

BUDLEIGH SALTERTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Town Council held in the Council Offices, Station Road, Budleigh Salterton on Monday 24 November 2025.

The meeting commenced at 7.20pm.

PRESENT

Cllr P Lewis – Chair and Town Mayor
Cllr A Chaplin
Cllr S Cook
Cllr C Cunningham
Cllr P Jones
Cllr P Manfield
Cllr L Miszewska
Cllr G Woodcraft

In attendance: Alice Gater-Wildgust (Town Clerk), District Cllr Charlotte Fitzgerald, District Cllr M Martin and Co Cllr N Hookway.

25.306 Public Speaking Time

Two members of the public were in attendance.

Gavin March, President – Lions Club of Budleigh Salterton, spoke regarding the Public Hall hire fees for the Public Hall and in particular the importance of Town Council support for Gala Week. He provided an overview of Gala Week, emphasising its importance as a highlight of the Budleigh calendar, with the event marking 42 years. He noted that local groups and families came together during Gala Week, with the public hall serving as a central and accessible community space.

Mr March acknowledged the council's financial challenges but stressed that when charity events such as Gala Week disappeared, the community suffered. He highlighted that all funds raised remained within Budleigh Salterton and the surrounding area. He requested that the council consider maintaining the concessionary hire rate for Gala Week, recognising the significant positive impact the event had on both the Lions Club and the wider community.

7.24pm 1 member of the public left the meeting

25.307 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from , Cllr R Doorbar, Cllr S Horn and Cllr P Jones.

25.308 Declarations of Interests in Items on the Agenda

Cllr Lewis declared an interest in Minute 25.322, as they were a member of the club.

Cllr Cunningham declared an interest in Minute 25.322, as they were a member of the club.

Cllr Chaplin declared an interest in Minute 25.327, as they were a resident of Norman Crescent.

25.309 Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council Committee held on 13 October 2025 had been circulated prior to the Meeting. It was unanimously agreed they be signed as a true record.

25.310 Reports of Committee

The Minutes of the meeting of the following committees were noted:

Public Hall Committee held on 13 October 2025

Finance Committee held on 10 November 2025

25.311 Chair's Report

The Chair reported that since the last Town Council Meeting they had committed significant time to the Council's work.

In the role as Town Mayor, the Chair was honoured to lay a wreath on behalf of the Council and Town at the War Memorial and to attend the Remembrance Service at St Peter's Church. They had also attended the Exmouth Civic Service, which recognised the town's nautical history and various musical initiatives.

The Chair met with Rev Jean Hughes of the Methodist Church to learn about the work undertaken to support educational endeavours for young people in Gaza.

Regrettably, the Chair was unable to attend the annual town late-night shopping event in the following Friday and had sent apologies. The Deputy Town Mayor, Cllr Woodcraft, was attending.

They continue to meet regularly with the Town Clerk and the Deputy Chair. They had been addressing a number of inherited issues and reviewing ways of working, acknowledging that further progress was needed.

In particular, the Chair reported that work was being prioritised by categorising tasks as "must do," "should do," or "could do." Colleagues on various committees were encouraged to review requests and to understand that priority must be given to "must do" tasks initially. Members were encouraged to use Teams for communication, especially for matters that may require a swift response.

The Chair informed members that Councillor David Walsh had resigned due to personal reasons. He had been a valuable and committed member over the past two years and would be greatly missed. The Returning Officer issued a notice of casual vacancy on 11th November. Electors had 10 days from that date to request an election. If no request was received, the Council would proceed to fill the vacancy by co-option.

The Chair and Cllr Woodcraft met with Sarah Coles regarding Budleigh Information Centre. They also attended meetings organised by East Devon District Council on Community Asset Transfers and Beach Management. The Chair noted that the recent partnership Traffic and Transport Group meeting included positive feedback from partner members.

Additionally, the Chair met with IT support to discuss the Council's requirements for IT assistance and the limitations experienced with the tablets.

Finally, the Chair advised that Cllr Woodcraft would cover their duties during their forthcoming absence over the next few weeks.

25.312 Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported on recent meetings, including a productive session with Chris Khan from the Environment Agency regarding emergency planning and flood risk, with further collaboration planned. A meeting with East Devon District Council's Street Scene team discussed BSTC's one-off funding commitment to refurbish sea front benches.

The Clerk attended both the Budleigh Cliff and Beach Management Plan residents' meeting and the Planning Advisory Group session alongside councillors.

Regarding resignations, the Clerk acknowledged the resignation of Councillor David Walsh, effective 10 November 2025, and noted that the vacancy process was underway through EDDC.

Following the meeting with EDDC, further contractor documentation were requested to ensure sea front bench work could be safely undertaken within specifications.

The consultation on Section 106 funding closed on 30 October 2025, with strong support for the proposals within. Relevant parties had been notified, and allocation of

funds would be arranged, with monitoring of outcomes ongoing. A report on additional suggestions received during the consultation was expected early in 2026.

The upcoming Late Night Shopping event was scheduled for 28 November 2025, with road closure notifications received from Devon Highways.

There had been a series of vandalism incidents at the Station Road public toilets, resulting in the closure of one cubicle. The police were reviewing CCTV footage. The BSTC caretaker was managing most repairs, resulting in significant cost savings; £500 had been spent on maintenance year-to-date, excluding labour.

Finally, proposed dates were provided for a meeting with Pennon Water representatives, including Alan Burrows, Head of Local Government Affairs, and the local Project Manager, with options of 12 or 19 December provided. The Clerk agreed to confirm a suitable date.

25.313 Reports of Council Representatives on Other Bodies

Cllr P Manfield – Knowle Village Hall

Cllr Manfield reported that Knowle Village Hall had expressed their thanks to BSTC for its support with the Section 106 funding. The KVH Committee continued to be busy and had recently met with Plastic Free Budleigh. They were organising a fundraising quiz scheduled for 19 December 2025, and plans were underway to upgrade the hall kitchen and garage/lock-up.

Cllr S. Cook – South West Water Update

Cllr Cook provided an update following the meeting with South West Water in May. He reported that the pipe relining project initially identified Fore Street and Brook Mews as the worst affected areas. However, during the project, it became clear that work around Knowle would provide greater benefit in reducing flow to the Lime Kiln Pumping Station. Consequently, work on the Fore Street and Brook Mews section was put on hold.

Cllr Cook explained that there had been some misunderstanding within BSTC regarding the difference between spills and discharges at the Lime Kiln Pumping Station. South West Water clarified that multiple discharge events within the first 12 hours count as a single spill, with additional events in subsequent 24-hour periods counted as further spills. A 24-hour gap between events resets the count.

Regarding pollution in Kers Brook, E. coli levels had been lower and more stable since February, though contamination sources could include livestock and wildlife. Discussions were ongoing involving East Devon District Council, South West Water, the Environment Agency, Clinton Devon, and the Otter Valley Association concerning the future management of this section of the brook.

Cllr Cook noted that the Town Council had issued a press release expressing concerns about the water quality of the River Otter. South West Water had requested a follow-up meeting, which the Town Clerk was arranging. The focus of the meeting would be on completing the pipe relining project, improving communication about future works and progress updates (such as WaterFit Live alerts), upgrading the rising main between Lime Kiln and Exmouth Treatment Works, and the future of Kers Brook from the Play Area to the Lime Kiln Car Park.

Cllr J Billington - Plastic Free Budleigh Salterton

Cllr Billington congratulated Sue Glover and the Plastic Free Budleigh Salterton team on achieving the 'Plastic Free Town' award. This recognition reflected their dedicated efforts to reduce single-use plastics and promote environmental sustainability within the community. The achievement was seen as a significant milestone for Budleigh Salterton, highlighting the town's commitment to environmental responsibility and serving as an example for other communities to follow.

Cllr Billington further reported that they had met with a member of the public, representatives from the Lions Club, and Sue Glover to discuss the issue of nails found on the beach, which appeared to originate from fires involving pallets. Cllr S. P. Cook also attended the meeting. The group explored potential actions to address the safety concerns arising from this matter.

It was noted that the beach is under the control of EDDC and any issues relating to this matter would not be a concern to the police

Cllr Chaplin – Christmas Lights Working Group with Shop Budleigh

Cllr Chaplin AC expressed thanks to Jen Mills at Shop Budleigh for her dedicated work in organising and ensuring the Christmas lights were switched on in the town, which greatly contributed to the festive atmosphere. Appreciation was also extended to the generosity of local residents and businesses who supported this welcome initiative. Shop Budleigh was in the process of developing a display poster to formally acknowledge all contributors, including BSTC, which had donated £11,000 over the past two years. Additionally, County Councillor N. Hookway had provided a £1,000 grant from their locality budget to support the project.

25.314 Reports of County and District Councillors

East Devon District Council (EDDC)

Cllr C Fitzgerald

Cllr Fitzgerald reported that EDDC will meet on 26 November to debate and vote on a proposed unitary authority structure to be submitted to the Department for Local Government, Housing and Communities. After extensive evaluation and public consultation (with 6,000 responses), the recommended '4-5-1' model proposes three unitary authorities grouped under a shared Mayoral Authority overseeing services such as police and transport. The proposed groups are:

- 4: West Devon, Teignbridge, South Hams, Torbay
- 5: East Devon, Mid Devon, North Devon, Torridge, Exeter
- 1: Plymouth (expanded)

It is expected that Exeter and Devon County Council may submit alternative proposals. The deadline for all submissions is 28 November. Following this, there will be a consultation period inviting feedback from town and parish councils.

Additionally, Cllr FitzGerald represented East Devon District Council as Vice-Chair at the Exmouth Remembrance Day parade and service on 9 November, which honoured veterans and current service personnel with a well-attended event reflecting Exmouth's strong military heritage.

It is expected that EDDC will vote on a 'motion for the ocean' in December. Cllr Fitzgerald will bring concerns regarding nails from beach fires to their attention

Devon County Council

County Cllr N Hookway

Cllr Hookway reported that the national fairer funding settlement indicates that rural areas will be placed at a disadvantage in the coming year. Central Government has not accepted the previously applied principle of remoteness. Social care is the only area that has been protected. Devon County Council is already facing a reduction of £50 million.

East Devon District Council is also expecting a substantial reduction in funding and is considering a rise in Council Tax that would be above the level of inflation.

The Cabinet had agreed that the contract with Libraries Unlimited will remain in place for a further two years.

Cllr Hookway reported positively on the recent Traffic Group meeting in Budleigh Salterton. A request for Speed Compliance Action Review Forum (SCARF) had been

initiated for Knowle Hill (between the roundabout and the junction of the B3178), and speed tests will be carried out.

They will be undertaking a tour of the district with Emma Sampson, Devon Highways, in December.

The Councillor highlighted the Devon Health and Care Strategy, which aims to integrate services more effectively. This includes a review of the role and location of Minor Injuries Units, following the recent sudden closure of the Dawlish MIU.

25.315 Finance Inspection

- (i) The payments for the month of October & November (to 13th) 2025, in accordance with Appendix A 'expenditure list' were approved.
- (ii) It was noted that Cllr Woodcraft had conducted the internal finance inspection for October 2025.

25.316 Precept 2026/2027

Consideration was given to the Finance Committee's recommendation [Minute 25.285] to request a precept of £235,611.93 for 2026/27 from EDDC, maintaining the same 19% increase applied in 2025/2026. Following a details discussion it was:

Resolved:

To request a precept of £235611.93

It was agreed to request that EDDC provide space for two lines of text from BSTC to accompany the Council Tax demand for 2026/27, enabling the Council to communicate the increase to the community in a transparent and open manner.

25.317 Roof – Norman Centre

Details of a quotation for repairs to the Norman Centre roof were received and considered.

Resolved:

That RC Scaffolding be appointed to carry out the necessary repair works to the Norman Centre roof in accordance with the submitted quotation.

25.318 Building Survey – including roof assessment

The Council received and considered the recommendation from the Public Hall Committee to commission a building survey and solar suitability assessment at a proposed fee of £1,875 excluding VAT, and to appoint Andrew Mills Surveyors to undertake this work, as detailed in the supporting papers.

Resolved:

- To approve the commissioning of the building survey and solar suitability assessment by Andrew Mills Surveyors at the quoted fee.

Further Actions:

- To ascertain whether Andrew Mills Surveyors provide energy audit services.
- To obtain detailed information regarding the East Devon District Council (EDDC) energy audit requirements.

25.319 Hire Rates

The Council received and considered the recommendation from the Public Hall Committee concerning proposed revisions to the Public Hall hire rates, as detailed in the supporting papers.

Resolved:

It was agreed that the revised rates will apply to all bookings from 1 Jan 2026, as outlined in appendix 2 of the PH Hiring agreements related to future bookings:

'The Hirer agrees to pay the actual charge in force at the time the premises are used (not the charge extant when the booking is made as charges may be subject to increase following the Town Council's annual review of hire charges).'

It was further agreed that the two tiered rates would be referred to Charity Rate and Commercial Rate

The proposed rates are as follows:

Rate Category	Proposed Rate (from Jan 2026)	Notes
Charity Rate (formerly 'regular' rate)	£18.00	Inclusive of heating, sound system, set up and take down
Commercial Rate	£30.00	Inclusive of heating, sound system, set up and take down

The new rates would represent a simplified and fully inclusive charging structure.

25.320 Station Road Toilets

The Council received and considered the recommendation from the Public Hall Committee concerning the reconditioning of the doors, as detailed in the supporting papers.

Resolved:

That the recommendation be accepted.

25.321 Request for Grant Aid 2025/26: St Peters School PTFA

(i) To consider whether to sponsor Christmas Gifts.

(ii) To determine the amount of sponsorship.

Resolved:

That a grant of £500.00 be paid

25.322 Request for Grant Aid 2026/27: Lions Club of Budleigh Salterton – Gala Week Children's Cycle Competition

(i) The Council considered whether to sponsor the Children's Cycle Competition.

(ii) The Council considered the amount of sponsorship to be awarded.

Resolved:

To sponsor the Children's Cycle Competition with a grant of £200.00

25.323 Staffing Committee update

This item was deferred to a future agenda

25.324 Meeting Dates 2026

Suggested meeting dates for 2026 were received. It was:

Resolved:

that the suggested meeting dates be accepted while acknowledging that some flexibility was required to accommodate staff annual leave.

It was further agreed to add in two meetings for the newly formed Climate and the Environment Committee.

25.325 Office Opening Hours: Christmas/New Year

It was agreed that the office will close at 4.00 pm on Tuesday 23 December 2025 and will reopen on Friday 2 January 2026, in accordance with the arrangements followed in previous years.

25.326 Committee Membership

A review of committee membership was carried out.

Resolved:

The following appointments were agreed:

- Catriona Cunningham: Community Gardens Committee
- Peter Manfield: Traffic and Transport Group

It was agreed that membership of the Emergency Group would be reviewed at a later date. [Committee Membership details](#)

25.327 Community Asset Transfer (CAT)

Details of a proposal regarding an approach to Community Asset Transfer were received and considered.

Resolved:

- That the report be accepted as a basis for the Town Council to work towards resolving the matter.
- That Members and the Clerk would collaborate in small groups as outlined on page 4 of the supporting document.
- That the matter be added to the Town Council agenda for January.
- That Doug's email address be shared with Members, alongside a reminder regarding the Code of Conduct.
- That AGW will coordinate and arrange a suitable date for the group meetings.

23.328 East Devon District Council: Event Notification

To note that no objections were raised to the following event:

- Reindeer Fun Run – The Green, Budleigh Salterton – 9.00am – 12.30pm - 30 November 2025

25.328 Correspondence Received

- Citizens Advise East Devon: Letter of Thanks for Grant
- Clinton Devon Estates: Heath to Sea response to consultation
- C Sismore-Hunt – Thank you card following gift of named rose.
- Budleigh Salterton Library: Letter of thanks for grant
- Museum Development South West: News letter
- OVA October Newsletter

25.329 Any Other Business at the Chairman's Discretion

No other business was raised

25.330 Dates of Next Meetings

Planning Committee
Town Council

15 December 2025 at 7.00pm
15 December 2025 on the rising of the Planning Committee

The Chair to Move that:

Under Section 100(a)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the Meeting as exempt information is likely to be discussed.

PART B

25.331 Staffing – Salaries

To receive details of and agree any annual increase for the Caretaker and Deputy Caretaker

A discussion took place regarding the annual pay increase for the Caretaker and Deputy Caretaker.

Resolved: a 5% increase would be applied.

There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 9.08pm.

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Chair

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Date