

BUDLEIGH SALTERTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Town Council held in the Council Offices, Station Road, Budleigh Salterton on Monday 23 March 2026.

The meeting commenced at 7.14 pm

PRESENT

Cllr P Lewis – Chair and Town Mayor

Cllr S Cook

Cllr S Horn

Cllr P Manfield

Cllr S Woodman

Cllr A Chaplin

Cllr R Doorbar

Cllr P Jones

Cllr G Woodcraft

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

25.510 Public Speaking Time

A member of Exmouth and District Community Transport shared details of the service that it runs in Budleigh Salterton. It was reported that 16 residents made 312 journeys over the year, contributing a total of £5,100 in fares. However, the overall cost of providing the service, including running two buses, was approximately £92,000 in 2025.

Around 10% of service users are residents of Budleigh, representing roughly £9,000 of these costs. Thanks were expressed for last year's grant support. However, the service continues to operate at a deficit. EDCT emphasised that this provision is a vital lifeline for many people in the community.

With fares at around £17 per trip, and total daily costs often reaching £40–£50, the service is not affordable for everyone. EDCT is working hard to bridge this funding gap and asked whether BSTC can commit additional financial support.

25.511 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr C Cunningham.

25.512 Declarations of Interests in Items on the Agenda

Cllr Chaplin declared an interest in Min 25.523, they are a member of the Christmas lights Group as a Town Council representative and Min 25.528, they are a plot holder at Greenway Lane Community Gardens.

25.513 Minutes

The Minutes of the following meetings had been circulated prior to the meeting:

- Meeting of the Town Council held on 23 February 2026
- Extra Ordinary Meeting of the Town Council held on 9 March 2026.

It was unanimously agreed that they be signed as a true record.

25.514 Report of Committee

The Minutes of the following meetings were noted:

Community Gardens 9th March 2026

Foreshores and Footpaths 9th March 2026.

25.515 Chair's Report

The Chair reported that Lesley Miszewska had resigned from the Council and formally recorded thanks for their service and contributions since their appointment. It was noted that the resulting casual vacancy would be advertised in the usual way, either leading to an election if requested or to co-option by the Council.

The Chair thanked all those who attended the Annual Parish Meeting held on 12 March. Responses to questions raised by members of the public were in the process of being finalised and were expected to be ready for publication by the end of the week. It was

further reported that ideas and comments gathered during the interactive session were being transcribed and would help inform future Council decisions.

The Chair reported that Councillor Chaplin and the Chair had attended an online meeting with Pennon and South West Water, alongside representatives from East Devon District Council and Devon County Council. It was noted that further follow-up action would be required.

The Chair highlighted that the Local Government Reorganisation process had placed increasing pressure on all levels of local government, including the Town Council. Members and the public were asked to recognise that many issues arising were beyond the Council's control, and that the Council had limited time and resources to manage the ongoing disruption and delays.

25.516 Clerk's Report

Finance and Governance

The Clerk reported that year-end financial documentation preparation was underway, including work towards completion of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

Meetings and Professional Development

- The introductory CiLCA session was attended and completed.
- An informal discussion was held with East Devon District Council officers regarding potential Community Asset Transfers (CAT), focusing on public toilet facilities and contiguous assets in Budleigh Salterton. Existing budgets for the Steamer Steps and Brook Road sites would transfer if agreements proceeded, with £35,000 allocated for Brook Road to cover demolition and site remediation. Further details for Steamer Steps were awaited. Contact had been made with contractors and the Council's insurance broker to assess potential costs for taking on these assets.
- Feedback from the Annual Parish Meeting (12 March) was very positive, with community members finding the session informative.
- A meeting with the EDDC Streetscene Manager confirmed minimal overlap with BSTC contractors.
- The Clerk attended a DALC LGR meeting, which included discussions on CAT and shared experiences of Local Government Reorganisation.

Town Council Representatives on Other Bodies

Research and a report were being prepared to define the parameters of this role and would be circulated in due course.

Operational Updates

- Flooring works at the Public Hall were completed.
- Station Road resurfacing works were scheduled to start on 25 March (night works).
- Reconditioning of Station Road Toilets cubicle doors was due to begin in late March.

Staffing

The vacancy for Assistant to the Town Clerk was live and advertised across multiple platforms, including Facebook, the Council website, Job Centre Plus, Indeed, and DALC.

Contractor Engagement

- The Lock Monkey completed a lock change on site.
- Site meetings were held with two contractors regarding replacement fire doors.
- A meeting took place with Paul Abbotts Garden Maintenance to discuss 2026 priorities.
- Glanville Construction completed works on the Green, removed metal hoardings, and would shortly carry out surface repairs and reseeding.

25.517 Reports of Council Representatives on Other Bodies

SWW/Pennon Water

Cllr Lewis shared that a meeting had taken place with Pennon Water recently. It was recorded that there was no significant update and the meeting was generally considered unproductive.

Budleigh Salterton Library

Cllr Doorbar It was acknowledged that the Friends of the Library have undertaken considerable work, and the Council's support of the library was deeply appreciated.

Knowle Village Hall

Cllr Manfield shared that the S106 grant was due this week. Thanks were expressed to the Council and the community for their involvement.

25.518 Reports of County and District Councillors

District Cllr C Fitzgerald

Planning: A planning appeal is being considered by East Devon District Council.

Marlcombe: has been removed from the government's new towns list causing immense disappointment across EDDC. Around six locations were removed from the list in total. EDDC will now focus on securing alternative funding and support and will be actively seeking opportunities to support local priorities despite changes at the national level.

25.519 Finance Inspection

- (i) Payments for the months of January and February 2026, in accordance with Appendix A, were noted.
- (ii) It was noted that Cllr G Woodcraft had carried out the internal finance inspection for January and February 2026.

25.520 Request for Grant Aid 2025/26: Budleigh Information Centre (BIC)

- (i) It was agreed to make a donation to BIC.
- (ii) A grant of £1000 would be made.

It was agreed to use the remaining 2025/2026 budget for this grant.

25.521 Request for Grant Aid 2025/25: Exmouth & District Community Transport (EDCT)

- (i) It was agreed to make a donation to EDCT.
- (ii) A grant of £1000 would be made. BSTC would like to see more work done by EDCT to get more local users for the service.

It was agreed to use the remaining 2025/2026 budget for this grant.

25.522 Request for Grant Aid 2026/27: Budleigh Music Festival (BMF)

- (i) It was agreed to make a donation to BMF.
- (ii) A grant of £1700.00 would be made, to cover artists fees and workshop costs. It was noted that BSTC valued these events that include the whole community.

25.523 Request for Grant Aid 2026/27: Shop Budleigh

- (i) It was agreed to make a donation to Shop Budleigh.
- (ii) A grant of £6000 would be made, to be paid from Town Improvement Fund / CIL or Grant Budget. It was further noted that BSTC also settle the energy bill for the High Street Christmas lights every year.

25.524 Christmas Lights

A report was received from the Christmas Lights group and consideration was given to the following:

Support: It was agreed that the Council is supportive of the provision of annual Christmas lights within the town and acknowledges the positive commercial and emotional benefits such a display provides.

Financial Commitment: Consideration was given to whether BSTC will commit to an annual donation or grant of approximately £6,000 plus VAT for a period of five (5)

years to support the delivery of Christmas lights. It was:

Resolved: that BSTC would commit to fund the installation of the Christmas Lights at £6000.00 per annum for 2026 and 2027 only. This includes the amount resolved in Min 25.523. Any further funds would need to come forward for consideration separately.

Establishment of a Christmas Lights Group: Due to concerns regarding ongoing liability and the current commitments and workload of the Council, a decision on this matter could not be made at the present time and would require further consideration in the future.

Discussion:

- It was noted that 15 out of c. 80 traders currently contribute to the Christmas Lights fund.
- Concern was expressed about a single point of failure, with a suggestion that the Council should retain ownership of the lights and the process, and that any group should be Council-led.
- Previous discussions on this issue had raised concerns regarding liability, risk, and implications for future councils.
- A partnership group was suggested as a potential option.
- The Clerk advised that, in light of recent Town Council resolutions to increase staffing to manage existing workload, it would be prudent to complete current commitments thoroughly before taking on additional responsibilities.

8.05pm One member of the public left the meeting.

25.525 Local Government Reorganisation

There are five proposals available for consideration.

- It was noted that the Council would want to play a full part in any local initiatives.
- Members acknowledged that it was not always straightforward to respond as a council, and that the Council is prepared to work with the options provided.
- It was agreed that members would complete their responses individually.

25.526 Finance

- (i) It was agreed that Complete Cleaning Services will be paid by direct debit rather than BACS. This is an existing contract with a bimonthly invoice of £234.00.
- (ii) Details were received and agreed of the following budget amendments (see Appendix B).

25.527 CCLA

Consideration was given to the appointment of one additional member to become the third signatory on the two CCLA investments held by BSTC. It was:

Resolved: Cllr Jones agreed to act as the third signatory.

25.528 Community Gardens Plot Edging

Consideration was given to the recommendation of the CG Committee that the practice of providing replacement wooden plot edging within Greenway Gardens be discontinued, in light of the significant cost currently borne by the Council. It was:

Resolved: to accept the recommendation of the CGC

25.529 Town Council Responses to Consultations

It was noted that the following responses had been submitted by the Town Clerk on behalf of Budleigh Salterton Town Council:

**DCC – Waiting Restrictions Amendment Order – [DPS:NL:DEV001/1509:B]
(South Farm Road.)**

EDDC Play Park and Open Space Strategy (PPOSS) Consultation

25.530 Correspondence Received

Exmouth Town Council – Save the Date – Civic Service 2026: 12 September 2026, 11.00am, Holy Trinity Church, Exmouth

Devon County Council:

- Temporary Prohibition of Through Traffic – Station Road: 25 March to 1 April 2026 (resurfacing). TTRO2668022.
- Temporary Prohibition of Through Traffic & Parking – Boucher Road and Boucher Way – 20 April – 3 June 2026 – (Gas Mains replacement). TTRO2668535.
- Temporary Prohibition of Through Traffic & Parking – Granary Lane, Salting Hill, Marine Parade – 24 May 2026 – (Budleigh Runners Fun Run). TTRO2668217.
- Temporary Prohibition of Through Traffic – Dark Lane – 20 March – 9 April 2026 – Landslip (TTRO2668830)

Patching Works – B3178

- 30-31 March – East Budleigh Road & Coastguards Road – 7.00am - 7.00pm
- 30 March – 3rd April – East Budleigh Road (from East Budleigh) to Bicton – 7.00pm – 7.00am (night work)
- 9-10 April – B3178 from Brick Cross to South Farm Road - 7.00pm – 7.00am (night work)

- 7 April – Coastguard Road – 7.00pm – 7.00am (night work)

25.531 Any Other Business at the Chair’s Discretion

Cllr Woodman suggested that the TC take a table on the first Saturday of Gala Week to carry out some community engagement and agreed to move forward with arranging this.

25.532 Dates of Next Town Council and Committee Meetings

13 April 2026	Planning Finance
27 April 2026	Planning Committee Town Council
11 May 2026	Annual Meeting of the Town Council Election of Chair and Deputy.

There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 8.47pm.

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Chair

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Date