

BUDLEIGH SALTERTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Town Council held in the Public Hall, Station Road, Budleigh Salterton on Monday 26 January 2026.

The meeting commenced at 7.45pm.

PRESENT

Cllr P Lewis – Chair and Town Mayor
Cllr S Cook
Cllr C Cunningham
Cllr R Doorbar
Cllr S Horn
Cllr P Manfield
Cllr G Woodcraft

In Attendance: Mrs A Gater-Wildgust (Town Clerk), District Cllr C Fitzgerald, District Cllr M Martin and two members of the public.

25.384 Public Speaking Time

No member of the public addressed the Council.

The Chair confirmed that Standing Order 3(f), relating to the restriction of public speaking, would be suspended later in the meeting to allow for broader discussion of Minute 25.390 and would be reinstated thereafter.

25.385 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Chaplin, Cllr Jones, Cllr Miszewska, Cllr Woodman and Co Cllr Hookway.

25.386 Declarations of Interests

There were no interests declared.

25.387 Minutes

The Minutes of the Meetings of the Town Council held on 15 December 2025 & 12 January 2026 had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was unanimously agreed that they be signed as a true record.

25.388 Chair's Report

The Chair began their report by inviting all those present to observe a one-minute silence in light of the tragic events of Christmas Day. A one minutes silence was observed.

The Chair reflected that the events of Christmas Day 2025 would always be remembered by the town, and that their impact continued to be felt by many within the community. On behalf of residents and visitors, the Chair expressed sincere thanks to all emergency services and volunteers for their prompt, professional, and compassionate response in supporting those affected. The Chair also conveyed the Council's sympathies and condolences to the families and friends of those who tragically lost their lives. The Chair confirmed that a statement had been issued in their capacity as Town Mayor on Monday 28 December 2025.

The Chair reported that they had undertaken no other formal duties as Town Mayor since the previous Town Council meeting.

In a personal capacity, the Chair attended a public event concerning proposed changes to the town's library, as put forward by Libraries Unlimited, the charity responsible for library services across Devon. The Chair noted that a wide range of

views and comments were expressed, which would be forwarded to Devon County Council to help inform its decision-making process. It was reported that attendance was high, including many residents, County Councillors, trustees, and senior staff from Libraries Unlimited, who were able to hear directly and appreciate the potential impact of the proposals on the town and surrounding area.

The Chair reported, with regret, the resignation of Jan Billington from the Council. The Chair recorded appreciation for her dedication, attention to detail, and her particular focus on the impacts of climate change, which had made a valuable contribution to the work of the Council and to addressing the needs of the town over the past 18 months.

25.389 Clerk's Report

Station Road Toilets

The Clerk reported that over Oct-Nov 2025 there had been an increase in incidents of vandalism and anti-social behaviour at the Station Road public toilets. As a result, two cubicles had been closed. The Clerk further reported that work was ongoing with the police to manage and address the situation more effectively.

Libraries Consultation

The Clerk reported that a response to the Libraries Consultation had been submitted to Devon County Council and uploaded to the Commonplace consultation platform. A copy of the response had also been sent to Cllr Cheryl Cottle-Hunkin (Devon County Council).

East Devon Emerging Local Plan to 2042

The Clerk reported that the second Regulation 19 consultation had closed at noon on 26 January 2026. A response had been submitted requesting inclusion in the Water Cycle Study. The response had been uploaded to Commonplace and circulated to the Strategic Planning Committee and to Ed Freeman, Assistant Director for Planning Strategy and Development Management.

Maintenance

The Clerk reported that the caretaker was undertaking a small upgrade to the hall due to deterioration of the walls caused by general wear and tear and incidents of users affixing items to the walls. It was also reported that the Norman Centre was due to be repainted following the replacement of lining paper. Work on the public hall floor was approximately fifty percent completed, with additional screws and filler helping to maintain and stabilise the floorboards. The caretaker was fitting this work in alongside cleaning and room set-up duties. The Clerk further reported that work on the Station Road toilet doors was planned to commence when weather conditions improved.

7.54pm Standing order 3(f) on Public Speaking was suspended

25.390 Community Asset Transfer (CAT) – Strategic Considerations

Community Asset Transfer (CAT) and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

The Council discussed how it might approach Community Asset Transfer (CAT) and discussed which assets currently managed by East Devon District Council (EDDC) the Town Council might consider running for the benefit of the town and its residents.

It was noted that, under current Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) plans, the structure of the new authority was not yet known and could be either a Devon-wide authority or a Greater Exeter authority. At this stage, the outcome remained uncertain. Members noted that this discussion was taking place in the context of LGR and as an alternative to assets transferring automatically to the new unitary authority.

It was agreed that any future decisions would need to consider legal matters, costs and long-term financial commitments, whether the Town Council has the ability to manage and maintain the assets, and the benefit each asset would bring to the community.

It was noted that all assets would transfer to the new authority unless the Town Council opened discussions about them. Alternatively, assets could transfer to the soon to be formed Unitary Authority, with discussions taking place at a later date.

Asset Discussion

Play Areas and Skateparks

It was agreed that these assets were important to the town and a view was expressed that they should remain locally managed. Reference was made to the football club recently securing additional land to protect facilities for its youth teams and the positive support received from EDDC during this process. BSTC had recently completed a consultation on S106 funding and a grant had been granted to the Youth Section of Budleigh Salterton Football Club to develop the facilities.

Beach Huts and Shelters

Concerns were raised about the condition of these assets and the cost of ongoing maintenance.

Industrial Sites

These were noted but not discussed in detail.

Public Toilet

Public toilets were discussed, excluding Brook Road. It was noted that BSTC took ownership of the Station Road toilet block in April 2025 following a decision by EDDC to close the facility. BSTC considered the toilets to be an important amenity for the town and had been operating them since that time.

It was noted that there was a significant cost associated with running the facility, with cleaning costs alone in excess of £20,000 per year and total annual running costs expected to exceed £30,000.

Infrastructure

It was felt that the Town Council would not have the capacity to manage infrastructure assets.

Parks and Open Spaces

It was also noted that Jubilee Field and the land East of Lime Kiln was not something to be considered by BSTC.

During the discussion the following queries were raised:

- What influence the Town Council would have over Budleigh Salterton assets once the new authority was in place?
- How EDDC funds might be reallocated under the new arrangements?

The timeline for the transfer of power to the new unitary authority is as follows:

May 2027: Shadow Unitary Authority becomes operative. EDDC remains operative.

May 2028: Full control of EDDC duties transfers to the new Unitary Authority; the Unitary Authority is fully vested.

8.41pm The Chair reinstated standing order 3(f) on Public Speaking

25.391 Reports of Council Representatives on Other Bodies

Cllr Manfield provided an update on the work being carried out by the Knowle Village Hall Committee, highlighting their successful fundraising efforts for the play park and hall. It was noted that five events were planned for 2026. Most recently, the Committee had saved approximately £4,000 by reinstating the trampoline themselves.

Cllr Doorbar reported that the Budleigh Salterton Library Committee continued to be as enthusiastic as ever.

25.392 Reports of County and District Councillors

Cllr Martin shared details of an interesting bulletin about cost-of-living support and social isolation among young men and boys. A copy of the bulletin would be forwarded to the Town Clerk.

25.393 Finance Inspection

- (i) Payments for the months of December 2025, in accordance with Appendix A were approved.
- (ii) It was noted that Cllr G Woodcraft has carried out the internal finance inspection for December 2025.

25.394 Audit 2025/26

To note that the Council's Internal Auditor, Westcotts, has undertaken the interim audit and no issues were raised. It was noted that BSTC will conduct a review of risk assessments and the investment strategy, in conjunction with the annual audit, as usual.

25.395 Committee Membership – deferred to a future agenda

Emergency Group: to appoint one additional member.

25.396 Correspondence Received

- Devon County Council:
 - Temporary Prohibition of Through Traffic – Station Road: 19 Jan - 6 Feb 2026 (pipework's)
 - Temporary Prohibition of Through Traffic – Station Road: 16 to 20 February 2026 (resurfacing)
- Letter of Support and Condolence: Cllr Graham Deasy, Mayor of Exmouth Town Council
- Saint Peter's Mini Mag – Jan 2026
- British Gas: Renewable Energy Certificate 1 Jan 2026 – 11 Oct 2027

25.397 Any Other Business at the Chairman's Discretion

No other business was raised.

25.398 Dates of Next Meetings

Monday 9 th February, from 7.00pm	Planning Committee Community Infrastructure Levy Committee Public Hall Committee Climate Change and Environment Committee
Monday 23 rd February, from 7.00pm	Planning Committee Town Council

There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 8.49pm.

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Chair

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Date