BUDLEIGH SALTERTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Finance Committee held in the Council Offices, Station Road, Budleigh Salterton on Monday 14 September 2026.

The meeting commenced at 7.30pm

PRESENT

Cllr P Lewis (Chair)
Cllr R Doorbar
Cllr G Woodcraft

In attendance: Alice Gater-Wildgust (Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)), Cllr A Chaplin and Cllr P Jones.

26.189 Public Speaking

There were no public speakers.

26.190 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr S Cook.

26.191 Minutes

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

26.192 Chair's Report

The Chair thanked the preceding Chair, Cllr G Woodcraft, for their work.

The Chair reported that the monthly governance and finance check takes approximately one and a half to two hours. Thanks were expressed to all those who authorised payments, as this provided an additional level of financial control.

It was noted that further work was required in relation to reserves. While not all the answers were currently known, work was progressing towards establishing a clear position for 2027/28.

The Chair noted that budgets would always require a degree of flexibility, but this should be kept to no more than was necessary.

It was also noted that revisions to the budgets were required. All questions arising from the review would be logged and worked through in due course.

26.193 Clerk & Responsible Financial Officers Report

Matters Currently in Progress

The following matters were reported:

Renewal of Energy Contracts: The RFO had begun obtaining indicative costings and reviewing the options available in advance of the future renewal of the Town Council's energy contracts. As these contracts were customarily brokered, a range of energy brokers were being considered to establish which would be best placed to represent BSTC and secure an appropriate contract offering best value for money.

It was noted that a recommendation would be presented to the Town Council once the review had been completed.

Remedial Works to Public Hall Roof: Indicative costs are being sought for the remedial works identified in the recent surveyor's report and for costs related to the future conservation of the Public Hall roof. This information will assist the Council in assessing the likely financial implications and making appropriate provision within future budgets and reserves.

Upper Station Road Car Park: Indicative costs are being sought for anticipated works required to maintain the car park in a safe and satisfactory condition. This information would assist with future expenditure and reserve planning.

Public Hall Boiler/Heating System: Preliminary enquiries have been begun regarding the Public Hall heating system to establish the available options for replacement of the existing boiler and the likely next steps, to support reserve planning.

Approved

Other Work in Progress

2027/28 Budget: The RFO reported that work had commenced on preparing the draft budget for consideration, review and agreement by the Finance Committee in November 2026, prior to presentation to the Town Council on 23 November.

Norman Centre: A review of the current rates applicable to the Norman Centre had been requested from EDDC. It was noted that the current cost of the space significantly exceeded the income generated.

Financial Planning and Costings

The RFO explained that the costings and enquiries being undertaken were intended to provide the Council with sufficient information to assess future financial commitments, inform budget setting and reserve planning, and support future decision-making.

It was noted that, unless specifically approved by the Council or undertaken under existing delegated authority, obtaining quotations or indicative costs did not constitute a commitment to expenditure.

26.194 Income & Expenditure 2026/27

(i) Income and Expenditure (Financial Budget Comparison Report) for the period 1 April 2026 to 31 August 2026.

Consideration was given to the report. It was noted that there was larger deficit that expected in the budget; however, work was underway to reduce the deficit which had arisen following an unforeseen midyear increase in payroll costs and additional staffing requirements.

Following a wide ranging discussion, the report was received and accepted.

(ii) To agree the proposed amendments to existing budget headings and the creation of new budget headings, and to make a recommendation to the Town Council.

Resolved: The following proposed amendments were agreed, and it was resolved that a recommendation for their adoption be made to the Town Council.

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Heading	Current	Proposed
325	Equipment Services & Repairs	Office Equipment
329	None (new)	Office Maintenance
255	None (new)	Council Event Expenses
114/6	None (new)	SR Toilets – Fund
372	Statutory Sick Pay	Locum Cover
516/3	none (516 is Cleaning PH)	Cleaning Contactor

26.195 Reserve Policy

(i) The Committee considered the proposed Reserves Policy, including the proposed reserves and the arrangements for their management and use. It was:

Resolved: To recommend the Reserves Policy to the Town Council for approval.

(ii) The Committee considered how the Town Council could work towards achieving the objectives of the new Reserves Policy and discussed the appropriate actions and priorities required to support its implementation. It was:

Resolved: The Committee agreed to retain the existing reserve titles and to use the information currently available in determining their purpose and level. It was agreed that the current reserve levels were largely attributable to the assets that would require future investment. However, it was noted that the overall value of the current reserves was too low to provide meaningful financial support for future investment. It was further noted that additional reserves might be established to support the future

Approved

replacement of catering equipment and Public Hall furniture, including tables and chairs. A recommendation is to be made to the Town Council.

CURRENT RESERVES

Reserve Status

	01/04/26	14/09/26
Car Park Fund	£22,500.00	£22,500.00
Public Hall Fund	£50,000.00	£50,000.00
Jubilee Shelter Maintenance	£3,500.00	£3,500.00
Town Improvement Fund	£5,000.00	£5,000.00
CIL Fund	£53,983.12	£53,983.12
Station Road Toilets	£0.00	£0.00
	£134,983.12	£134,983.12
	£134,983.12	£134,983.12

It was agreed that a conservative approach should be taken when determining the appropriate level of the General Reserve. The potential worst case scenario of receiving no precept was considered, although this was recognised as an extremely unlikely occurrence.
It was agreed that the appropriate level and arrangements for the General Reserve would be determined following further consideration.

26.196 Any other business

No other business was raised.

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

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Chair

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Date

Approved