following rate increases of 10% over the past two years.

In response to a question regarding debt, Cr Thomson confirmed the Shire currently holds no debt.

Annabel asked whether further annual rate increases of 10% were anticipated. Cr Thomson advised this has not been determined and Council must balance competitiveness, community expectations and financial sustainability.

Annabel queried the revenue generated from the recent 10% rate increase and its allocation. Cr Thomson advised approximately \$100,000 was raised and placed into general revenue.

The CEO advised the additional revenue contributes to a range of operational areas including wages, overheads and road-related expenditure.

Annabel asked whether the Shire was progressing efforts to return responsibility for Robinson Road West to Main Roads WA and requested an update on current progress.

The Shire President advised that the Shire is preparing a business case supported by traffic data to demonstrate regional and heavy vehicle usage. It was noted that Main Roads WA is not obligated to accept transfer of the road and discussions are ongoing.

#### 4.2 MAL BAXTER

Mal Baxter asked whether the adopted budget to June 2026 was publicly available.

The Presiding Member advised the budget is available on the Shire website and monthly financial reports within Council agendas provide ongoing financial updates. The CEO offered to provide a copy upon request.

#### 4.3 PAULINE EDGCUMBE

Pauline Edgcumbe raised several matters:

##### **Waste and Recycling/Landfill**

Pauline noted previous concerns regarding recycling and wind-blown rubbish had been addressed and requested this be publicly communicated in the Woodanilling Wongi. She also asked about the remaining lifespan of the landfill facility. The question was taken on notice.

##### **Health Services and Transport**

Pauline raised concerns regarding access to health services and requested consideration of transport options to Katanning. The question was taken on notice.

### **Water Use and Oval Irrigation**

Pauline expressed concern regarding year-round watering of the oval and the condition of memorial lawns. The Presiding Member advised the oval water supply is sourced from the dam and noted efforts are being made to reduce reliance on purchased water. Concerns regarding memorial lawns were acknowledged.

### **Weather-Sensing Irrigation**

Cathi Bessell-Browne supported Pauline's comments and requested Council investigate weather-sensing irrigation technology to improve water efficiency. The Presiding Member acknowledged this as a potential improvement.

### **Baptist Church Grounds**

Pauline asked about the Shire's commitment to maintenance at the Baptist Church. The CEO advised the Shire undertakes basic maintenance up to a capped amount, with additional works the responsibility of the Church. Further opportunities may be explored with the Bloom Festival group. The matter was noted.

Pauline raised a question regarding the allocation of funding toward town and community services, expressing concern that a significant portion of expenditure appears directed toward roads. She asked how much of the Shire's finances are allocated to the town and community, and whether this information could be presented in a more transparent and easier-to-understand format.

The Chief Executive Officer confirmed that monthly financial statements are publicly available and advised that no funds have been redirected from their intended purposes. The question was taken on notice.

## **4.4 CATHI BESSELL-BROWNE**

"What is happening with complaints about dangerous overgrown conditions at crossroads, road maintenance, and missing road signage which have been reported to the Shire for over six years? What is happening to complaints and where are they going?"

The matter was taken on notice.

Cathi, on behalf of Brooke Moulden, queried why the Shire was not formally participating in meetings relating to Ausgold social impact assessments, noting potential impacts to the Woodanilling community.

The Shire President advised that while the Shire is not formally represented, it is aware of the matters and maintains communication through relevant channels.

## **4.5 BRIGITTE BURG**

Brigitte Burg, attending her first Electors Meeting, asked whether financial documents could be made more accessible to the public.

The Presiding Member advised financial information is publicly available and paper copies may be requested from the Shire office. The CEO noted options could be explored to provide simplified summaries to assist community understanding.

## MOTIONS

### 4.6 INDEPENDENT FORENSIC AUDIT – NOTICE OF MOTION

*A proposed motion submitted by elector Cathi Bessell-Browne for consideration at the Annual Electors Meeting.*

#### **ITEM 4.6. INDEPENDENT FORENSIC AUDIT – NOTICE OF MOTION**

**Moved: Cathi Bessell-Browne**

**Seconded: Annabel Paulley**

That Council consider immediately requesting an independent forensic audit to assess past, current and future capacity of the Shire of Woodanilling to meet its statutory, regulatory and governance obligations to inform continuous improvement, financial sustainability and community confidence.

The scope of the audit should include, but not be limited to, an assessment of:

1. Alignment between community expectations, the level of services currently provided, and the Shire's financial and operational capacity, including benchmarking service levels against comparable local governments to ensure the community receives reasonable and sustainable value in return for rates and charges.
2. Capacity, transparency and governance arrangements to play an active and appropriate role in community safety planning and risk mitigation, particularly in the context of recent local events and community experiences suggesting a growing criminal element and potential risks to child safety.
3. Capacity to enforce local planning and development requirements in a consistent and transparent manner, including compliance relating to unauthorised occupation, accommodation, land use and amenity impacts.
4. Capacity to sustainably fund, maintain or transfer responsibility for assets and infrastructure, including consideration of the long-term viability of maintaining Robinson Road West versus transfer to Main Roads WA, particularly in light of the recent tragic fatality involving this road.
5. Capacity to engage with community, including public availability of accurate and timely agendas, minutes, audio recordings, registers of interests, councillor training registers, and other statutory information, and a review of Council's Community Engagement Charter to identify if it reflects regulatory requirements and best practice.
6. Council's delegations, policies and governance frameworks to ensure they have been reviewed regularly and align with contemporary best practice and legislative intent.
7. Council's compliance with interest declaration requirements, including the intent of Local Government Regulations and Best Practice Guidelines for conflicts of interest to be managed during forums and workshops, and when representing the Shire to external bodies.
8. Governance or resourcing gaps that may affect Council's ability to manage emerging risks and community concerns in a timely and lawful way.

And that the findings of the Audit be reported publicly and used to guide future decision-making, policy development and resourcing priorities including:

1. A review of the Shire's Strategic Community and Corporate Business Plan to ensure it is supported by evidence-based assumptions, includes 'Community First' in its values, recognises challenges and community needs, and is focussed on measurable outcomes and deliverables to improve liveability.
2. A review of Annual Report format and content to ensure inclusion of clear deliverables and outcomes with performance measures to demonstrate continuous improvement and progress towards increased liveability within the Shire.
3. Inform the development and implementation of Council's Long Term Financial Plan.
4. Inform development and implementation of the Shire's Public Health Plan.
5. Inform reviews of Council's Community Safety Plan, Workforce Plan and Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

## DISCUSSION

*The Mover, Cathi Bessell-Browne spoke to the motion:*

“This motion is fundamentally about people. About the safety, wellbeing and future of this community, particularly children and vulnerable residents. Good governance is not an abstract concept; it directly affects whether risks are identified, whether services are delivered lawfully and sustainably, and whether the community can trust its local government to act in its best interests.

This motion is not about assigning blame to individuals. It is about acknowledging that there appears to have been a systemic governance failure that has persisted over a long period of time - across multiple Councils and several CEOs. The longevity and breadth of the issues strongly suggest structural failure rather than personal fault.

There is clear, observable evidence that core governance, transparency and compliance systems are not functioning as required. Council and committee agendas, minutes, audio recordings and attachments are not consistently available to the public online. Key statutory registers, including financial interests, councillor training and tenders, appear to be inaccurate or absent online. Audit Committee minutes are missing, recent Council meeting recordings have not been released, and it seems to be several years since Council’s Community Development or Transport and Plant Committees met.

At the same time, many of the foundational plans that underpin lawful decision-making, service delivery and financial sustainability are significantly out of date.

Strategic and Corporate Business Plans continue to be adopted and implemented in the absence of current supporting frameworks: the ICT, Workforce and Asset Management Plans do not appear to have been reviewed since 2013, the Long-Term Financial Plan since 2016, and the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan since 2017. Council delegations do not appear to have been reviewed annually, nor policies systematically reviewed, several local laws appear overdue for statutory review, and the Shire has not adopted a compliant Community Engagement Charter.

As a result, decisions are being made without all the contemporary, evidence-based frameworks to support compliance, risk management, or value for money.

Importantly, available health and wellbeing data indicates the community is not doing well. Mental health outcomes are significantly poorer than those of surrounding shires, and other indicators, including higher rates of serious illness, suggest long-standing challenges to community wellbeing. While Council is proposing to develop an in-house Public Health Plan, that alone does not address these concerns. Without an independent assessment of governance, resourcing and capacity, there is a real risk that planning occurs without the systems or capability required to deliver meaningful change.

The consequences of governance gaps are no longer theoretical. The community is experiencing emerging safety concerns, including incidents raising child safety risk, and the tragic fatality on Robinson Road West highlights the risks associated with infrastructure that the Shire may not have the capacity to sustainably maintain. It already appears that Council may not currently have sufficient financial or operational capacity to consistently enforce its planning, building and compliance laws. An independent forensic audit is essential because independence matters.

Oversight by someone external to the Shire and community is critical to ensure objectivity, impartiality and credibility, and to avoid decisions being influenced by emotion, personal relationships, or local history. Independence protects Councillors, staff and the community by ensuring findings are evidence-based, defensible and focused on systems rather than personalities.

If Council does not have the financial or operational capacity to fund independent assurance, then it has a responsibility to self-report to the WA Local Government Inspector and request an independent monitor. This pathway exists specifically for situations where capacity is constrained. Inaction is not a neutral option. Doing nothing also carries legal, financial and reputational risk - often at a much higher cost.

This motion is about transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement. It seeks to restore community confidence, ensure legal compliance, and provide a clear, evidence-based foundation for future decision-making so the Shire can be safe, sustainable, and genuinely community-focused into the future.”

## **5 CLOSURE OF MEETING**

There being no further business the Shire President declared the meeting closed at 8:13pm.