

## BUDLEIGH SALTERTON TOWN COUNCIL

**MINUTES** of the meeting of the Town Council held in the Council Offices, Station Road, Budleigh Salterton on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2026

The meeting commenced at 7.06pm.

### **PRESENT**

Cllr P Lewis – Chair and Town Mayor  
Cllr A Chaplin  
Cllr R Doorbar  
Cllr P Manfield  
Cllr S Woodman

Cllr M Alligan  
Cllr C Cunningham  
Cllr S Horn  
Cllr G Woodcraft

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

### **25.561 Public Speaking Time**

There were no public speakers.

### **25.562 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr S Cook and Cllr P Jones.

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

There were no interests declared.

### **25.564 Minutes**

The minutes of the Town Council meetings held on 23 March 2026, having been circulated prior to the meeting, were unanimously approved as a true and accurate record.

7.09pm Co Cllr Hookway joined the meeting

### **25.565 Report of Committee**

The minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 13 April 2026 were noted.

### **25.566 Chair's Report**

The Chair reported that this was their Chair's final report, as the current term of office was due to conclude on 11 May, at which point responsibilities would pass to a successor. The reported that it had been an honour to serve as Mayor of Budleigh Salterton, and they had been pleased to participate in a wide range of events, in addition to undertaking formal civic duties on behalf of the town.

By way of example, the Chair had attended, on the previous day, a Civic Celebration hosted by the Chair of Devon County Council in South Molton Assembly Rooms, alongside approximately thirty other dignitaries. The occasion was notable for its ceremonial procession, with attendees in civic regalia and uniform. The event highlighted a broad spectrum of activity across the county, including cultural initiatives and voluntary work. Of particular note was the work of the Devon Youth Council, comprising young people aged 11 to 20, who were actively identifying and addressing the needs of younger residents. Their survey findings had emphasised the importance of "things to do and places to be." The Chair expressed a hope that Budleigh Salterton would explore opportunities for closer engagement with this group.

In terms of chairing the Council, the year had presented a number of challenges, requiring resilience both organisationally and individually. Notwithstanding this, there had been several notable achievements:

Decision-making and working practices had been more closely aligned with the Neighbourhood Plan, reflecting residents expressed priorities for guiding the town's development. Clearer terms of reference had also been established for committees, improving accountability, clarifying expectations, and reducing duplication, while remaining subject to review where appropriate.

Engagement with residents had become more open and considered, with greater attention paid to the broader implications of Council communications and actions. Efforts had been made to ensure that decisions reflected balanced judgement as public stewards of resources, rather than responding solely to the most vocal viewpoints, as demonstrated at the Annual Meeting.

The Council had demonstrated increased accessibility and inclusivity, particularly in welcoming a diversity of perspectives, as exemplified through the Celebration of Civic Service. During the year, the Council had said farewell to Councillors Sizemore-Hunt, Walsh, Billington, and Miszewska, and had welcomed Councillors Jones, Woodman, and Alligan, together with the return of Councillor Cunningham. In terms of staffing, best wishes had been extended to Mrs Jo Vanstone on her retirement, and to Mrs Lynne Ward as she pursued new opportunities. Appreciation had also been expressed to Mrs Charlotte Fitzgerald for providing temporary reception cover during periods of transition.

These changes in both approach and personnel had underlined the importance of training. The role of a Councillor, and the operation of committees within local government, were unfamiliar to most and inherently complex. The Chair expressed gratitude to the East Devon Monitoring Officer, Melanie Wellman, for delivering a recent session on the Code of Conduct, the Nolan Principles, and the legal framework within which Councillors operate. Members were encouraged to take advantage of further training opportunities in order to carry out their duties from an informed and responsible position. The Chair also formally recorded a complaint received from a resident of Marine Parade regarding notice of resurfacing works. It had been requested that this matter be considered by the Traffic and Transport Group at its meeting on 12 May, at which representatives from Devon County Council Highways participated.

Looking ahead, the Climate Change and Environment Committee was organising an event during Gala Week, scheduled for Wednesday 27 May. This initiative supported the Council's objective of exploring measures to reduce traffic emissions and manage vehicle speeds within the town. As part of Gala Week, the event was intended to be family-oriented and inclusive, extending beyond traffic-related issues to incorporate ideas and practical guidance from a range of local organisations. Councillors were encouraged to attend and offer their support.

The Chair concluded by expressing thanks to fellow Councillors and staff, with particular acknowledgement of Councillor Gina Woodcraft in her role as Deputy, for their collective efforts over the year. Their contributions had ensured that Budleigh Salterton Town Council remained focused on addressing the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors within the scope of its statutory powers and responsibilities.

Finally, best wishes were extended to the incoming Chair, to be elected on 11 May, in anticipation of what was likely to be another demanding year. This would potentially include the winding down of existing principal authorities and the transition towards a new Unitary Authority, bringing with it evolving relationships and responsibilities.

For reference, the following dates had been identified for the attention of the incoming Chair:

20 May	Ladies Choir
21 May	Interviews for BSTC Receptionist
23 May	Opening of Gala Week
27 May	BSTC Gala Week Event
28 May	Evening event, "Adapting for a Changing Future", hosted by Plastic Free Budleigh, OVA, and Budleigh Lions
9 June	Opening of the Budleigh Salterton Almshouses by the Duke of Gloucester, Patron of the Almshouses Association

It was anticipated that further engagements would arise in due course

## 25.567 Clerk's Report

The Town Clerk extended thanks to Cllr Lewis for her commitment to BSTC and the role of Chair over the past twelve months and for their support of The Town Clerk over this period. Further thanks were also given to members for their time, effort and energy dedicated to Town Council affairs.

This assistance across a range of areas was noted with appreciation and continued to support the effective operation of Council business.

**Reserves:** Members were advised that a Reserves Policy was in development. This would be brought forward for review and adoption once finalised and was intended to provide a clearer framework for the management and understanding of Town Council reserves. This would also be available on the BSTC website

**High Street:** It was reported that Devon County Council had agreed to undertake works to the surface of the High Street, although the precise scope remained to be confirmed. The Town Clerk had made representations to Devon County Council requesting consideration of an alternative surface colour which, alongside complementary measures such as signage, to assist in reducing vehicle speeds and improving safety. In addition, a meeting had been requested with Devon Highways to discuss potential signage that the Town Council might install in support of the "20 is Plenty" campaign, which the Town Council had previously resolved to promote.

**Finance and Governance:** AGAR: A meeting had been scheduled with the Interim Auditor as part of Phase One of the year-end financial completion process.

**Town Council Representatives on External Bodies:** Work was underway to establish clearer parameters for the role of Town Council representatives on external organisations.

**Receptionist:** The receptionist vacancy had been advertised, with applications open until 11 May. Interviews were scheduled to take place on 21 May 2026.

## 25.568 Reports of Council Representatives on Other Bodies

**Speedwatch:** Councillor Chaplin reported that five volunteers were now in place for the Speedwatch initiative. Contact had been made with Devon and Cornwall Police, who had established a group for coordination. The next stage required each volunteer to register individually and undertake the necessary training. It was noted that additional volunteers were still required, with a minimum of four needed to formally commence any operations. A Speedwatch stand was also planned for the forthcoming CCE event, taking place on 27.5.26

**Abandoned Boats:** Councillor Chaplin reported that, following extensive communication with East Devon District Council regarding abandoned boats and associated paraphernalia on Budleigh Beach, a meeting had taken place with District Councillor Geoff Jung, Portfolio Holder with responsibility for this area. Following a productive discussion, it had been agreed that a six-week period of grace, commencing 1 April 2026, would be allowed for boats to be fully licensed and appropriately labelled. This would then enable a full inspection of any unlicensed boats and related equipment, with a view to their removal in order to prevent further degradation of the beach environment.

**Budleigh Salterton Community Workshop:** Councillor Chaplin advised that a recent meeting had taken place with the Budleigh Salterton Community Workshop to discuss their requirement for additional workspace and storage. This included exploring the potential use of up to three cubicles within the Station Road toilet block. Members were encouraged to respond to the circulated communication in order to better understand any concerns or queries regarding this proposal, enabling either a recommendation to be brought forward to Full Council or a further meeting to be arranged with the Community Workshop.

**Budleigh Salterton Library:** Councillor Doorbar reported that the Friends of Budleigh Salterton Library had held a coffee morning earlier that day. It was noted that the level of support for the library was considerable and reflected its importance within the community.

**Exmouth and District Community Transport:** Councillor Horn advised that they would be attending the Annual General Meeting in the coming week and would report back to Council in due course.

**Knowle Village Hall:** Councillor Manfield reported that Knowle Village Hall had recently held a fundraising event, which included a duck race. The event had been well attended and enjoyed by all participants.

## **25.569 Reports of County and District Councillors**

### **Devon County Council**

#### **Co Cllr N Hookway:**

**Libraries:** It was reported that the results of the recent county-wide consultation on library services were due to be published following the Corporate and Infrastructure Committee meeting on Wednesday next. The consultation had generated approximately 25,000 responses, representing one of the highest levels of engagement in recent years.

The Portfolio Holder, Councillor Cheryl Cottle-Hunkin, had put forward a number of proposals for the future development of library services, with a particular emphasis on expanding their role as community hubs offering a broader range of council services.

It was further noted that the Chief Executive of Devon County Council had identified additional funding, including approximately £200,000 from central government, to support the continued development of library provision. Matters relating to the future use and provision of library premises remained under ongoing discussion.

**Highways:** Reference was made to correspondence received from a resident concerning works on East Budleigh Road, including issues relating to Boucher Way and East Budleigh Road, where recent works had required reopening the road shortly after completion.

Cllr Hookway reported that they were liaising with the Highways Coordination Engineer to ensure that this does not happen again. It was also noted that Wales & West Utilities had an extensive programme of works planned in and around Budleigh Salterton over the coming year, including works at Coastguard Hill. These works were necessary due to the age of the existing gas mains, estimated at 80 years old, and regulatory requirements to address leakage and ensure compliance.

**High Street and Fore Street:** Highways officers had acknowledged that sections of the High Street and Fore Street were in need of repair. Concerns were raised regarding the communication of planned works to local traders, with particular reference made to correspondence received from Shop Budleigh. Discussions on these matters were ongoing.

### **East Devon District Council**

**District Cllr C Fitzgerald:** reported that EDDC was recently named the number one district in the country for lowest residual waste. A notable achievement for EDDC and even more notable for the residents of East Devon who are helping this to happen.

**District Cllr M Martin:** reported that the EDDC Overview Committee met on 26.3.26 for an options appraisal regarding CAT. The recommendation that public toilets be transferred to those Town Councils who wished to proceed with course of action, with a dowry to reflect remaining share of capital budget, was supported and would now go to Full Council for approval.

Devon Community Resilience Forum: has funds of up to £1500 to help communities with emergency planning equipment

At the recent East Budleigh Annual Meeting, Clinton Devon Estates attended to share details of a planning application for sixteen properties on Frogmore road.

## **25.570 Finance Inspection**

- (i) Payments for the months of March 2026 in accordance with Appendix A were approved.
- (ii) It was noted that Cllr Woodcraft had conducted the internal finance inspection for March 2026

## **25.571 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/25**

- (i) It was noted that Section 1: Annual Governance Statement had been completed following review by the Finance Committee.
- (ii) Section 1 of the AGAR was approved and signed by the Chair, in accordance with the recommendation of the Finance Committee (Minute 25.546).

## **25.572 Public Hall Income**

It was resolved to approve the recommendation of the Public Hall Committee (Minute 25.420) to revise the booking deposit procedures in order to safeguard future income. It was:

Resolved:

- i. That a 50% deposit, payable at the time of booking, be non-refundable;
- ii. That full payment be required no later than six weeks prior to the event;

- iii. That hirers be given the option to pay the full balance at the time of booking.

#### **25.573 Internal Auditor Appointment 2026/27**

It was resolved to approve the appointment of Westcotts, Chartered Accountants, to undertake the Council's audit work for the forthcoming year. It was further noted that Bethany Gibbons would function as Internal Auditor, and that Westcotts are independent of Budleigh Salterton Town Council.

#### **25.574 Policies**

The following policies were reviewed: Publication Scheme; Data Protection Policy; Information Technology Policy and it was:

**Resolved:** To adopt all three

#### **25.575 Risk Assessment & Risk Management**

The risk assessment and risk management documentation were received and accepted.

#### **25.576 Fire Risk Assessment Actions**

##### **Fire Doors:**

- (i) Consideration was given to quotations provided and it was:

**Resolved:** to appoint LEC as the contractor to replace two fire doors.

- (ii) Fire door survey of the double doors between the toilets vestibule and the Public Hall - a decision was deferred until a later date as insufficient information was available.

##### **Curtains:**

- (iii) Consideration was given to quotations received, and it was:

**Resolved:** to appoint Fire Proofing Limited for complete this piece of work.

#### **25.577 Building Survey**

The completed building survey received from Andrew Mills Surveyors was received, and consideration was given to its contents.

It was noted that the primary purpose of commissioning the survey had been to address concerns regarding the condition of the roof, floor, and materials of the Public Hall. Whilst the report identified a number of areas which would benefit from attention and future maintenance, it was noted that the fundamental structure of the 100-year-old building was sound, with no immediate issues identified requiring urgent intervention.

The surveyor had also recommended that a specialist provider would need to be consulted should the Town Council wish to make further investigations regarding the installation of solar panels. In this context, it was noted that early consideration would be required in respect of the intended use of any electricity generated. Possible options included exporting electricity back to the grid; however, further work would be required to understand any potential return on investment and wider financial implications. Alternatively, electricity generated could be retained for use within the building. It was noted that this would require significant additional investment in the Public Hall's infrastructure, which is currently heated by gas.

#### **25.578 Budget Headings / Reserves 2026 / 2027**

##### **i. Salary 2026/2027**

It was noted that an increase of £11980.00 had been applied to the salary budget following the decision to recruit an additional member of staff.

##### **ii. Town Improvements / Town Improvement Fund**

The recommendation of the Finance Committee (Minute 25.547) to amend the relevant budget headings was received and accepted. Budget headings were revised as follows:

i.

**CURRENT**

120	Grass Cutting	£5,000.00	£0.00	£2,565.00	£2,435.00
125	Town Improvement Fund	£25,000.00	£0.00	£669.66	£24,330.34
126	Defibrillators	£0.00	£0.00	£583.95	-£583.95
130	Town Handyman	£10,000.00	£0.00	£9,514.66	£485.34

**FUTURE**

499	Town Improvement Budget	-----	-----	-----	-----
499/1	Grass Cutting	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
499/2	Town Handyman	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
499/3	Town Improvements	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00

iii. **Reserves**

Details were received of current Council reserves, set out below:

**Reserve Status**

	01/04/25	21/04/26	26/27
Car Park Fund	£22,500.00	£22,500.00	23175.00
Public Hall Fund	£50,000.00	£50,000.00	51500.00
Jubilee Shelter Maintenance	£3,500.00	£3,500.00	4550.00
Town Improvement Fund	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	6500.00
CIL Fund	£57,742.62	£53,983.12	53983.12
	<u>£138,742.62</u>	<u>£134,983.12</u>	
	£138,742.62	£134,983.12	

**25.579 Gala Week**

(i) **Gala Week Opening Day – Saturday 23 May 2026**

Consideration was given to the proposal that the Council host an engagement stand on The Green in order to increase Budleigh Salterton Town Council visibility within the community. It was:

**Resolved:** that the Council would host a promotional and engagement stand on The Green.

It was further noted that Councillors Doorbar and Cunningham, together with Councillor Woodman, would develop the arrangements for the stand.

It was recognised that the initiative would provide an opportunity for residents to meet and engage directly with Members of the Council.

The following themes and materials were identified for inclusion within the stand:

- Signposting to the CCE event taking place on Wednesday 27 May
- Public Hall information, including booking arrangements and general information
- Opportunity for residents to raise queries and questions with the Town Council, using a format similar to that adopted at the recent Annual Town Meeting, whereby questions could be submitted in writing, with full written responses provided and published on the BSTC website
- Information relating to the Council precept
- A suggested message of thanks to Budleigh Salterton residents in recognition of the recent excellent residual waste performance results.

(ii) **Climate Change and Environment Event – Wednesday 27 May 2026 (10.00am – 12.00pm)**

The arrangements for the previously agreed Climate Change and Environment event, including the launch of the “20 is Plenty” initiative were discussed.

(iii) **Working Party**

It was acknowledged and agreed that members would come forward to support both of these events with planning, and on the day. The Town Clerk will circulate a timetable request to allow Members to share their availability.

**25.580 Grants Policy**

Consideration was given to the draft Grants Policy and following a proposal to revise wording from 'policy' to 'guidance' it was:

**Resolved:** with the agreed amendment, to be adopted as the Town Council Grant Guidance.

**25.581 Correspondence Received**

**Devon County Council:**

**Temporary Prohibition of Through Traffic & Parking**

- 10.4.26– 29.5.26: Dark Lane, (TTRO2668832)
- 12.4.26-22.5.26: Northview Road, Sherbrook Hill, Westhill (TTRO2669040 – Gas Mains Replacements – **Staged** works)
- 29.6.26-24.7.26: Westfield Close (TTRO2669043, Gas Mains Replacement)

**Temporary Prohibition of Through Traffic, Parking, Suspension of one way**

- 18.5.26-25.8.26: Upper Stoneborough Lane, Station Road, Cricket Field Lane (TTRO2669048 – Gas Mains Replacement, **Staged** works)

**Temporary Prohibition of Through Traffic**

- 17.6.26-19-6-26: Stoneborough Lane, (TTRO2668596 – Pole Replacement)

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**25.582 Any Other Business at the Chairman’s Discretion**

Cllr Chaplin requested an update on CAT and queried whether this matter should be scheduled for discussion at a future Town Council meeting or referred to a working group.

**25.583 Future Diary Dates**

**Next Meetings**

11 May 2026	Annual Meeting of the Town Council
	Planning Committee
12 May 2026	Traffic and Transport Group
18 May 2026	Planning Committee
	Town Council

**Town Council Events**

23 May 2026	BSTC Stand at Gala Week Opening
27 May 2026	Climate Change and the Environment Event

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

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Chair

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Date