

## **BUDLEIGH SALTERTON TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES** of the Annual Town Meeting held in the Public Hall, Station Road on Monday 18 March 2019 at 7.00pm.

### **PRESENT**

Cllr T D Wright (Town Mayor)  
Cllr S V Hall (Deputy Town Mayor)  
Cllr A J Dent  
Cllr A N Gooding  
Cllr M C Hilliar  
Cllr A L Jones  
Cllr C A Kitson  
Cllr R D Sherriff

**Clerk:** Mrs J E Vanstone

**Others Present:** County Cllr Mrs C Channon and 38 members of the public

### **Welcome by the Town Mayor**

The Town Mayor, Cllr T D Wright said he was pleased to see so many residents in attendance. He then welcomed Mr Trevor Waddington.

### **116. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs L D Evans (recovering from an operation), Cllr Mrs M L Kenneally-Stone (family commitments), Cllr C Richards (holiday) and Cllr Mrs C A Sismore-Hunt (unwell).

### **117. Minutes**

The Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on Tuesday 3 April 2018 had been circulated prior to the Meeting. It was unanimously agreed they be signed as a true record.

### **118. Guest Speaker**

Trevor Waddington, Chairman of the Trustees of Fairlynch Museum & Arts Centre (Fairlynch)

He thanked the Town Council (BSTC) for asking him to be the 'warm-up' act for the town meeting!

2018 had been the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Sir Walter Raleigh, our local hero. He and his fellow Trustees realised this was going to be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to celebrate his life and planning for 'Raleigh 400' had begun in 2017 with a request to the Tate Gallery to loan Budleigh's very own painting – The Boyhood of Raleigh, painted by Sir John Everett Millais in 1870.

The Tate had agreed to the loan in principle but there were many provisos. Fairlynch security had had to be upgraded and environmental conditions in the Exhibition Room had to be within specification. Return transport had to be provided by an approved courier and of course there was insurance cover for the painting valued at £2M.

The estimate of the funding needed for this was £12,000. As a museum accredited by Arts Council England, they were eligible to apply for an Art Fund grant, which they did. Unfortunately, they did not get the grant but were determined that Raleigh 400 would go ahead!

A fundraising campaign was started seeking donations from all and sundry. Mr Waddington said he had written to Sir Hugo Swire seeking a donation, who in turn had passed the letter to the Chairman of Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), Sir Peter Luff, who said he would fully support an application.

The Lions Gala Week had a Sir Walter Raleigh theme, providing an ideal opportunity for a dress rehearsal. It was amazing what could be done with an old pair of velvet curtains and he was delighted when Michael Downes threw himself into the role of Sir Walter Raleigh!

BSTC, many individuals and local organisations gave generously and by May 2018 the team had raised over £8,000 from donations. They had also learned that the HLF grant application had been successful providing up to £15,400 for spending in previously agreed areas.

It was full steam ahead for Raleigh 400!

Budleigh Salterton Art Club performed a tableau of The Boyhood of Raleigh in the Gentlemen's Club car-park with member Nick Speare as the sailor and two local boys in costume playing the parts of the young Walter Raleigh and his half-brother Humphrey Gilbert. John Washington, Chairman of the Art Club, played the part of Sir John Millais. The tableau was performed on the day the exhibition opened and again on the August Bank Holiday.

The Art Club were especially supportive throughout the exhibition. The Tate Gallery had insisted that an invigilator be present in the Exhibition Room during visitor opening hours. Fairlynch was already stretched by providing 3 stewards so the Art Club kindly stepped in to provide invigilators.

HLF had set a target of engaging with 2,000 local schoolchildren and the grant enabled them to employ former teacher Lizzie Mee as the Education Outreach Officer. She was brilliant!

In September the Budleigh Salterton Carnival provided yet another excuse for dressing up! The "Fairlynch Fancies" were awarded First Prize as the best walking group with Di Bagshawe dressed as a potato – she distributed packets of potato crisps during the procession!

The final celebration in the Raleigh 400 year was a black-tie dinner at Powderham Castle with the Earl of Devon as Guest of Honour. During his after-dinner speech he had been able to tell diners that Fairlynch had hosted over 7,000 visitors – a 40% increase on normal years – and the Education Outreach target set by HLF to engage with over 2,000 schoolchildren had also been exceeded.

He then went through a breakdown of the costs involved in putting on the Exhibition and explained that because of an underspend £2,500 was returned to HLF. He added that he was pleased to report that for the first time in many years it looked like Fairlynch's accounts for 2018/19 would show that income had exceeded expenditure! He told the audience that the Trustees were always on the look-out for volunteers so if anyone was interested, they should contact him.

He then advised that this year's exhibitions opened on Good Friday with the Changing Face of the High Street. There was to be a new costume and lace exhibition upstairs and in the main upstairs room there was going to be an exhibition on Devon's New World Explorers.

He hoped to see everyone there.

The Town Mayor, Cllr T D Wright thanked Mr Waddington. He said the Town was so lucky to have residents like him and his fellow Trustees and was glad to have paid a small part in the wonderful celebration. He congratulated Michael Downes on his beard!!

## **119. Reports**

### **Chairman of the Town Council**

Cllr T D Wright said it had been real privilege and honour to be Chairman of the Council and to represent the town at many events in the area.

It had been a very good year for the town. The exceptional summer had brought many more visitors to the town and it was good to see so many enjoying the Town beach, seafront and town's facilities – he wanted to reassure all that Members of BSTC did all it could to support the organisers of the many events and festivals that brought added life to the town.

BSTC was having to fund more, including the refurbishment of the Jubilee Shelter and had paid for the watering of the flower beds and planters, which were so well looked after by Budleigh in Bloom. BSTC had also agreed to fund the replacement of some more of the tatty railings along the sea front and continued to maintain the wonderful Public Hall that is the centre of many local events and activities.

It was excellent news that there was again a high quality really local butcher in the High Street and to see the new restaurant, Marcos, doing so well. He said the town's shops provided most of residents' needs who were very lucky that the local traders continued to provide excellent services. It was a very sad day when the last bank had closed – the replacement mobile bank which visited three times a week was busy but it did not offer the same facilities to discuss personal matters. Banks and similar institutions seemed to think everyone is online and did not seem to have any loyalty for their customers. BSTC did make its views known but he thought these had fallen on deaf ears.

The town had also lost its dedicated PCSO, and again it seemed the police thought that 'virtual policing' could replace personal contact. A community policing presence got to hear of problems before they escalated and could nip such problems in the bud. 2018 had seen the Carnival become part of the regular East Devon carnival circuit and he thanked the committee who worked so hard to make it happen.

He then thanked his fellow councillors, who willingly gave up their time, especially those who chaired committees and represented the town on other bodies. He said they did not always agree but he knew that all the councillors worked hard in many ways to help make the town the special place it is.

One of the first things he and his fellow Ward Members had done after becoming District Councillors in 2011 was to persuade EDDC Cabinet not to surrender the lease on the asset to the Longboat Café to enable plans to demolish it and extend the café. EDDC did not want the ongoing responsibility of the shelter so BSTC had agreed to take it on. He had hoped he would be able to advise that the Lease had finally been signed, but the Clerk advised she had still not received confirmation that that had happened!

He then advised that Royal Mail had just agreed to replace the damaged post box in Upper Stoneborough Lane and Tesco had indicated they would install an ATM in their new shop in Fore Street which would be accessible 24 hours a day, but that would depend on planning permission being granted.

He congratulated Cllr Mrs L D Evans and Cllr A L Jones who had both been on the Council for 25 years. He said this was a remarkable achievement.

He concluded by saying that Elections for the town and district councils would take place on 2 May and he asked those present to consider standing for election – new blood brought new ideas and perspectives. He said if anyone was interested, to talk to any of the current team to learn what being a councillor entailed. There was still time to get nomination papers in!

### **Chairman of the Planning Committee**

Cllr A J Dent reported that, thanks to the established East Devon Local Plan and Budleigh Salterton Neighbourhood Plan (NP), there were now clear planning policies to follow which took out the emotional aspects and allowed members to make decisions based purely on policy. This had resulted in just two applications out of 85 received where the view from EDDC officers was different from that of BSTC. He said the majority of applications were improvements and extensions to existing buildings which updated and improved the housing stock.

There was one major development which was causing concern and that was the Evans Field development near Tidwell Farm. A new developer had taken over the site and had submitted an application which would reduce the affordable housing from thirty to five dwellings on grounds of viability. He and his fellow Ward Members had strenuously challenged this application which had since been back and forth between EDDC officers and the developer. Arguments on viability were a common tactic used by developers to reduce affordable housing and each case was examined by an independent District Valuer. He explained that the whole concept of this development was that it would provide some much-needed affordable housing in the town. This remained a priority and the Ward members would continue to fight for this. In the meantime, residents may have noticed that little or no work was taking place on site and until a decision was reached there was unlikely to be any further development here.

### **Chairman of the Finance Committee**

The Town Mayor, Cllr T D Wright read Cllr C Richards' report who had forwarded his apologies – in a contest between a beach in Portugal and a night in the Public Hall, the beach had won!

Another year had passed and yet again he was pleased to report that the Town's Finances were in good shape.

Residents would have seen from recent Council Tax Bills that the amount BSTC requested had risen by 3%, which was a lot less than the other constituent parts of the bill.

During the past year the Council continued to pay for grass cutting in some areas of the Town, as well as supporting Budleigh In Bloom whose volunteers do so much to make the Town look attractive. BSTC had also made donations, totalling £8000, to many other organisations which, in themselves, did much to improve the lives of people in the town. The coming year would undoubtedly see BSTC making a similar level of donations to local organisations. In addition, BSTC also paid for the maintenance of the Brook Road Toilets – he feared that if BSTC did not do this, they would quickly be closed and the site sold, with the commensurate loss of parking spaces. Similarly, BSTC paid almost £5000 each year in rent and rates for the Upper Station Road Car Park.

Other outgoings included purchasing more CCTV cameras for the interior of the Hall, redecorating and then replacing the windows in the Jubilee Shelter with uPvc ones better able to cope with the exposed position, paying for the manufacture and installation of the WW1 Centenary Plaque at the War Memorial and upgrading the IT equipment in the Council offices.

Another continuing expense was the Public Hall. During the past year BSTC had spent over £22,000 which included replacing the old central heating boiler – he was sure all users would appreciate that! Over £7000 had been spent on remedying dry rot in part of the building – thankfully much of that expense had been covered by the Council's Insurance policy. He had no doubt that the elderly building would continue to need significant amounts spent on it in the years ahead.

A part of the building was the Norman Centre. In the past year, since Age Concern had moved to The Hub, initial renovation work had cost over £20,000 and an even greater sum would be needed in the year ahead to complete the renovation work and turn it into a first-class facility.

At the last year Annual Meeting he had predicted a small deficit in the annual budget but due to some of the provisions he made not actually being needed, BSTC was ending the year in the black.

The year ahead would probably reverse this. In addition to the work on the Norman Centre, there was the likely cost of installing CCTV in the Town Centre – although still at the planning stage, the cost would certainly be a significant sum.

With all of this, he was forecasting a deficit of almost £38,000 in the coming year but fortunately, due to a tight rein on the purse strings over previous years, the Council had adequate funds to cover this as well as leaving BSTC with a healthy reserve.

The conclusion repeated what had been reported at the outset – the town's finances were in good shape.

This was his last year as Chairman of the Finance Committee as he was retiring from the Council in May. From his years in that role he had taken great personal satisfaction in the fact that the Council's finances had improved tremendously, such that there were now considerable reserves. That said, BSTC could not be complacent because in the years ahead he was certain that more and more services and their costs would be devolved onto local Councils such as this one. He was confident that whoever took over the Finance role would continue to exercise a tight rein over the expenditure such that overall, the Finances remained 'in the black'.

The Town Mayor, Cllr T D Wright thanked Cllr Richards for his years as Chairman of the Finance Committee. He thought all members of the Council would agree that he had been a steady hand on the finances over the years.

### **Chairman of the Public Hall Committee**

The Town Mayor, Cllr T D Wright read Cllr Mrs Evans' report who was at home recovering from a hip replacement operation.

The Public Hall had been hired for numerous events over the past year and continued to be ever-popular with users.

As always money had been spent wisely with the Chairman of the Finance Committee keeping a close eye. In the Spring of 2018, dry rot was discovered in the timbers under the floor of the ladies' toilets. This had been dealt with – the walls had had to come down and be rebuilt, joists and flooring had to be replaced but luckily the cost of this work had mostly been covered by insurance.

CCTV cameras had been installed around the building and had proven useful to the police for not only crime but missing persons.

After a great deal of discussion, the central heating boiler was replaced by two new boilers. This allowed for flexibility of heating for hall and hot water for the kitchen which the previous boiler did not have, especially during very cold weather. An additional four radiators had been installed and no complaints had been received from hirers so far!

As always, items had to be replaced because of general wear and tear and as was to be expected with an old building. The Hall Committee were always looking ahead as to what major expenditure could be anticipated in the future and under current consideration was the main hall floor, as it could no longer be re-sanded due to nail heads and the tongue and groove in places was being held together with plastic wood; light sanding had to take place every 4/5 years so that it can be resealed. When a roof slate was recently replaced concerns were raised about the condition of the slates and the fixing pins and the Finance Committee had been asked to start setting money aside for these two items.

New blinds for the arched windows on the stage had to be relegated to the wish list – new roller blinds would be great, but their fixing would mean added expense of re-plastering of the walls and re-positioning of electrical equipment. The old blackout shutters and grotty insulation material would have to continue for the time being!

Keeping up with regulations was also an added expense as all equipment had to be tested annually and she thanked the Clerk who kept a very good check list.

Phase One of the Norman Centre refurbishment was complete with the installation of a new kitchen and central heating boiler. Phase Two would start in April with the refurbishment of the toilets, LED lighting, redecoration, new flooring and seating.

Hires were picking up for the Norman Centre which was a very versatile venue with seating for approximately twenty, but it could be used as an open space.

Neither space would function without the goodwill and care of the backroom people: Steve, Julie and Paula who made sure everything is clean and welcoming, and Jo and Kate who dealt with the hirers with great tact!!!

She asked that everyone continued to use the Hall and the Norman Centre, which were great assets to the Town and much envied by some of the neighbouring towns and villages.

### **Chairman of the Foreshore & Footpaths Committee**

Cllr R D Sherriff reported that the Committee had carried out two inspections over the previous twelve months accompanied by EDDC StreetScene Officer, Richard Martin. Following the caterpillar infestation in May 2018, EDDC had cut back the vegetation adjacent to the river by Lime Kiln Car Park and above West Kiosk café on the left side of Steamer Steps. The vegetation on the right side could not be cut back as the terrain was too steep for such work to be carried out without hiring specialist equipment. However, EDDC would continue to monitor the situation and if there was a reoccurrence, they would spray the affected areas.

The Old Mortuary had been vandalised earlier in the year – the entrance had been temporarily secured and assurances were received from Budleigh Salterton Angling Association, who lease the Mortuary from Clinton Devon Estates (CDE), that they would replace the temporary repair with a more acceptable permanent solution.

The railings adjacent to the BS Club car park were due to be repaired and repainted in the spring and it was hoped to replace the scaffold pole handrail on the steps by the Raleigh Wall with a new handrail in keeping with the railings along the rest of the sea front.

The water fountain by the Jubilee Shelter was proving to be very popular and the Committee was looking to install a tap adjacent to the toilets above Steamer Steps during the coming year. The shower next to the east end toilets would be replaced and the drainage area will be improved.

A new footpath sign has been erected by Devon County Council (DCC) at the western side of Lime Kiln car park and BSTC asked DCC to erect another new sign at the eastern side. Many of the railings and posts along Salting Hill had been replaced; the condition of others would be monitored.

EDDC had instigated a programme of repainting/re-staining the benches along the sea front – because of the large number of seats (120 at his last count!!) this programme was ongoing.

On behalf of BSTC he thanked StreetScene for keeping the sea front clean and tidy; in all weathers they emptied the bins and cleaned and maintained the toilets. He also thanked the residents who regularly scoured the beach and picked up any rubbish.

He said that Surfers Against Sewerage had carried out a beach clean in February at which a dozen volunteers had scoured the beach and all they could find was half a bin bag of rubbish! The co-ordinator had stated that, in her opinion, Budleigh beach was one of the cleanest in the South West – a fact all should be proud of.

### **Chairman of the Community Gardens Committee**

Cllr M C Hilliar reported that since 2018 three inspections of the plots had been completed and he was pleased to report that the plots were looking in good shape. The inspection team was once again made up of Cllr Hilliar, Steve Hagger and Jerry Hitt; he added that if any plot holder was interested in joining the team to contact the Clerk who would pass the message to him.

During the year, he had worked hard to maintain a high standard of use on all plots and he was pleased the waiting list had reduced from 24 to just six people; this was down from ten the previous year. The turnover of plots was down to the hard work put in by the inspection team, the Clerk and her assistant.

He was pleased to report that for a third year running there was no increase in plot rent and that meant plot holders could continue to enjoy their plots without a high cost involved. The only thing they had to worry about was maintaining their plots to a high standard, otherwise they would get a “Jo letter” and no-one wanted one of those!

He wished the next Chairman the best of luck. He said it was a joy to work with Steve and Jerry and the views were brilliant! He did not think anyone could ask for a better office! In addition to that, the Chairman would have the support of the Town Clerk and her assistant.

He concluded by thanking Steve Hagger, Jerry Hitt, Kate Harrison and Jo Vanstone for all their hard-work during the last year.

### **Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Committee**

Cllr R D Sherriff reported that the NP was formally approved ('made') by EDDC in October 2017. Since then there had been 60 planning applications and the NP had been instrumental in helping BSTC make a decision regarding every one of those applications.

In many cases the NP plan was used to support an application and in all these cases the EDDC Planning department had agreed with the BSTC decision and approved the application. In the vast majority of cases where BSTC had been unable to support an application, EDDC had agreed with the BSTC decision and refused the application.

There were five applications where EDDC had overturned the BSTC decision; in some cases, this was because of a retrospective application with the original application being submitted prior to the NP being approved. In other cases, it was because EDDC Planning officers had interpreted the NP differently to BSTC and in one case both the BSTC and EDDC decisions were overturned on appeal by the independent Planning Inspector.

Statistically, this meant that over 93% of planning applications had been in line with the relevant NP policies and those statistics demonstrated the value of the NP which he was sure would continue to shape the evolution of the town for years to come, in line with the wishes of the community.

### **County Councillor**

County Cllr Mrs C Channon reported that in February and March 2018 the Town was visited by the 'Beast from the East'. Highways had made considerable effort to clear the snow from the roads and StreetScene made a gallant effort to clear the footways. However, the snow damage had dramatically increased the number of potholes and it had taken a concerted effort to try and get that damage repaired. Money had been available but not the number of contractors needed.

She said it was frustrating that as one piece of road had been patched, statutory undertakers (utility companies, etc) had come along and dug it up and had not always repaired it to an appropriate standard! In recent months Budleigh Salterton seemed to have been a magnet for South West Water, Wales & West, Western Power and Open Reach – most of which was claimed to be emergency work and therefore not planned! Work was planned for West Hill over the next two months or so while Wales & West updated the gas mains – she asked residents to be patient while the work was carried out.

The Library went from strength to strength and it was very fortunate that the Friends Committee arranged so many attractive events. It was also helpful that they received support from the Literary Festival.

The exciting event in May had been the opening of the Budleigh Hospital Health and Well-being Hub. Hundreds of residents had flocked to the opening which was led by local people, who were not only impressed by the comprehensive range of services offered by the Hub but also by the general ambience, warm colours, and comfortable furniture. The gym had state-of-the-art equipment and was well used. Catering was of a high standard as well and the kitchen employed people who had learning difficulties, affording them an opportunity to feel really valued in the community. For those who had spent nearly five years trying to fulfil this objective, it was at last a dream come true. The team were greatly indebted to the Hospital League of Friends for their persistence and financial support, Richard Mejzner for his vision and Rob Jones, the project co-ordinator. They were also indebted to Sir Hugo Swire MP who had contributed by lobbying the appropriate people in the Department of Health.

Since the change to the Ward boundary, she had worked with her County colleagues, Cllrs Jeff Trail and Richard Scott, who represented part of Exmouth and the Woodbury area. From their pooled Locality Budget they had given substantial donations to the Music Festival, the Veterans' Group (who met weekly in the Peter Hall), the local schools and the Late Night Shopping entertainment. She was pleased to advise that they would be making a donation to this year's Exhibition at the Fairlynch Museum. She had also had the advantage of working in partnership with the three District Councillors and had good relations with both BSTC and East Budleigh with Bicton Parish Council. She said it made a great difference when you worked as a team and she wished the candidates in the forthcoming District Council Elections every success, when she will be acting as their Agent. She added that if anyone was interested in becoming a councillor, it was a very worthwhile experience.

## **District Councillors**

### Cllr A J Dent

Cllr Dent started his report by saying that the willingness of Budleigh residents to volunteer and participate in a whole range of activities was what made the Town tick. It also made the role of a councillor that much more rewarding.

He had thoroughly enjoyed meeting many new people and had made new friends whilst 'working' as a Trustee of Age Concern, a Trustee of Leisure East Devon, a supporter of service veterans, a helper with the Knowle Village Traffic Group and as a backstop of informal advice on planning issues – just some of the areas in which he was involved!

Whilst he had an important role at EDDC he always remembered that first and foremost he was a Ward member representing Budleigh Salterton.

A particular challenge was the growing role of social media as people of all ages were increasingly making use of it. Twitter, on a wide scale, and Facebook, on a more local level, were immensely influential – he wondered how many younger members of his family watched the news or read newspapers!

Many residents might not make much use of social media but he bet their families did and it was a medium that he had to become more professional in using and it was the way that maybe younger voters might be encouraged.

Following recent work by the Boundary Commission both Colaton Raleigh and Otterton would be part of the new ward of Budleigh and Raleigh in the District Elections on 2 May. Three Conservative candidates had been selected for the election – Tom Wright, Patsy Hayman and himself. All would know Tom Wright; Patsy, born in Colaton Raleigh, was Vice Chairman of East Budleigh Parish Council and had lived all her life in the area. He thought they had a good team for the election, and they would be getting out and about seeking support, as being an election for District and Town and Parish Councils he thought it would be likely that the turnout would be low!

He said Budleigh remained a delightful place to live and despite some recent vandalism crime was very low. As previously reported, BSTC was looking to install CCTV along the High Street to give twenty-four hour cover seven days a week. This was needed as the shortage of police on the ground meant towns had to seek alternative means of security. Fortunately, the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) had a fund which will go a long way to cover the set-up costs.

He and his fellow Ward members continued to resist attempts to make the 'free' car park behind the Public Hall a pay and display car park; with the pressure on budgets, officers would dearly like to make this change but so far he was pleased he and his fellow Ward members were winning!

The lack of affordable housing was a continuing concern although some pressure had been relieved by the development of Cranbrook where over 1,500 people were already in residence. Residents will have seen the extensive housing developments around Topsham and Sandy Park. Whilst the new houses were sold as fast as they were built, they still did not solve the issue of affordability.



The Budleigh development at Evans Field had temporarily ground to a halt as the new developer wanted to remove virtually all the affordable housing on viability grounds. He and his fellow ward members had strongly backed BSTC in rejecting this move as they believed there was adequate profit for the new developer including a substantial amount of affordable housing. The issue was unresolved and may yet come before the Development Management Committee for resolution. He wanted to reassure residents that they would be fighting their corner for a commitment to affordable housing.

He thanked the residents of Budleigh for making the Town such an idyllic place to live and he looked forward to their continued support at the local elections and beyond.

#### Cllr T D Wright

Cllr Wright reported that he had been the portfolio holder for the environment, which was the part of EDDC that managed the waste and recycling contract, the new green waste service, the cleaning of streets, emptying litter and dog poo bins and more positively the maintenance of the District's award-winning parks, gardens and nature reserves. He was proud how EDDC cared about the beautiful area and he was at the release of over 200 water voles at the Seaton Wetlands and more recently had taken part in the planting of over 2000 native British trees in the Clyst Valley area. EDDC also carried out inspections of the cliffs and carried out safety work when problems were found. District was also carrying out flood protection works along the seafronts – not only was work to be undertaken in Exmouth and Sidmouth but also in villages at risk from rising water levels.

He was also very pleased to advise that the new waste and recycling service was setting the standard for the rest of the country. Residents had responded magnificently, and the district now recycled 60% of household waste which left less to go for disposal. EDDC had invested in modern waste-sorting equipment that made the recycled material more valuable; that was not only good for the environment, it was good for our pocket! The latest figures showed that waste and recycling service was £232,000 under the predicted budget. They were involved in the new plastic reduction consultation programme. He added that he was also the Deputy Chairman of the Devon Strategic Waste Partnership.

He said that EDDC was not complacent and would be looking to improve the way it collected litter from busy seaside areas, making it easier for people to recycle the leftovers from their time on the beaches. He said EDDC supported organisations like Surfers Against Sewage in their beach clean initiatives; there was no doubt that more people were visiting the area and while that was excellent news for the tourism industries it did put added strain on services.

Like all authorities, EDDC had had significant cuts in its grants from central government and as a result had had to become more efficient reviewing all areas of spending and developing very different ways to raise revenue so that they could continue to provide first-class services and facilities which residents expected. The plan to completely refurbish the Town's skate park was an example of its commitment to all sections of the communities.

He then reported that he was also EDDC's representative on the Police & Crime Panel which scrutinised the work of the PCC. He explained that they did not supervise the police, just the work of the Commissioner; the allocation and deployment of resources was an operational matter for the Chief Constable.

When in 2018 the PCC was allowed to increase the precept by £5, which had resulted in an unexpected uplift in police finances, he had obtained an assurance from the Chief Constable that he would have another look at the proposed decrease in PCSO numbers. He had carried out a review and the decrease was less than initially planned but alas that had not saved the Town's dedicated PCSO.

He had not been at the budget setting meeting this year and so was not able to question the Chief Constable about the workforce balance. He had been disappointed to see that from 2020, PCSO numbers would be reduced from 196 to 150; this was despite the increase of £12 per band D property in 2019/20; that was an increase of over £47,000 since 2018 for Budleigh Salterton and £16m from East Devon.

On 28 February at the EDDC Full Council meeting he had tabled a motion asking that the Chief Constable be asked to allocate more resources to East Devon. EDDC was the biggest contributor to police budgets in Devon with the exception of Plymouth, contributing more than Exeter and Torbay and over twice as much as our near neighbours, Mid Devon. The motion had received unanimous support.

#### Cllr S V Hall

Cllr Hall reported that in the last Council year he continued to sit on the same committees as in previous years but had also been asked to sit on the Overview Committee.

He explained that as the name implied, the Audit and Governance Committee monitored both the way the Council conducted its financial affairs and the way it administered policy strategies. The Committee also monitored a regularly updated Risk Register and discussed reputational issues.

EDDC received regular reports from its two independent auditors - external auditors, KPMG, provided verdicts on the Council's ability to provide clear and concise accounts which were delivered on time. They also commented on whether EDDC provided "good value for money" – on both counts they had given an "unqualified approval" which was very satisfactory.

The internal auditor was the South West Audit Partnership. In the past year they too had not found any areas of major concern. The Council's 151 Officer (chief financial officer) had recently brought to the committee's attention an item which had been scored highly on EDDC's risk register. It concerned lack of funding for major infrastructure that would be needed in the district. Known as CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy), the government policy was muddled and unclear and was still being discussed at Westminster. There had been a suggestion that the S.106 monies pooling restrictions would be lifted and used to help the funding gap.

He continued to sit as Chairman of the Licensing Committee which had overseen updates on policies covering Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers, Gambling and Street Trading. During the year, he had had cause to revoke a Hackney Carriage Driver's Licence for a serious misdemeanour. The person had not been local and the offence managed to receive attention in the National Press. He was pleased to report there were currently no other issues locally or within the District.

Recently resurrected, the Overview Committee had primarily been set up to explore ways of increasing revenues for the authority, made more pressing by the lack of central government funding. Whatever projects were considered it was agreed that detailed risk assessments were made, and extremely detailed business plans were implemented. Members would also want to satisfy themselves that such projects were in keeping with any long-term policy strategies that the authority may have. Examples of other authorities' similar plans that had been covered by the media included the purchase of a shopping centre which would be regenerated and subsequently let out. The second was the building of a hotel in an area currently used as a car park. The hotel would be owned by the Council but leased to a national hotel chain. Estimates of £2m per annum income had been aired. There were many possibilities but any project undertaken would have its inherent risks as most authorities would need to borrow the money in the first place. With current austerity measures all authorities would need to think "outside the box" and not rely on traditional income streams.

Finally, as Chair of the Town's Traffic Group he reported that the relationship with County Highways Officers remained positive and had led to a number of safeguarding measures being implemented around Budleigh and East Budleigh. He specially thanked County Cllr Christine Channon for being that vital link between the town and highways.

He said that as the Deputy Town Mayor he had some experience of all that Cllr Wright had achieved over the past year. He said being Chairman of the Council was the equivalent of running a £2.5m company!

He concluded by saying that he would not be standing in the forthcoming elections; it had been an honour and privilege to represent the Town and he thanked residents for their support. He thanked Councillors, the Clerk and her assistant for their support during his time on the Council.

## 120. Open Forum

- Mr A Beresford had submitted various questions before the meeting:
  - He asked County Cllr Mrs C Channon to update the audience on the meeting dates, agenda and minutes for the Budleigh Salterton Hospital Health & Wellbeing Hub Advisory Board and comment on public access and accountability associated with it.
  - He also asked Cllr Mrs Channon to update the audience on the same issues for the Woodbury Exmouth and Budleigh Salterton Health & Wellbeing Hub.
  - He commented on the parking restrictions in the High Street and asked if the limited loading restrictions previously in place on the south side of the High Street, near the traffic lights, could be restored to reduce the number of incidences where vehicles obstruct the traffic lights and pedestrian crossing.
  - He then asked if the Town Mayor could report on the formal public meetings arranged by the Police & Crime Commissioner, specifically full details of the most recent meeting, including minutes, and the date and venue for the next meeting and whether any surgeries are offered.

Cllr Mrs Channon responded in order. She said that the Hub was let to Westbank on a three-year contract. Members of the board were Chairman of Westbank, the Hub Manager plus representatives from the Hospital Trust and Budleigh Salterton Hospital League of Friends and Dr R Mejzner (representing the Budleigh Salterton Health Centre). She explained that the public did not have any access to minutes as it was run by the NHS.

She said she also sat on the WEB group. She explained that no money was involved with this group, it was purely advisory. She represented DCC, Cllr Jill Elson represented EDDC, Sue Lake represented the Patient Group and the Chairman, David Bassett, represented surgeries in the Exmouth area. She said the hospital matron and various nurses also attended as well as the Hub Manager, Marc Jobson. She said that these minutes were not available for the public but if there was a request or query about a certain important issue, she would be happy to help, if she could.

Mr Beresford said he found it extraordinary that the minutes were not available as these groups had representatives appointed from DCC and EDDC.

Cllr Mrs Channon advised she forwarded minutes to the Clerk who could pass them on to Mr Beresford if he so wished.

- The Town Mayor responded to Mr Beresford's question about parking in the High Street. He said that this was not dealt with by Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) Officers but was a Police matter. There had been a change of policy on Traffic Wardens and DCC had decided to provide CPE Officers.

Cllr Mrs Channon added that at a recent Budleigh Salterton Traffic Group meeting, members had discussed a suggestion for a yellow hatched box near Staddons and was waiting to discuss this further with Highways Officers. She said that parking at The Lawn caused problems. She said she was appalled by some of the driving she saw in the High Street but apart from a number of foolish drivers, most locals were considerate. There was not an easy solution to this problem and to quote the former president of the Chamber of Commerce “what is needed is a little patience and a bit of common sense”!

- Cllr Wright then responded to Mr Beresford’s comments on the Police & Crime Panel meetings. He said the next Panel meeting would be held in June 2019; meetings were usually hosted by Plymouth City Council. Minutes and agendas were available on the Council’s website and it was in order for members of the public to send questions for the Commissioner. He said that Ms Hernandez attended surgeries and if she had time was always happy to attend public meetings. He added that she was not a “shrinking violet” and would answer questions from members of the public at these public meetings. He said he would remind Mr Beresford near the next meeting and would be happy to take him along.
- Mr R Wiltshire wished to remind the audience that the Otter Valley Association would be organising its annual Estuary Litter Pick on Saturday 23 March, meeting in the Lime Kiln Car Park at 11.00am. He added that the Town Mayor would be there to present the prize for the most unusual find!
- Mr M Webb said he was pleased to see a new flag flying on the seafront. He wondered why the Flag of St George was flown and not the Union Flag. The Town Mayor said it was tradition but on days of public mourning or celebration, the Union Flag would be flown.
- Mr Webb said at the 2018 Annual Meeting he had asked if the bridge on Upper Stoneborough Lane could be repainted. The Town Mayor said that he had suggested that rather than repaint the bridge it might be beneficial to reduce the height of the bridge so that users with mobility issues would be able to use it.
- Mr P Duke suggested that the Devon Flag be flown on the seafront. The Town Mayor said it was protocol to fly the Flag of St George.
- Mr J Falby said that he was a member of a number of groups in the town and he wished to thank the Town Council for its work on keeping the Public Hall in good order. He also thanked the Town Clerk and her assistant for all their hard work.
- Mr B Ward said that both Cllr Dent and Cllr Sherriff had mentioned planning applications where the opinions of BSTC and EDDC had differed. He asked which applications these were. Cllr Dent said they were:
  - 11 Coastguard Road – a house in the garden. The first application had gone to appeal and the inspector had found one window overlooking the neighbouring property. The application had been resubmitted omitting this window and officers had found no reason to refuse. He said that no matter what the Budleigh Salterton Neighbourhood Plan (BSNP) said, it was up to individual interpretation.

- 68 East Budleigh Road – a house in the garden. This had been strongly resisted due to it being on the entrance to the town. EDDC Planning officers had felt that because of the application at 58 East Budleigh Road being approved on appeal, they did not have a strong enough case for refusal.
- Mr Ward commented on the loss of trees in the town, particularly those at 7 West Hill Lane. Cllr Dent said that permission had been given for the removal of some trees at this site but additional trees had been felled. Replacement trees were to be planted and landscaping added to obscure the development in the future. He said that Policy NE4 of the BSNP encouraged the maintenance of wooded areas and that trees and hedgerows were important in the setting of the town. The Town Mayor added that the EDDC Tree Officer was keeping a strict eye on the development at West Hill Lane.
- Cllr C A Kitson said he had a few comments to make. He said he and Cllr C Richards had been co-opted on to BSTC on the same day sixteen years ago and both had decided not to stand for re-election. He thanked his colleagues for their support during that time. He reminded the audience that if anyone was thinking of standing for election there were not just three positions that were vacant but all twelve positions. He said residents were able to stand for the District Council as well and did not have to have a political party behind them.

The Town Mayor thanked Cllr Kitson and Cllr Richards for their hard work over the past sixteen years. He said they would be sorely missed.

There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 8.34pm.

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Chairman

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Date