

TS/VF/KJM/281014

Budleigh Salterton Town Council
Council Offices
Station Road
Budleigh Salterton
Devon
EX9 6RJ

29 December 2025

Dear Councillors

Between 21 November and 17 December 2025, I conducted a remote interim review of the financial records, as recommended by the reporting requirements of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return and in accordance with your instructions and our engagement.

I write to confirm that the data reviewed and the records sampled up to the 30 September 2025, indicate that the accounting records (kept on AdvantEdge Finance) continue to be maintained to a high standard. Although this interim review does not scrutinise transactions to the same level as an Annual Internal Audit, I can confirm that I have reviewed the following:

- Bank Accounts - ensuring that they have been reconciled regularly.
- VAT Returns - two VAT126 forms have been prepared in the accounting year to date, these have been submitted and refunds received.
- Council minutes from April 2025 – September 2025 have been reviewed from your website.
- Nominals have been reviewed and any unusual, one-off or large expenditure items and a random selection of transactions have been agreed to the relevant invoices. However, it was noted that the Wages for June 2025 were entered on 24 July 2025 when the document is dated 26 June 2025.

I would also like to remind you of the importance of ensuring that full Council minutes accurately record any risk assessments reviewed in advance of the 31 March 2026 year-end. This review of risk (financial and non-financial) is required at least annually and compliance with this requirement is recorded in the AGAR form. I would also advise a review of the council's investment policy if this has not been carried out within the last 12 months.

I will arrange my usual annual visit after 31 March 2026. However, should you have any queries in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me.



Email

axminster@westcotts.uk



Phone

01297 33388



Address

Timberly, South St, Axminster, EX13 5AD

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Finally, as this completes my interim work to date, I am taking this opportunity to enclose my firms invoice for the work undertaken on your affairs for your kind attention in due course. The invoice includes VAT at the standard rate, the net fee being £360 with value added tax thereon of £72. The remainder of my annual work will be invoiced separately once the year-end work has been completed next year.

Yours sincerely


Tom Stuckey
Partner

Enc

Community Asset Transfer review – 26 Jan 2026 – Meeting Papers.

Community Asset Transfer offers BSTC the opportunity to take control of key local facilities, ensuring their continued operation and maintenance despite budget pressures and organisational changes caused by LGR.

With the upcoming shift to a unitary authority, there is uncertainty around how public amenities will be managed and funded. A CAT allows BSTC to maintain local oversight, tailor services to community needs, and protect assets from potential closure or reduced service by larger councils focused on broader priorities. Additionally, managing assets locally can improve responsiveness, preserve service quality, and strengthen community identity during a time of transition.

On the other hand, taking on a Community Asset Transfer means BSTC would be fully responsible for all costs and maintenance, which could strain budgets, especially with older facilities needing repairs. It also requires significant staff time and planning, with risks that service quality could drop if resources are insufficient. Managing assets far from the council office adds extra challenges in overseeing upkeep and responding quickly to problems.

At the Town Council meeting in Nov 2025 (Min 25.327) it was agreed that further exploration of assets was warranted and that members would feed back in early Jan. Please see the allocations below. Thank you for everyone who has managed to complete some work on this. It is understood that there is limited information available and this work was carried out over the busy Christmas period also.

The outcomes of this meeting will be formally discussed in public at the next Town Council meeting on 26.1.26 and efforts will be made to engage the community to join the meeting and hear the discussion.

Suggested allocation for Stage 2 work on the groups of assets:

Parks and Open Spaces	Land	The Green, Jubilee Field, Victoria Place, Granary Lane, east of Lime Kiln car park, north of West Hill, Railway walk, Norman Crescent	Cllr Billington & Cllr Manfield
Sports Activities, Play areas and skateparks	Land & asset	Football Club, Greenway Lane, Skatepark Lime Kiln, Railway Walk, Playground Lime Kiln, Norman Crescent	Cllr Chaplin & Cllr Miszewska
Beaches and Foreshores	Land & buildings	Budleigh beach, Public Shelters (Marine Parade, east end, west end) Beach Huts and Chalets.	Cllr Cook
Café & Kiosks	Land & buildings	East end, Marine Parade, West end, Longboat	Cllr Cunningham & Cllr Horne
Coastal & Marine Lettings	Land & buildings	Old Bunkhouse Rolle Road	Cllr Woodcraft
Industrial Sites	Buildings	Station Road workshops x 10	Cllr Jones & Cllr Lewis
Car Parks	Land	Brook Road, The Green, Lower Station Road, Lime Kiln, Rolle Mews	Town Clerk Gater-Wildgust
Public Toilets	Land & buildings	Rolle Road, Brook Road, Station Road, East end Salting Hill	Cllr Chaplin & Cllr Manfield
Infrastructure	Infrastructure	Bridge at Lees Road, Footbridge Greenway Lane, Road Bridge Bridge Road, Bridge & steps Mansfield Terrace, Budleigh Beach outflow	

CAT review

From Councillor Steve Cook <steve.cook@budleighsaltertontowncouncil.gov.uk>

Date Wed 2025-12-31 4:25 PM

To Councillor Penny Lewis <penny.lewis@budleighsaltertontowncouncil.gov.uk>

Cc Alice Gater-Wildgust <alice.gater-wildgust@budleighsaltertontowncouncil.gov.uk>; Councillors <councillors@budleighsaltertontowncouncil.gov.uk>

 1 attachment (58 KB)

BSTC (Steve Cook suggestions)Budleigh eddc_asset register_v1 1.xlsx;

Hi Penny, I hope you had a good Christmas and I wish you a healthy and happy New Year.

Please find enclosed the spreadsheet with my comments on both the areas I was asked to look at - Budleigh Beach, Public Shelters and Beach Huts and Chalets (highlighted in Yellow) and all the other assets as well.

You'll see that my view is that we should be responding positively by Expressing an Interest in the majority of the Assets.

My rationale for suggesting a Yes or No interest, is based on whether the town, through community ownership, would benefit by unlocking the potential and taking control of an asset or not.

Transferring an Asset to BSTC could give us income opportunities or even the opportunity to generate revenue through a sale.

This would give residents a greater stake in the future of their town, BUT we need to be aware of the condition of each asset and the ongoing maintenance costs which would have to be paid for out of the Precept.

In addition, the management of these assets will mean recruiting more staff - another not insignificant cost.

*In order to take this further we need access to information on these **4 key areas**:-*

- 1. Cost of upkeep over the last 3 years*
- 2. Revenues for the last 3 years, if applicable*
- 3. Lease terms and covenants, if applicable*
- 4. Resilience - vitally important in determining the long term exposure for BSTC*

In view of the lack of information currently available as detailed in notes made by the Town Clerk following a meeting with EDDC and discussed at the BSTC meeting on

15th December, we need to take 2 actions to enable BSTC to make an informed decision about whether to pursue the acquisition of any of the assets:-

1. EDDC control the Assets and will be the other party if an Asset is transferred. They have suggested we increase our Precept to take account the costs we are likely to incur to acquire any asset. Therefore, our Mayor should write to the Chief Exec of EDDC, Tracy Hendren, to request:-

- a. The information detailed above on the **4 key areas**. If this information isn't available, when will it be?.
- b. Is EDDC intending to go ahead with this CAT proposal or do they believe the timescales are such that all assets will be automatically transferred to the new Unitary Authority?

This will give BSTC an official response from EDDC to help partly justify the rise in Precept to our electorate.

Transparency is key.

If the answer our question in point b is that they believe the assets will be transferred to the new Unitary Authority, then both BSTC and EDDC resources could be spared, until the reorganisation has taken place, and used more effectively.

2. Assuming the intention is for the CAT proposal to go ahead, then BSTC should contact the current users of the Assets to understand their view of the issues / opportunities, the way they utilise the Asset and any information they have on the **4 key areas**

As you know, I won't be at the meeting on the 12th Jan.(I'm away from 2nd Jan.) but I would appreciate it if my suggestions were discussed at the meeting to see whether others agree that this is a suitable way forward or if another approach should be adopted.

Best regards,

Steve Cook

Councillor Steve Cook

Chair - Foreshore and Footpaths Committee

m: 07802 213 887

e: steve.cook@budleighsaltertontowncouncil.gov.uk

w: www.budleighsaltertontowncouncil.gov.uk

Budleigh Salterton Town Council, Public Hall, Station Road, Budleigh Salterton EX9 6RJ


[illegible]

Re: CAT review

From Councillor Jan Billington <jan.billington@budleighsaltertontowncouncil.gov.uk>

Date Mon 2026-01-05 3:41 PM

To Councillor Penny Lewis <penny.lewis@budleighsaltertontowncouncil.gov.uk>; Councillors <councillors@budleighsaltertontowncouncil.gov.uk>; Alice Gater-Wildgust <alice.gater-wildgust@budleighsaltertontowncouncil.gov.uk>

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Park and Open Spaces Community Assets – Peter Mansfield and Jan Billington.

Peter and/or I have visited all of these and added our findings to Steve Cook's spreadsheet above. All are subject to finding the details of lease or freehold costs and terms and associated maintenance costs.

Many are mentioned in the BSNP and as such are vital community assets and green spaces but obviously some come with much greater maintenance cost than others – for example The Green is regularly maintained whereas the Railway Track is only strimmed once a year. However, with a Tree Warden hat on, I would say that I have been more frequently contacted with regard to the Railway Track than any other area of Budleigh with regard to garden waste fly tipping and EDDC trees being chopped down to increase residential light etc etc. Legal costs of enforcing restrictions, as well as maintenance costs and admin costs will need to be clarified.

The Green seems to be the only space with potential for income generation and this could be increased but the income from events such as Literary Festival and Gala Week will never match the ongoing maintenance costs and again will result in BSTC admin costs to manage.

The only two areas Peter and I would NOT recommend taking forward are:

1) Jubilee Park – This is leased by EDDC from Clinton Devon. Whilst currently a lovely community asset, it includes the South West Coastal Path (King Charles 111 England Coastal Path) and is one of the areas most prone to recent cliff falls. The area is not covered by EDDC's Budleigh Salterton Beach and Cliff Management Plan and at some point the Coastal Path will need rerouting etc which might lead to substantial work and cost. It might also need fencing and signage to protect/advice walkers. We would recommend that BSTC do not take on this lease.

2) The Strip of land to the East of Lime Kiln Carpark. This is offered as Freehold and is the narrow strip of land between the the East side of the Lime Kiln Car Park and the Estuary. This area and the Lime Kiln Carpark are not covered by EDDC's Budleigh Salterton Beach and Cliff Management Plan, nor is the SWW pumping station. If future flood defences are required to protect the Lime Kiln carpark from the Estuary/Sea flooding they will need to be sited along this piece of land. We would suggest to BSTC that any benefit that might be generated from owning such a tiny strip of land with some dated benches upon it will be negated by future problems.

Please do come back to us if you would like us to do any more digging at this stage.

Sent from Outlook for Mac

From: Councillor Penny Lewis <penny.lewis@budleighsaltertontowncouncil.gov.uk>
Date: Monday, 5 January 2026 at 09:59
To: Councillor Steve Cook <steve.cook@budleighsaltertontowncouncil.gov.uk>
Cc: Alice Gater-Wildgust <alice.gater-wildgust@budleighsaltertontowncouncil.gov.uk>, Councillors <councillors@budleighsaltertontowncouncil.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: CAT review

Thank you for your thoughts and work on this Steve.

Best wishes

Penny

Sent from Outlook for Android

From: Councillor Steve Cook <steve.cook@budleighsaltertontowncouncil.gov.uk>
Sent: Wednesday, December 31, 2025 4:25:05 PM
To: Councillor Penny Lewis <penny.lewis@budleighsaltertontowncouncil.gov.uk>
Cc: Alice Gater-Wildgust <alice.gater-wildgust@budleighsaltertontowncouncil.gov.uk>; Councillors <councillors@budleighsaltertontowncouncil.gov.uk>
Subject: CAT review

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Steve Cook

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Budleigh Salterton Town Council, Public Hall, Station Road, Budleigh Salterton EX9 6RJ

[illegible]

**CLlr - confidential Community Asset Transfer - CAT Research Industrial Units Station Road - CLlr
Gina Woodcraft**

From Councillor Gina Woodcraft <gina.woodcraft@budleighsaltertontowncouncil.gov.uk>

Date Fri 2025-12-19 4:37 PM

To Alice Gater-Wildgust <alice.gater-wildgust@budleighsaltertontowncouncil.gov.uk>; Councillor Alan Chaplin <alan.chaplin@budleighsaltertontowncouncil.gov.uk>; Councillor Catriona Cunningham <catriona.cunningham@budleighsaltertontowncouncil.gov.uk>; Councillor Steve Cook <steve.cook@budleighsaltertontowncouncil.gov.uk>; Councillor Jan Billington <jan.billington@budleighsaltertontowncouncil.gov.uk>; Councillor Penny Lewis <penny.lewis@budleighsaltertontowncouncil.gov.uk>; Councillor Lesley Miszewska <lesley.miszewska@budleighsaltertontowncouncil.gov.uk>; Councillor Richard Doorbar <richard.doorbar@budleighsaltertontowncouncil.gov.uk>; Councillor Peter Manfield <peter.manfield@budleighsaltertontowncouncil.gov.uk>; Councillor Stephen Horn <stephen.horn@budleighsaltertontowncouncil.gov.uk>; Councillor Phil Jones <phil.jones@budleighsaltertontowncouncil.gov.uk>; Councillor Gina Woodcraft <gina.woodcraft@budleighsaltertontowncouncil.gov.uk>

Cc Gina Woodcraft <gina.woodcraft@gmail.com>

1. CAT Action taken re - Budleigh Salterton Workshops (Industrial Units) Station Road.

I started by making direct contact with Doug Stanton (EDDC Project Manager Estates) on the basis of obtaining more information about the management of these units, insurance/expenditure and the annual income from the tenants. He was unable to assist (mainly due to he said GDPR/Data protection). So, I revised my thinking and went down to the units on a number of separate occasions to talk to the Workshop tenants.

All tenants are expected to start with a clean shell of space and leave it in exactly the same way when moving out - i.e. to remove all of their equipment and belongings and repair internal walls etc prior to the unit being rented out again by EDDC. Each tenant will kit - out the space (as they need / think fit) to run their business.

- a) Unit 7 Porcelain Renovation - 16 years occupancy - well established, highly specialist business, doing repair work for people all over the world. Rick Stein is a customer and many auctioneers recommend this outlet. Uses the Post Office frequently.
- b) Unit 3 or 4 - new start up. Electrical repair business again local customers. Local person - but new tenant not yet in residence.
- c) Unit 5 - Two brothers - unit mainly used as a storeroom much needed for their property maintenance business. Six-year lease with a three-year break clause - same as the others. Pleased to have a workshop which is local. Link with Jurassic Kitchens in the High Street who sell new kitchens - mainly in East Devon.
- d) Unit 6 - Antique furniture restoration. Local man - 18 years in the unit. Well established.
- e) Unit 10. Budleigh Salterton Pate - mini manufacturer/food supplier - Quality product which sells beyond BS. Greendale. Thirty years in the unit.
- f) Unit 1. British Legion - mainly storage area.

2. Summary.

These are predominantly small but varied local businesses, some with a wide geographical reach others who mainly service the town's residents - carpenter joiners - property maintenance and renovation 95% local contracts. Many are well established.

Local people with predominantly local contacts. Tenants pay for their own water /electricity etc and business insurance . Many do not pay business rates as they are below the threshold.

3. Rental Income. Rents are said (by the tenants themselves) to be very reasonable (fairly low) and most are now out of contract. They mooted that they have been expecting a rent increase but this has not happened as yet. Size of units 180-550 sq. ft. Some tenants have more than one-unit UK Clippers - (units 8 and 9)

Annual collective rental income 25/26 in the region of £22 - £25,000 per annum. Not high.

ACRI for 26/27 - No difference at the moment.

4. Running Costs for the 'Landlord' - Freeholder.

4.1. Insurance. Cost per annum? Need to know more.

4.2. Liabilities . External maintenance of the units and car parking area for work vehicles and customers. EDDC has undertaken repairs to the flat roofs over the past 3 years, and repaired the guttering. In the last five years they have also resurfaced the tarmac car parking area. Window cleaning externally - litter picking and weeding to keep tidy. Future repairs and liabilities?

4.3. Staffing - Additional demand on or extra member of staff (part time) to manage contracts and liaise with workshop tenants. Also to advertise and interview new tenants as they arise and oversee an old tenant depart, according to the contract and expectations. Overview of units, arrangement, oversight and payment of necessary repairs as required.

4.4. Toilets. One or two have their own toilet on their premises but the majority don't. In the left-hand corner, there is a small unit between units 1 and 2 which houses a toilet for which the tenants have a key.

4.5. View of current Leaseholders . All workshop tenants spoken to are pleased to have a local, accessible workshop at a price they can afford.

Future developments - Not against or unhappy with the prospect of the BS Town Council taking on the contracts (asset transfer) and having someone locally to talk to. Those I spoke to, saw the positives in this.

5. Conclusion

The emerging local plan makes reference to the need for the provision of local economic industrial units to serve the residents and local area. Have not been able to establish exactly who owns the land i.e. the Title holder - presume EDDC. I also don't know if this small but central area of land has an asset value in excess of £100k.

Due to the location, ease of access and the contribution to the town/local area from the workshop businesses, it would make sense to take over these units if we have the capacity to do so! Also, no conditions and covenants applied by EDDC.

Cllr Gina Woodcraft 18/12/2025.

6. Further action and thoughts.

I will contact other town/parish councils to find out if they too have workshops/similar industrial units in their locality which are available for CAT and their thoughts on this. Perhaps this is an occasion for collaboration.

I think we need to be realistic about the capacity EDDC have to work with us on these asset transfers, despite their apparent appetite.

They appear to be focused on 'Low Hanging Fruit' i.e. toilets, assets with clean (no pun) 'Title Deeds'. What we and EDDC don't want is to keep going round and round in circles with Lawyers. Probably best to look at and initially at least focus on those we value on behalf of the town and can take on fairly easily.

Community Asset Transfer: Rolle Road and Seafront Toilets

Date: 6 January 2026

Prepared by: A. Gater-Wildgust

Background:

Rolle Road and Seafront toilets are managed by East Devon District Council (EDDC). Due to budget cuts and upcoming council changes, EDDC is exploring transferring these assets and has asked BSTC to consider what assets, if any, it would be interested in looking at taking management of, as already done at the Station Road Toilet Block.

Proposal:

BSTC to take over management and upkeep of these toilets through a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) or rule these entities out.

Key Points:

- **Costs:** BSTC will cover cleaning, repairs, and utilities. Station Road toilets are projected to cost about £32k/year (excluding staff time). Seafront toilets generate some income, which may help cover costs.
- **Risks:** Older facilities like Rolle Road may need costly repairs. Managing distant sites requires careful planning.
- **If BSTC declines:** EDDC or the new authority might close or reduce services, and BSTC loses local control, possibly harming its reputation.

Recommendation: BSTC should investigate further before deciding, with detailed financial and operational plans. A budget for the assessment of all assets / CAT is included in the 2026/27 precept requested from EDDC. If BSTC do proceed with this transfer it is recommended to develop an extensive management plan before proceeding.

Brook Road Car Park and Closed Toilets

The Brook Road toilet block, closed for some years, and surrounding land are owned by EDDC. BSTC has requested an update and is awaiting further information. EDDC's cabinet has agreed the site is only suitable as a car park. BSTC awaits confirmation on whether it will be included in Capital Allocations. The Budget Setting and Accountability Panel (BSAP) are currently considering this.

Recommendation: for BSTC to wait until such as a time as EDDC have made a strategic determination on this site before proceeding.

BSIC Community Asset Transfer

Current East Devon District Council run Car Parks

Spaces	Lower Station Road	Brook Road	Rolle Mews	Lime Kiln
	37	15	56	411
Proximity to High Street & amenities	Yes	Yes	Yes	Further away
Proximity to Beach	Further away	Further away	Yes	Yes
Close to	Public Hall Drama Club Green Community Workshop Library Medical Centre St Peter's Church	Library Medical Centre St Peter's Church High Street	Methodist Church BIC High Street	Play park Skatepark LORP
Facilities	Toilets (BSTC) Bike rack (BSTC) No coach bays	No coach bays	Bike rack 4 EV chargers No coach bays	2 EV chargers No coach bays
Current cost to park	EDDC rates Winter rates Permits Charges apply 8-6pm Disabled parking space Blue badge holders pay	Free maximum 2 hours	EDDC rates Winter rates Permits Charges apply 8-6pm Blue badge holders pay	EDDC rates Winter rates Permits Charges apply 24/7 max 24 hours Blue badge holders pay
Payment device	Machine – Ringo 42945		Machine – Ringo 42947	Machine - 42944
Known issues		Redundant toilet block		Pumping station & Tankers Future flooding

Summary: My personal view is that I think we could express initial interest in all 4, even if we don't pursue all in the end, having the information will be useful in the long run. I believe the three serving the High Street are the most appropriate to be formally considered by BSTC

Recommendation: Further detailed information is sought on each car park, separately (see over). Lower Station, Brook and Rolle are probably the most useful to residents and the High Street.

	Lower Station Road	Brook Road	Rolle Mews	Lime Kiln
Ratable Value				
Occupancy rates				
-summer				
-winter				
-out of hours				
Maintenance requirements				
-surface				
-boundary				
-buildings				
-weather issues				
Security				
-monitoring				
-reinforcement				
Payment				
-cost of provision				
-maintenance				
-administration				
Lighting				
-provision & maintenance				
-running costs				
Local resident benefit				
Visitor benefit				
Potential developments re traffic and parking				
Potential future use of land and consequence				
Potential administration costs to BSTC of managing the asset				
Parking payments received 2024/2025				