

## **BUDLEIGH SALTERTON TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES** of the Meeting of the Finance Committee held in the Council Offices, Station Road, Budleigh Salterton on Monday 14 April 2025.

The meeting commenced at 8.06pm.

### **PRESENT**

Cllr G Woodcraft - Chair  
Cllr R J Doorbar  
Cllr M P Lewis  
Cllr S Cook

**In attendance:** Mrs A Gater-Wildgust (Town Clerk), Cllr P Manfield

### **24.507 Public Speaking Time**

No member of the public wished to speak.

### **24.508 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. C Sismore-Hunt

### **24.509 Declarations of Interests in Items on the Agenda**

No interests were declared.

### **24.510 Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance Committee held on 25 November 2024 had been circulated prior to the Meeting. It was unanimously agreed they be signed as a true record.

### **24.511 Chair's Report**

The Chair reported that it had been a particularly busy period, especially with the year-end work to reconcile the accounts. In light of increased staffing costs, recruitment fees, the purchase of computer software to support tablet use, and bringing funding forward from 2025/26 to support the Public Hall upgrade approximately £60,000 was draw from reserves in 2024/25. The Chair was pleased to report that income for 2024/25 came in slightly above what was budgeted, and the interest earned from our investments (Communities, Churches and Local Authorities Investment Fund) had helped to offset the overall deficit.

Looking ahead, the Chair noted that planning will be needed for future capital projects, including flooring, seating, and roof improvements. These are important areas that will require both financial planning and community input. The Chair also requested more details reporting on transactions terms 'miscellaneous'.

Reflecting on the decision to raise the precept this year, the Chair stated it was a sensible and necessary step. As noted in the Broadclyst Council newsletter and recorded on [eastdevon.gov.uk](http://eastdevon.gov.uk) Budleigh Salterton Town Council (BSTC) remains one of the lowest charging towns in East Devon.

Going forward, the Chair suggested that the council consider modest annual increases to the precept, to ensure long-term financial stability and to avoid larger, more difficult increases in the future.

### **24.512 Income & Expenditure 2024/25**

Details of the Income and Expenditure for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. were received and approved.

The Chair highlighted the need to explore new income opportunities to support the Council's financial position. It was also agreed that a review of the current subsidy

model for the hall is necessary, particularly given the high maintenance demands and associated costs.

Concerns were raised about the significant rates payable to East Devon District Council and the overall cost of managing the hall. Questions around the ownership and parking arrangements for the adjacent large car park were noted, with a recommendation to check the Land Registry.

It was emphasised that any changes involving the Public Hall should be carried out in partnership with the community, and a focused piece of work with the Public Hall Committee is planned to support this.

Clarification was also given on the Jubilee Shelter budget, confirming it as a contingency allocation in case major repairs are needed.

#### **24.513 Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25 (AGAR)**

- (i) It was agreed to complete the AGAR, Section 1: Annual Governance Statement
- (ii) It was agreed to sign Section 1

#### **24.514 Internal Controls**

- (i) A copy of the Council's Internal Finance Controls had been circulated prior to the Meeting, and it was

**Resolved:** The current procedures were deemed satisfactory, and no changes were recommended.

The Chair confirmed that they attend the offices once a month to carry out the various checks.

- (ii) A review of the Town Clerk's discretionary spend value and agreement on a figure for 2025/26 was carried out and it was

**Resolved:** To maintain discretionary spend for existing expenditure and to revise to £250.00 the discretionary value for new expenditure.

#### **24.515 Income & Expenditure 2024/25**

An advance payment under Budget Heading 150:CIL Expenditure of £8915.86 caused an overspend in 2024/25. This payment to The Woolly Shepherd regarding the Hall Acoustics was previously allocated for payment in 2025/26.

#### **24.516 Budget Headings 2025/26**

The following amendments to budget headings were received and agreed:

- Heading 110: 'Public Conveniences'. Amend title to 'Station Road Toilets'
- Remove budget Heading 111 – Public Convenience Cleaning
- Add subheading to 110 as follows:
  - 110/1 Consumables
  - 110/2 Cleaning
  - 110/3 Electricity
  - 110/4 Water
  - 110/5 Maintenance

#### **24.517 Changes to budgets 2025/26**

The following changes to 2025/26 budgets were received and agreed:

- i. Budget Heading 150: Community Infrastructure Levy
  - Current Budget: £8750.00
  - Future: £0.00
  - Rationale: This item was paid for in 2024/25
- ii. Budget Heading 126 Defibrillator
  - Current Budget: £0.00
  - Future: £500.00

- Rationale: A total of £361.45 was spent in 2024/25. Each unit requires periodic battery replacements, as well as replacement pads in the event of deployment

**24.518 Precept 2025/26**

It was noted that Budleigh Salterton Town Council requested £198000.00 Precept from East Devon District Council [Min 24.368].

**24.519 Grant Applications 2025/26**

A template grant applications form has been circulated prior to the meeting and it was

**Resolved:** to further develop the template and finalise at a future meeting of the Town Council.

There was a discussion around the need to ensure grant applications clearly demonstrate their benefit to the community, including how many residents will be reached, how the initiative supports local wellbeing, and its relevance to Budleigh. Applicants should also outline other fundraising efforts and be prepared to report back on their progress at 6, 12, and 24-month intervals.

It was suggested that the current grant application form be reviewed and amended, and this item added to the next agenda for further discussion. A brief conversation was held regarding the grant timetable, with a proposal to bring this back to the next Town Council meeting for consideration.

**24.520 Any Other Business at the Chair's Discretion**

No other business was raised

There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 8.57pm

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Chair

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Date