

BUDLEIGH SALTERTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Town Council held in the Council Offices, Station Road, Budleigh Salterton on Monday 28 October 2024 on the rising of the Planning Committee.

Meeting commenced at 7.09pm.

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 (Lead Town Clerk), Mrs A Gater-Wildgust (Town Clerk), District Cllr M Martin and one member of the public

24.248 Public Speaking Time

No Members of the public wished to speak.

24.249 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from County Cllr C Channon, District Cllr C Fitzgerald and District Cllr H L Riddell.

24.250 Declarations of Interests in Items on the Agenda

- Cllr R J Doorbar declared a personal interest in Min 24.259 – he is the Deputy Chairman of the Friends of Budleigh Salterton Library
- Cllr M P Lewis also declared a personal interest in Min 24.259 – she is a member of the Friends of Budleigh Salterton Library

24.251 Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on 30 September 2024 had been circulated prior to the Meeting. It was unanimously agreed they be signed as a true record.

24.252 Reports of Committees

The Minutes of the following Meetings were noted:

- Budleigh Salterton Climate Change Group held on 23 September 2024
- Budleigh Salterton Traffic Group held on 24 September 2024

24.253 Chairman's Report

The Town Mayor, Cllr C A Sismore-Hunt did not have anything to report.

24.254 Clerk's Report

Mrs J E Vanstone reported:

- The Caretaker had visited the office the previous week. He had received a date for his pacemaker upgrade and if all went well he would be available to return to work in the New Year, subject to a satisfactory Occupational Health assessment.
- Work to replace the seafront toilets had started. She was pleased to be advised that the owners of Fifty Degrees North had kindly agreed that the defibrillator be relocated to the wall of their café for the duration of the building works.

- There would be a Remembrance Service at the War Memorial on Sunday 10 November at 2.00pm followed by a Service in St Peter's Church at 2.45pm. She hoped that as many Councillors as possible were able to attend. There would also be a short service at the War Memorial on Armistice Day at 11.00am.

24.255 Reports of Council Representatives on Other Bodies

Cllr R J Doorbar said he had attended the meeting at Exmouth Town Hall with South West Water (SWW) officers.

Budleigh in Bloom

Cllr C M Cunningham reported that the various planters around the town had been emptied and the winter planting would take place later this week.

Budleigh Salterton Nursing Association

Cllr C M Cunningham reported that she had attended a recent meeting. This was a small charity which helped local people who needed help with medical equipment.

Heaths to Sea

Cllr J S Billington reported on the recent well-attended stakeholder event. As a new Councillor she had not felt qualified to tell the Group what the Town Council could offer in terms of support. Clinton Devon Estates (CDE) wanted feedback on the Lower Otter Restoration Project (LORP) and if the increase in visitor numbers was having a beneficial effect on the town's businesses. CDE acknowledged that mistakes had been made with the LORP and wanted to better engage with residents during this project. Budleigh Salterton was at the heart of the project area and will be affected the most by the outcome.

Cllr S P Cook asked if this could be added to the next Town Council agenda.

Cllr G Woodcraft added that the Information Centre had a lot of volunteers who might be able to have some input.

Exmouth & District Community Transport Group

Mrs J E Vanstone said she had received the notes following the recent AGM. She would circulate the full report after the Meeting:

- Fares already exceeded annual income expected, mainly due to trips such as lunches.
- Hire was slightly ahead of budget but some difficulties with the small vehicle.
- No grant had been received from East Devon District Council (EDDC) as yet. An application had been made and was apparently awaiting legal and portfolio report.
- The majority of Parish and Town Council Grants had been received – second payments were due from Exmouth and Budleigh Salterton in October.
- £5500 other grants – £3000 from Gibbons Trust and £2500 from Exmouth League of Friends.

24.256 Reports of County and District Councillors

County Councillor

Mrs J E Vanstone read County Cllr C Channon's report:

- The water leak in Barn Lane had now been fixed.
- The sink hole on Marine Parade was 10 feet deep and 4 feet wide. Dirty sewage had been located at the bottom of it so it would appear to be another problem caused by SWW. Devon County Council (DCC) were monitoring this. She was concerned of its proximity to the War Memorial and that it will soon be Remembrance Day.
- The Youth Club continued to go from strength to strength.

- From Saturday 2 November, the Information Centre will be on Winter opening hours (10.00am to 1.00pm Monday to Saturday).
- She was mindful that there were probably residents in the town who could be claiming Pension Credit but were not. She had asked Marc Jobson if Seachange could offer a consultancy service. He had thought they could help but was asking how such a service would be funded. She had asked him to provide an estimate so various local charities could be approached and asked for support.
- The Choral Evensong at St Peter's Parish Church planned for 10 November had been moved to 17 November, when the new Bishop of Exeter would be visiting. This was a lovely service and she encouraged all Town Councillors to attend.

District Councillors

District Cllr M Martin reported on feedback from the Local Plan Consultation:

- The trend was to use brownfield sites rather than greenfield spaces.
- Budleigh Salterton town centre should be preserved with concern about the number of empty shops/decline in the High Street.
- Commercial applications should be decided in a speedier manner.
- There should be more trees and natural drainage as well as concerns about parking and accessibility.
- Across the board, Green Wedges were the most popular item to be commented on and this showed the importance residents held on these areas. 283 comments had been received on Budleigh Salterton's Green Wedges, with an absolute objection to development on them.
- The sewerage infrastructure was a worry as well as over-subscription to St Peter's School and the loss of agricultural land.
- Some sites were going to be revisited because, even with the new town, the total number of sites across the district was 2000 houses short.
- In Budleigh Salterton, sites BUDL_01 and BUDL_03 would be discussed again. She hoped that BUDL_01 did not go through; officer recommendation was that those areas would not be touched. BUDL_03 had raised lots of questions and she is concerned about that.
- She confirmed she would speak on behalf of the town at the Strategic Planning Committee meeting on 29 October.

Cllr C A Sismore-Hunt said she was concerned that a pressurised sewage pipe ran under the fields at sites BUDL_01 and BUDL_03 and it was difficult to find out if that information was correct before the SPC meeting.

Cllr M P Lewis added that the sites were largely being determined by whoever offered the land, rather than using land which was more suitable to build on. It was suggested that Cllr Martin mentioned Evans Field which was not finished and not joined up with the rest of the town. The option of using BUDL_03 would add to that disjointed feeling.

Mrs J E Vanstone read District Cllr H L Riddell's report:

- Another positive meeting had been held with SWW, organised by David Reed MP at Exmouth Town Hall.
- Work to replace the seafront toilets would be starting imminently and temporary toilets were in situ.
- EDDC was trying to promote the uptake of Pension Credit for residents who had not already applied. Pension Credit topped up pension income and can help with day-to-day living costs. Residents may be eligible to claim Pension Credit, even if they owned their home or had savings.

Cllr R J Doorbar commented on the SWW meeting – he did not feel it was as positive as Cllr Riddell had reported! He thought the presentation from SWW, detailing the history of the issues in Exmouth and Budleigh Salterton, was very technical, with the officers using very technical terms and attendees having to ask lots of questions. The key point was SWW are reacting to issues rather than planning what should be happening in the future. He felt SWW were trying to do a good PR exercise. He had spoken to David Reed MP, who was trying to get things happening.

Cllr S P Cook reported on the meeting with SWW officers held in Norman Centre earlier in the month. The works planned for Budleigh Salterton was due to run from December to February and officers had promised to send the local parish clerks a weekly progress report. He felt that needed following up to make sure the Council was up to date.

Cllr M P Lewis added that she understood that no water testing was taking place outside the summer months.

Cllr J S Billington said that SWW were testing every day but the results were not being made available to the public!

District Cllr M Martin left the meeting.

24.257 Finance Inspection

- (i) Payments for the month of October 2024, in accordance with Appendix A, were approved.
- (ii) It was noted that Cllr G Woodcraft had carried out the internal finance inspection for September 2024.

24.258 Request for Grant Aid 2024/25: Launchpad

- (i) Consideration was given to making a grant towards the Community Larder.

Resolved: A grant will be made.

- (ii) Consideration was then given to the amount of the contribution.

Resolved: A grant of £685 will be made.

The Town Mayor, Cllr C A Sismore-Hunt added that she had visited the Community Larder recently and was surprised to learn that anyone can use the larder; it was not just for people on low income.

24.259 Request for Grant Aid 2024/25: Budleigh Salterton Library

- (i) Consideration was given to making a grant towards the refurbishments in the Library.

Resolved: A grant will be made.

- (ii) Consideration was then given to the amount of the contribution.

Resolved: A grant of £6000 will be made from Community Infrastructure Levy funds.

24.260 Request for Grant Aid 2024/25: Methodist Church

- (i) Consideration was given to making a grant towards the replacement clock on the Church.

Resolved: A grant will be made.

- (ii) Consideration was then given to the amount of the contribution.

Resolved: A grant of £250 will be made. It is hoped this will kick-start the fundraising activity for the work.

24.261 Royal British Legion – Poppy Appeal 2024

Consideration was given to an appropriate donation for the wreaths and it was

Resolved: A donation of £250 will be made.

24.262 Authority to Sign Cheques/Direct Debits/Authorise Payments

Cllr W K Wood volunteered to be added to the list of those with authority to sign cheques and Direct Debits and authorise internet banking payments.

24.263 Budleigh in Bloom

The difficulties Budleigh in Bloom were having in undertaking their work of covering the planting and care of the various units around the town was discussed.

Cllr C M Cunningham reported that the team looked after 80 units around the town which included the planters and troughs as well as 5 or 6 boats and the beds on The Green. The majority of volunteers were getting older and a drive to recruit more volunteers had not been massively successful, so much so some of the units might have to remain unplanted for the time being. Some volunteers were looking after a significant number of units.

She explained that the main problem was watering even with the changes over to more drought-tolerant planting but these plants did not have the visual impact of annuals. The team thought a "buddy system" might be a good solution.

She asked what the Town Council might be able to do to help the situation.

Members agreed that the floral displays made the town look attractive.

The Clerk said she would contact Exmouth and Sidmouth Town Councils to see what support they give their "in bloom" groups.

Cllr Cunningham said she will take this information back to the Budleigh in Bloom team.

24.264 Correspondence Received

- RBL Budleigh Salterton Branch: Letter of thanks for the cleaning work carried out at the War Memorial
- Budleigh Salterton Football Club: Letter of thanks for Solar Panel Grant
- Devon Association of Local Councils: Annual Report 2023/24
- Devon County Council:
 - Temporary Prohibition of Through Traffic and Parking – High Street and Fore Street: 29 November 2024 (Late Night Shopping)

24.265 Any Other Business at the Chairman's Discretion

- Cllr R J Doorbar was sorry that Michael Hilliar had resigned from the Town Council. He asked if there was a way of thanking him for his contribution to the town and Council. The Clerk advised that she had written to Michael thanking him.
- Cllr S P Cook said he had circulated some information to all councillors regarding a conversation he had had with the owner of Fifty Degrees North, Nigel Price. He wondered if it would be useful for Mr Price to come and speak to the Council one evening.
- Cllr C A Sismore-Hunt invited everyone to join her in the Norman Centre after the meeting on 9 December when there would be Christmas drinks and a small buffet; wives/husbands were also invited.

24.266 Dates of Next Meetings

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| Planning Committee: | 11 November 2024 at 7.00pm |
| Planning Committee: | 25 November 2024 at 7.00pm |
| Community Gardens Committee: | 25 November on the rising of the Planning Committee |
| Finance Committee: | 25 November 2024 on the rising of the Community Gardens Committee |
| Town Council: | 25 November 2024 on the rising of the Finance Committee |
| Planning Committee: | 9 December 2024 at 7.00pm |
| Foreshore & Footpaths Committee: | 9 December on the rising of the Planning Committee |
| Town Council: | 9 December 2024 on the rising of the Foreshore & Footpaths Committee |

There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 8.45pm.

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Chairman

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Date

