

BUDLEIGH SALTERTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Town Council held in the Council Offices, Station Road, Budleigh Salterton on Monday 19 August 2024 on the rising of the Planning Committee.

Meeting commenced at 7.15pm.

PRESENT

Cllr C A Sismore-Hunt (Town Mayor)
Cllr J S Billington
Cllr A F Chaplin
Cllr S P Cook
Cllr C M Cunningham
Cllr R J Doorbar
Cllr S J Horn
Cllr M P Lewis
Cllr D Walsh
Cllr W K Wood
Cllr G Woodcraft

In Attendance: Mrs J E Vanstone (Town Clerk), District Cllr M Martin, District Cllr H L Riddell and one member of the public

24.141 Public Speaking Time

No Members of the public wished to speak.

24.142 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr M C Hilliar (Deputy Town Mayor) and District Cllr C Fitzgerald.

24.143 Councillor Vacancy

It was noted that Steve Cook is co-opted on to the Town Council, unopposed.

24.144 Declarations of Interests in Items on the Agenda

No interests were declared.

24.145 Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on 29 July 2024 had been circulated prior to the Meeting. It was unanimously agreed they be signed as a true record.

24.146 Reports of Committees

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Budleigh Salterton Climate Change Group held on 8 July 2024 were noted.

24.147 Chairman's Report

The Town Mayor, Cllr C A Sismore-Hunt reported:

- She had attended the Budleigh Salterton Art Club Summer Exhibition Preview. As ever, she was impressed at the quality of the work on show. It had been a lovely evening.

24.148 Clerk's Report

Mrs J E Vanstone reported:

- She had received notification from East Devon District Council that the installation of EV chargers in Lower Station Road Car Park was not imminent. The site was going to be re-evaluated due to a gas pipe running underneath the car park!

- The Council had received a last-minute invitation to attend the Budleigh Salterton Cricket Club Sponsors Lunch. Unfortunately, the Chairman was unable to attend and had asked if she would like to go on her behalf, which she had been delighted to do. Cllr G Woodcraft had also been there with her partner. It had been a very enjoyable afternoon.

24.149 Reports of Council Representatives on Other Bodies

No reports were made.

24.150 Reports of County and District Councillors

District Councillors

District Cllr H L Riddell advised that not a huge amount had been happening at District.

- He reported on the ongoing situation with the South West Water (SWW). He had forwarded the latest letter from the CEO at SWW to the Clerk. The waste water manager had been due to visit but had cancelled; Cllr Riddell was unsure when it would be rescheduled. Work to reline the main sewer in the High Street was starting in September and he agreed that the pumping station needed upgrading too.
- He had met with David Reed MP the previous week; they had met some traders and discussed the various issues affecting the town. They had also had a good conversation with Information Centre who were happy with the progress being made with the town Council working group. He would speak to East Devon District Council about the Beach Huts. Most of the comments had been about SWW. He did not know whether it was a good thing the situation was being reported on the news – it was bad for tourism but good to bring the issue to the fore. The traders were having a mixed year and it was difficult to know whether the problems were related to the cost of living crisis or just people shopping out of town. He understood that some landlords wanted a year's rent in advance and this was putting off traders taking over empty shops. David Reed would also be looking at the problems with the town's pharmacy.

Cllr R J Doorbar said that the District Councillors must not ease up on the pressure on SWW. The situation was affecting all aspects of town life; he understood some accommodation bookings had been cancelled

Cllr Riddell promised to keep up the pressure.

Cllr M P Lewis said one of the other challenges in the town was that it is not just seen as a beach town. This would mean businesses could continue even though the sea conditions were not good. She said all must help businesses become resilient whilst there was an obligation to inform people there is an issue with the water quality.

District Cllr M Martin reported:

- She had received a Water Quality and Beach Safety Report which she will forward to councillors; this was a detailed report from the East Devon District Council (EDDC) Beach Safety Officer Pete Blyth with some information from Environment Agency.
 - The weather had been generally dry so there were not as many permitted discharges during July and August, although there were a few around 6 August. So far this year Budleigh has had 45 discharges, in comparison with Exmouth 22, Sandy Bay 20, Sidmouth 18, Beer 27, Seaton 18. The target is no more than 20 per bathing per year.
 - There had been 25 non permitted discharges so far this year, against a known 10 in 2023.

- Exmouth spills. On the night of 14 August the rising main from Maer Road pumping station to Maer Lane sewage works suffered a pipe burst, which led to an uncontrolled spill of raw sewage into the Maer Brook and thence to the sea. This was supposedly contained by SWW installing a temporary repair, then on Friday night and into Saturday there was a major discharge of sewage at Maer rocks as the Maer Road tank overflowed because the temporary repair had not in fact yet been made and the tankers could not keep up. The Beach Safety Officer had taken the decision to close the bathing rather than wait for the Environment Agency (EA) and a Public Incident Report Took (PIRT) was then subsequently issued. This spill ended at 19.35 on Saturday night and the PIRT was withdrawn at 19.35 on Sunday 18 August.
- Communications from SWW were, as usual, poor. They had made a few statements in this period, including the claim that they had notified the EA as soon as the discharge started on Saturday, which they had not. The EA were in fact informed by the ESCAPE group which is why the second PIRT was not issued until 14.47 when the spill started at 11.31 (not counting the two the night before). They also made no formal notification to us as required by the bathing water regulations.
- She had been disappointed to hear this morning from the EA that they consider the Saturday spills to be permitted under the emergency clause of the permit. She had pushed back on this since the burst happened on Wednesday night, therefore discharge some 48 plus hours later cannot really be considered an emergency.
- The Exmouth bathing water was open again this morning, but the Blue Flag was still down while officers/councillors considered whether in good conscience it could be raised before SWW had made a permanent repair; she was not confident of no further discharges, especially if it started raining.
- Beach Management. The access matting had been installed at Seaton, Sidmouth and Budleigh beaches. This work was supported by joint funding from town councils, and by grants from the EDNL A4A fund, and from the Shared Prosperity Fund. There was still a small pot of Shared Prosperity money left which would be spent on some semi-permanent access ramps to allow additional access points at Budleigh and maybe Seaton beach. The matting will remain in place until mid-September and then be lifted and stored for the winter before being reinstalled next May.
- She wondered if it would be helpful if the Beach Safety Officer came to speak to the Council.
- She updated members on the Local Plan. New housing targets had been discussed at the previous meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee. It looked likely that East Devon's annual housing target would go up from 893 houses to more than 1146, although this was not definite. This is a difference of 253. It was a large increase and all were aware there were not improvements to the local infrastructure (roads, sewage, schools and health service) but this was a point being raised all across the UK. East Devon's new emerging local plan was at quite an advanced stage which meant there was the potential to progress it under the transitional arrangements before the new targets 'bite', these arrangements will include a small uplift in housing figures, I was likely to be in the region of 954 (within 200 homes per year of the new figures). There was some uncertainty because this was dependent on the timescale for publishing the revised NPPF which was not known. Hopefully EDDC could rely on figures that were lower and close to the 'old' housing targets. The Committee had voted to try and deliver the local plan under the transitional arrangements, and a formal response by EDDC to proposed government reforms will be discussed at one of the upcoming meetings in September.

- Seachange would be hosting its annual Fundraising Fete on Saturday 14 September from 1pm - 5pm. It would be a fun event with the Exeter Morris dancers and band, a licensed bar, and delicious cream teas, plus a raffle, tombola, and other stalls!
- She was a member of the Personnel Committee and involved in the recruitment process for the Director of Housing and Health and Director of Place positions at EDDC.

24.151 Finance Inspection

- (i) Payments for the month of August 2024, in accordance with Appendix A, were approved. The Clerk advised that there was likely to be some more due to the timing of the meeting.
- (ii) It was noted that Cllr G Woodcraft will carry out the internal finance inspection for July 2024 later in the week.

24.152 Audit of Accounts: Year Ended 31 March 2024

It was noted that the Audit had been successfully completed.

24.153 Request for Grant Aid 2024/25: South West Museum Development

- (i) Consideration was given to making a grant to enable Fairlynch Museum to draw down enhanced services.
Resolved: A grant will be made.
- (ii) Consideration was then given to the amount of the contribution.
Resolved: A grant of £800 will be made.

24.154 Request for Grant Aid 2024/25: Budleigh Salterton Carnival

- (i) Consideration was given to making a grant towards the organisation of this year's Carnival.
Resolved: Members felt the information forward to the Council was quite difficult to understand and it was suggested that the Carnival Treasurer be asked to explain the accounts more fully.

24.155 Station Road Toilets: Transfer of Asset

Consideration was given to whether this Council is prepared to let East Devon District Council to leave the car park signage on the gable end of the toilet block and the litter bin on the paving outside the service alley. These items will be relocated if the Town Council terminates that right subject to written notice (length of notice to be discussed).

Resolved: This Council is prepared to allow the signage and bin to stay for the time being.

24.156 Staffing Committee

- (i) Only one nomination had been received, that of Cllr M P Lewis, proposed by the Town Mayor, Cllr C A Sismore-Hunt and seconded by Cllr S J Horn.
The Town Mayor, Cllr C A Sismore-Hunt declared that Cllr M P Lewis be appointed as Chairman.
- (ii) Cllr G Woodcraft was appointed to the Staffing Committee.

24.157 East Devon District Council: Street Trading Application

It was noted that no objections were raised to the following event:

- Budleigh Salterton Lions Club August Bank Holiday Fair – Street Trading Application for 35 x trading stalls, including some craft, food and other trading stalls – 26 August 2024

24.158 Correspondence Received

- South West Water: copy of a response to District Cllr H L Riddell
- Allotment & Leisure Gardener: Issue 3 2024

- OVA: July 2024
- Devon County Council:
 - Temporary Prohibition of Through Traffic – Knowle Road: 9 to 14 September 2024 (Patching/lining works potential pollution risk – Kier)
 - Temporary Prohibition of Through Traffic – Little Knowle: 24 to 28 September 2024 (Patching, lining works, locate and raise chambers – Kier)
 - Temporary Prohibition of Through Traffic – Moor Lane (at junction with Clinton Terrace): 28 October to 1 November 2024 (Provide new water connection – Kier)

24.159 Any Other Business at the Chairman’s Discretion

- The Clerk advised that she had seen a video of the River Otter which showed sewerage in the River. She asked if she should write to Clinton Devon Estates (CDE) to see if they had contacted (or were going to contact) SWW about the potential issues affecting the Lower Otter Nature Reserve.
- It was agreed she should write to CDE and report the problem to the Environment Agency and Natural England.

24.160 Dates of Next Meetings

Planning Committee:	9 September 2024 at 7.00pm
CIL Committee:	9 September 2024 on the rising of the Planning Committee
Finance Committee:	9 September 2024 on the rising of the CIL Committee
Staffing:	9 September 2024 on the rising of the Finance Committee
Planning Committee:	30 September 2024 at 7.00pm
Town Council:	30 September 2024 on the rising of the Planning Committee

Cllr S P Cook passed on his apologies for both meetings in September.

There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 7.53pm.

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Chairman

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Date