

BUDLEIGH SALTERTON ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

MINUTES of the Annual Town Meeting held in the Public Hall, Station Road, on Friday 14th March 2025.

The meeting began at 7.30pm

PRESENT

Cllr C Sismore-Hunt (Chair & Town Mayor)
Cllr A Chaplin
Cllr S Cook
Cllr R Doorbar
Cllr S J Horn
Cllr D Walsh

In Attendance: Thirty six members of the public, Co Cllr C Cannon and Alice Gater-Wildgust (Town Clerk)

139. Welcome

Cllr C A Sismore-Hunt welcomed everyone and asked them to join councillors for refreshments before the Meeting whilst they read the Reports Pack.

140. Minutes

The Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on Wednesday 10 April 2024 were confirmed.

141. Reports were received from the Chairs of the following Committees:-

- Town Council (Cllr C A Sismore-Hunt)
- Planning Committee (Cllr S J Horn)
- Finance Committee (Cllr G Woodcraft)
- Public Hall Committee (Chair Position Vacant)
- Foreshore & Footpaths Committee (Cllr A F Chaplin)
- Community Gardens Committee (Cllr A F Chaplin)
- Community Infrastructure Levy Committee (Cllr G Woodcraft)
- Budleigh Salterton Traffic Group (Cllr C A Sismore-Hunt)
- County Councillor
- District Councillors

142. Grant Reports were received from the following organisations, recipients of a BSTC grant in 2024/2025

- Budleigh Salterton Community Larder
- Budleigh Salterton Cricket Club
- Budleigh Salterton AFC
- Budleigh Information Centre (BIC)
- Budleigh Salterton Library
- Museum Development South West supporting The Fairlynch Museum
- Shop Budleigh

143. Open Forum

Thanks were recorded to a District Councillor for excellent work at a recent EDDC strategic meeting. Appreciation was extended to the Town Council, with acknowledgment of the hard work being undertaken. It was noted that the Town Council had acted quickly and decisively by calling an extraordinary meeting and attending EDDC, clearly stating that any plan crossing the B3179 was unacceptable.

Concern was expressed that the area could become overdeveloped. The Town Council was acknowledged for challenging EDDC and for its intention to act under Regulation 19. It was noted that there were 15 days remaining to register comments to the plan. While the need for housing was acknowledged, serious concern was raised about the suitability of 210 acres of development next to an SSSI. It was noted that the proposal was described as an "Exmouth development" despite being approximately 1.9 miles away from Budleigh Salterton. It was felt that greater consideration was needed regarding location. Despite strong efforts by the Town Council and some district councillors, concern was expressed that these efforts were being ignored by EDDC.

It was noted that a community member was hosting a session to support individuals in using Commonplace. The community was encouraged to act, alongside the ongoing actions of the Town Council.

Further reference was made to EXMO20, with the view expressed that it failed on one key aspect, having been unlawfully included and never formally approved. It was stated that local councils and residents had not been given an opportunity to comment. The use of a specialist planning lawyer was suggested, including the possibility of seeking an injunction against EDDC. The idea of establishing a shared legal fund was raised as a more effective approach than relying solely on individual objections.

Background context was shared regarding the lead-up to EXMO20 being brought forward. It was noted that there was a legal obligation to consult with neighbouring communities.

It was reported that a legal statement was being prepared regarding the lawfulness of the process, alongside the creation of a petition for community use.

Commonplace was noted as a platform currently in use across the country.

It was advised that petitions count as a single representation and may carry limited weight. Suggestions included presenting concerns directly to county and district councils and asking a local member to speak and present on behalf of the community. Concern was expressed about "upside-down planning," with infrastructure lagging behind development and the process being fundamentally flawed.

A request was made to arrange a Q&A meeting with district councillors, with particular interest in updates on devolution and the new Planning Act.

Thanks were extended to the Town Council from several community organisations and individuals. Gratitude was expressed for grant support and community backing of a Budleigh Salterton Cricket Club. It was noted that a new location had enabled expansion, with more teams and events, including approximately 150 junior participants on summer Friday evenings, all volunteer-run. A walking cricket team was reported to be starting in 2025. Pride was expressed in work supporting disability cricket, with the club becoming the first in Devon to be disability accessible. Grant funding had enabled improvements to external surfaces, following challenges identified during the hosting of a visually impaired cricket team in summer 2024.

An update was provided from Budleigh Salterton library, noting its transition from county council management to a charitable model. A temporary closure of five days in late April was reported. Thanks were extended to current and former mayors and councillors for their support.

Thanks were recorded from Co Cllr Channon to Cllr Caz Sismore-Hunt for long-standing service, with best wishes extended and appreciation expressed to their family.

A late-arriving speaker was afforded the floor and shared insights into EXMO20 and potential responses. It was noted that, while designated as an Exmouth site, the

development lay approximately two miles from Budleigh town centre and was comparable in scale to adding a village the size of Woodbury to Exmouth. Concerns were raised that both towns were already under strain and that an additional 700 families could significantly alter the character of Budleigh.

A suggestion was made to better connect local skills and talent, encouraging residents to come forward to participate in working groups across a range of areas.

There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 8.22pm.

.....
Chair

.....
Date

DRAFT