

***Budleigh Salterton***

***Annual Town  
Meeting***

***10 April 2024***

***Reports***

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**Reports**

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**Town Council**

**Chairman – Cllr D J Hayward**

During the past year the Town Council has continued to support local groups and organisations, making donations to the following:

- Budleigh Salterton Carnival
- Budleigh Music Festival
- Exmouth & District Community Transport Group
- Fairlynch Museum
- Lions Club of Budleigh Salterton

The annual Budleigh Salterton Lions Gala Week was a tremendous success as were the town's Music and Literary Festivals. Budleigh Salterton Art Club held its annual exhibition in the Public Hall which was also very well attended.

Members are currently discussing the possibility of taking over the running of the public toilets in the Station Road Car Park following a change of offer from East Devon District Council; it is hoped a decision will be made soon.

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**Planning Committee**

**Chairman – Cllr M C Hilliar**

Between April 2023 and March 2024, the Town Council considered 92 planning applications. The vast majority were extensions and general property improvements. All the decisions made were based on the relevant policies of the towns Neighbourhood Plan.

When it comes to planning decisions, Budleigh Salterton Town Council is purely an advisory body the final decision is made by East Devon District Council who are the statutory planning authority.

On 3 occasions East Devon District Council overturned the Budleigh Salterton Town Council decisions.

Out of the planning applications received, East Devon District Council approved 70 and refused 6 applications, one application was withdrawn and one had a split decision. We have also been advised of one planning appeal which has been lodged (a new dwelling at Little Knowle Court). At the time of writing this report, 14 applications are still waiting for a decision by East Devon District Council.

Although the development of the Cricket Club falls outside of the Budleigh Salterton Boundary, the Council voted to support the plans for their new state of the art clubhouse and changing facilities and I hope the Club will enjoy many happy years in their new home with the clubhouse used for future generations to enjoy.

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**Finance Committee**

**Chairman – Cllr D J Hayward**

The Town Council finances continue to be closely monitored and remain in good health.

The precept, which is the funding demanded via Council Tax which the Council needs to operate, was not increased during 2023/24 this year but residents will have seen a small increase for 2024/25.

There are still many projects that the Council would like to pursue and these are included within our five-year Plan. With the continuation of all the efforts made by all councillors they will be achieved.

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**Public Hall Committee**

**Chairman – Cllr Mrs L D Evans**

I am pleased to be able to report that the Public Hall and Norman Centre are continuing to be used by the residents of the Town, for Group Meetings, Family Events etc. The Hall has regular bookings for: Zumba, Pilates, Tea Dance, Dance classes. Monthly hires for: Bingo, Produce & Crafts Market. There are a number of annual events which are also in the diary. The Hall & Norman Centre are not fully booked so it's always worth an enquiry as to availability, we have very reasonable hire charges.

In October the Council took the decision once again not to increase Hire Charges, with councillors taking into account the monies raised by various charities who use the facilities and felt it was one way to help.

You will have noticed that the Covid Perspex screen which separated the in/out in the entrance foyer has been removed and stored away. Let's pray it never has to be used again!

The Dormer windows have been replaced, and also the new black out blinds; it took a while to get this completed as there were a couple of hiccups with the installation.

The Roof has had some repairs, but the area over the Office & Front Foyer still has issues. That section was not replaced what must be some 25 years ago as the TC didn't have the funds.

We were contacted by the Literary Festival & Film Societies half way through the year as the sound system was causing issues. Whilst investigating replacement a sound system, we were advised the Stage Lighting would need to be replaced to conform to new regulations LED lights.

The Town Council has agreed to replace both systems, and we are in the final stages of agreeing the final quotes. As you no doubt will understand there are sound & lighting systems which are all singing and dancing and others which are just basic and it's finding the happy medium. We then have to find a suitable time frame for installation as the Hall will probably need to be closed for a week.

We've also been contacted by the Otter Valley Association regarding the installation of Swift boxes, we are hoping to facilitate this.

Thanks to the Office and Caretaking staff for the smooth running of the building.

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**Foreshore & Footpaths Committee**

**Chairman – Cllr A F Chaplin**

In April 2024 an inspection of the seafront was carried out by East Devon District Council Streetscene and Budleigh Salterton Town Council and the following was observed.

At the top of Cliff Road the recent cliff fall has stabilised and a kerb installed to divert rainwater from the affected cliff edge.

The damaged shelter by the West End toilets has been fenced off and is awaiting a final structural report to determine the way forward. EDDC are reviewing moving the temporary fencing closer to the shelter and Streetscene will remove the bin and rubbish which has accumulated there.

The damaged bench will be removed and repaired and there are still a number of benches that require painting.

The confusing cycle signs are to be replaced/corrected and additional floor stencils will be added.

Streetscene have been clearing the weeds etc. from around the benches and paths from the Longboat Café eastwards.

Renovation of the Lime Kiln toilets will commence very soon with temporary toilets in place to facilitate the renovation period.

EDDC and BSTC are currently sourcing access matting to be in position early May 24 to enable access to the beach for those who would find it difficult upon the pebbles.

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**Community Gardens Committee**

**Chairman – Cllr A F Chaplin**

The first half of 2023 started with very wet conditions followed by the summer heat and drought, this resulting in a year of very mixed results for our plot holder's produce.

The year started off with a waiting list of 26 and plot inspections were carried out in April, July and October.

Following the inspections, a number of plot holders received a letter asking if they were struggling, wished to continue or give up their tenancy.

This resulted in 6 plots changing tenants in January/February 2024.

Despite this the current waiting list is 25.

Overall the allotments are looking very good and well attended by all plot holders who have put in a lot of work over the year.

An additional clause has been inserted into the Tenancy Agreement prohibiting both bonfires and incinerators on the plots.

Seachange who had plot 82 are encouraging locals to join in with their Community Allotment have made very good progress and are always looking for more help on their plot. They have now transferred themselves to a larger plot 83 relinquishing plot 82.

The committee had decided to increase the plot rent by £5.00 to £30.00 per year from January 2025.

For a very small outlay plot holders, young and old, can enjoy the growing of their fruit, vegetables, flowers etc, and enjoy tremendous views.

We would like to encourage all plot holders to donate any excess produce to Wesleys at the Methodist Church to help those less fortunate and to avoid waste. (Further details can be found at Wesleys).

Finally I would like to thank Jo Vanstone and Lynne Ward for their tremendous hard work in keeping the administration side of the Community gardens running like clockwork and also to thank Jerry Hitt and the committee members for their time in assisting with the plot inspections.



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**Community Infrastructure Levy Committee**

**Chairman – Cllr M C Hilliar**

Budleigh Salterton Town Council has a Community Infrastructure Levy committee who looks after our S106 moneys and also any payments we receive from planning applications contributing to the community infrastructure levy.

The Council has a CIL plan that can be view on our website or by visiting our office. So far we have spent £45000 on several projects in the town include the Football club floodlights as well as the community workshop. We still have just over £95000 left to spend on future projects such as bus stops for Granary Lane and other projects that might arise.

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**Budleigh Salterton Traffic Group**

**Chairman – Cllr Mrs C A Sismore-Hunt**

This group is not an actual committee of the Town Council and even though we have a wide remit, we are unable to make decisions. The group is made up of several parties, councillors from Budleigh Salterton Town Council, Devon County Council, East Devon District Council and East Budleigh Parish Council plus representatives from town groups. Officers from Devon County Council also attend; they are able to get to the right department quickly and in many cases can answer a wide range of questions on the spot. The Budleigh Salterton Town Clerk acts as our secretary,

The Group has covered a variety of topics such as

- General speeding issues around the area, especially on West Hill/Exmouth Road, where there are no pavements.
- Various blocked drains and overgrown hedges
- The general state of the road surfaces in this area, which is an ongoing concern for all road users

There are many other smaller items but this is just a flavour of things we are doing, or hoping to do.

The group feels there could be a lot more done in various areas but money and pressures from all the other villages in Devon requiring maintenance and highlighting their local problems confines our aspirations sometimes, but we are pleased with our progress through this year and hope we can continue being successful through the coming year.

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**Budleigh Salterton Climate Change Group**

**Chairman – Cllr M C Hilliar**

The Climate Change group has been meeting regularly over the past twelve months with representatives from the Town Council, local community, Clinton Devon Estates and East Devon District Council.

The group meetings over the last year discussed issues like water pollution in our rivers and seas which I understand the school children have really enjoyed testing to see how bad our sea pollution is. We have discussed issues around vehicles leaving their engines running at the school and hopefully soon we will see new signage asking motorists not to idle at the school. Again these will be designed by the children to give more of an impact.

As a group we have asked Budleigh Salterton Town Council to write to South West Water regarding the pollution in our rivers and seas and look forward to receiving their response at our next meeting.

We did also raise a safety issue with East Devon District Council over the use of disposable BBQs and their impact to people especially when they are not disposed of correctly but also of their environment impact. The dry summers mean a great risk of fires which in turn can cause the loss of habitats and damaging not only our local environment but also add to the global climate due to the loss of trees that produce oxygen and reduce CO2 emissions.

Overall the group is progressing well and over the next year we hope to continue to push East Devon District Council South West Water and Devon County Council to promote greener initiatives in our local area. And with the Devon Climate Emergency Plan now in its final version I believe we will become carbon neutral by 2050.

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**County Councillor**

**County Cllr Mrs C Channon**

Devon County Council held its Budget Meeting on 16 February. Unfortunately I was not there as I had had a nasty fall a week before and wasn't very mobile. However the budget went through on a majority verdict. DCC will be raising their Council Tax 4.99%. This to help to pay for an increase to support the young, old and vulnerable.

The Adult Social Care and Health will get an increase of £43.8m but this will be eaten up by a 1% National wage increase, high inflation and interest rates, plus increasing demand. Extra money has been found to repair potholes but there is a shortage of contractors to do this work, there is also extra money for gulying. The final settlement from Government was better than expected so it has been possible to retain the money we give to the Districts to help with homelessness.

The new Chief Executive, Donna Manson has now been in post for a year and has made considerable improvements to the Council during that time. Staff are now back in their offices and working in teams. This is particularly noticeable in Children's Services, where at last we have managed to build up a strong and experienced team of officers to bring us up to standard. Recently they have managed to get a sum of £95 m from Government towards the large deficit on the SEND budget. The team have also set out a plan to clear the rest of the deficit over the next eight years and still improve the service.

Most of my post bag continues to be about our roads. Devon has the largest mileage of roads of any other authority. We also suffer from some very wet weather which quickly creates potholes. Unfortunately 78% of our budget is needed to support both the vulnerable young and elderly. This does not leave much left for everything else. The number of people in care in my ward is very high and a lot of this is due to the fact that we have let companies like McCarthy and Stone, and Pegasus build huge blocks of "so-called" warden accommodation attracting elderly people to move into Devon. If one of the partners requires residential or nursing care and the other still requires a residence, it is not possible to sell their apartments to support their care and DCC has to pick up the bill.

I have been pleased to have been able to help Budleigh Information Centre to locate some extra funding. The volunteers do an amazing job and provide an essential service. There are no paid workers. I volunteer on Saturday afternoons and it is really interesting.

I have also been able to help the Memory Café with a £500 donation from my Locality Budget and I gave a substantial donation to the Music Festival to support the lunch-time concerts.

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**County Councillor cont/...**

I have worked with our MP, Simon Jupp, for some time now trying to persuade South West Water to offer a better service. We have had too many incidents of raw sewage being pumped into the sea both in Budleigh Salterton and Exmouth, both holiday resorts. In addition recently we had road closures without warning in Budleigh Salterton and most of these have been over a weekend, causing chaos to both the bus services and motorists. The Highway Enforcement Officer has been quite useful in monitoring these closures and has now informed SWW that this must not happen over a weekend.

When the County Council elections take place in 2025 I will have served as your County Councillor for 32 years and I will be 83. So I will not be seeking re-election but making way for a younger person. During that time the ward boundary has changed three times. In 2017 it moved westwards to include the Littleham Ward of Exmouth and thus became more urban. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time of service and have been given some great opportunities at local, regional and national level. I led the County Conservative Group for 7 years and I am still the only woman who has been the Leader of Devon County Council and it was with great pride that I served as the Chairman of the Council in 2015/16. During that time I have been most grateful for the help and support I have received from friends and family.

I would also like to thank the Town Councillors and I am most grateful for the help and advice I receive from Joanne Vanstone, your clerk, who will be retiring at same time as me next year.

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**District Councillors**

**District Cllr Ms C Fitzgerald, District Cllr Ms M Martin and**

**District Cllr H L Riddell**

I have now been a District Councillor for nearly one year. I have taken this opportunity to reflect on the past year at East Devon District Council. Every week I deal with lots of individual casework, in particular Social Housing. I have outlined some of the key issues and good news directly relating to Budleigh Salterton. I have thoroughly enjoyed my work at EDDC so far.

A particular highlight for me has been being able to be involved in supporting work with young people in the town. It's been great to get involved with the Budleigh Community Youth Project.

It has also been a huge honour to serve under the governing body at St Peter's Primary School, where I attended school which now seems a long time ago! The youth club itself is run by two fantastic volunteers Nikki and Roxanne who do an absolutely fantastic job. When I can, I have been taking opportunities to go along to the Youth Club and all the children seem to be having a great time. We have now extended the Youth Club to more age groups along with organising a Pool and Darts night on the 20 April and a Party Night on 7 September. It is hoped to be able to organise more trips next year.

Following on from the theme of youth work, it has been great to be able to help Budleigh Salterton Football club with their endeavours of making a new youth training pitch. Cllr Fitzgerald and I have had regular meetings with Football Club committee members, and I am pleased that after a generous donation from Budleigh Salterton Town Council a couple of months ago progress is going well. The facility will also be open to the public when not in use by the Football Club, it really is going to be a fantastic asset for the town.

I am also pleased to advise that on 11 May the newly refurbished Lime Kiln Play Area will be officially reopened. This is complimenting the work that was done to the Greenway Lane play area last year. It is great to see Budleigh Salterton getting its fair share of funding from EDDC and I hope these play areas will be enjoyed by children and their families for years to come.

The LORP project has now been completed and the results are spectacular. I have seen the project develop over the past few years every day when driving to South Farm, the views are also brilliant from up on the farm. It is great to see it so busy with people enjoying the nature reserves. I hope that this will be a huge boost to Budleigh.

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**District Cllr H L Riddell cont/...**

A big concern for lots of residents was anti-social driving around the town, particularly in Lime Kiln Car Park. I am pleased that after engaging with the Police, patrols have been stepped up and it seems that there have been no incidents recently. Once again, I urge any residents that experience anti-social behaviour to report it to the Police on 101 or in an emergency to call 999.

I am also supporting Bickton College with their '100 mile challenge' raising funds for the RNL and the Royal Marines Charity. Two very worthy causes. I will be volunteering at the event and would recommend to anyone interested to look on the Bickton College social media and webpage. It is being run by the students themselves and they are a real credit to the college and our area.

South West Water continues to be causing problems not just here in Budleigh but all along our coastline. On the 21 February I spoke on the South West Water Motion at Full Council about South West Water's failings in Budleigh Salterton. I will make sure I use my platform wherever possible to hold South West Water to account.

More than ever it is critical that we support our High Street as much as possible. I have been working closely with the Budleigh Information Centre and will shortly be meeting with them and Economic Development Officers at East Devon to find out what more we can be doing to boost trade in the Town. Early discussions with Officers indicate they are keen for more events to be held in the Town. For example, Exmouth is hosting a 'gate to plate' food festival.

Lastly, I would like to thank you all for your support over the past 11 months. Although sometimes opinions differ, we are all working in what we believe are the best interests of the town and we should all take pride in that. In particular thank you to Jo the Town Clerk for your guidance on lots of local issues. It has made my job as a new District Council a lot easier! I look forward to working with you all over the next year.