



## Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Tuesday, January 13, 2026 at 19:00 in the Crediton Library, Belle Parade, Crediton

<b>Present:</b>	Cllrs Steve Huxtable, Liz Brookes-Hocking, Giles Fawssett, Joyce Harris, Jim Cairney, Rachel Backhouse, Tim Stanford, Guy Cochran and Vix Frisby
<b>Apologies:</b>	Cllrs John Downes, Natalia Letch, Paul Perriman
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Four members of the public Cath Kelly, Lead Youth Worker
<b>Minute Taker:</b>	Rachel Avery, Town Clerk

## MINUTES

### 2026/379 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Cllr Huxtable opened the meeting and members introduced themselves.

### 2026/380 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The session began with a member of the public expressing concerns about the budget and precept increases, questioning the transparency and legitimacy of the recent community survey. The Chair responded that the survey results were statistically insignificant due to the low response rate.

A member of the public expressed concerns about budget control and realism, specifically referencing the overspend on the Crediton Food Festival and the handling of unspent balances. The Chair clarified that underspends are transferred to the General Reserve at year-end.

Further questions addressed the value for money and staffing, particularly the necessity of a new Communications Officer. The Chair indicated that this would be discussed later in the meeting.

Another public question raised concerns about the BT phone box on Saint Lawrence Green, suggesting it be repurposed as a lost property store for gloves.

The Chair promised to follow up on its current use, but it had been used as a propagation area for the St Lawrence Green Group.

A member of the public asked whether councillors were expected to read the budget report before voting, to which the Chair confirmed that they were.

The session concluded with questions about the urgency of raising the precept and the timeline for public responses, with the Chair committing to respond by the following Friday.

### 2026/381 APOLOGIES

**Decision:** It was **resolved** to receive and accept apologies from Cllrs Perriman (illness), Stanford (illness) and Letch (holiday). (Proposed by Cllr Huxtable)

### 2026/382 TO CONSIDER ANY DISPENSATION REQUESTS (REQUESTS SHOULD BE MADE TO THE TOWN CLERK PRIOR TO THE MEETING)

**2026/382.1 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS (DPI'S) IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA**

No declarations of personal interest or disclosable pecuniary interests were received.

**2026/382.2 TO CONSIDER ANY DISPENSATION REQUESTS (REQUESTS SHOULD BE MADE TO THE TOWN CLERK PRIOR TO THE MEETING)**

No dispensation requests were received prior to the meeting.

**2026/383 ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**Decision:** It was **resolved** to adjust the order of business by moving forward item 386 to 384 (Earmarked Reserve Virement), to ensure it was addressed in case of time constraints. (Proposed by Cllr Huxtable)

**2026/384 CHAIR'S AND CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair and Clerk had no announcements to make.

**2026/385 BUDGET 2026/27**

**2026/385.1 TO RECEIVE AND REVIEW THE DRAFT 2026/27 BUDGET, PRECEPT REQUIREMENT, AND ASSOCIATED REPORT**

The Chair introduced the draft budget for 2026/27, including the precept requirement and associated report. The following budget lines were discussed in depth:

- proposal to increase the CCTV budget from £6,000 to £9,000 to cover monitoring and repairs
- the small works budget was proposed to increase from £3,000 to £5,000 based on this year's experience
- the paddling pool budget, with considerations about funding from earmarked reserves alongside community consultation
- the employment of a Communications Officer was considered as proposed by Cllr Brookes-Hocking. It was argued that improved communication was necessary based on recent surveys and the need for a strategic approach. However, the Chair and other members felt that this should be discussed in a separate meeting rather than as part of the budget setting, with Cllr Frisby highlighting that she was on the HR Committee where this had not been discussed and that she had reviewed all staff job descriptions which included communications.

**2026/385.2 TO APPROVE THE 2026/27 BUDGET**

**Decision:** It was **resolved** to approve the proposed budget, recognising the need for financial prudence and strategic planning. (Proposed by Cllr Huxtable. Cllrs voting for were Cllrs Fawssett, Frisby and Backhouse voted against).

**2026/385.3 TO APPROVE THE 2026/27 PRECEPT, FOR SUBMISSION TO MDDC**

Consideration was given to the 2026/27, with the presented draft of £545,000.00 representing a 5% increase on a Band D property. This decision was based on the need to cover the budget deficit with general reserves and ensure the council's financial health.

The approval was made with the understanding that the precept increase is necessary for maintaining services and supporting future developments.

Cllr Backhouse proposed a 3.74% increase to the precept, which was ultimately not carried. Those voting for were Cllrs Backhouse and Fawssett, with Cllr Frisby abstaining.

**Decision:** It was **resolved to approve** the 2026/27 precept for submission to Mid Devon District Council (MDDC), setting the figure at £545,000.00. (Proposed by Cllr Huxtable. Cllrs Backhouse, Fawssett and Frisby voted against)

**2026/386 EARMARKED RESERVE VIREMENT**

A transfer of £500.00 from earmarked reserves to address the notice board issue promptly was reviewed.

**Decision:** It was **resolved to approve** the transfer of £500.00 from earmarked reserves. (Proposed by Cllr Backhouse)

**2026/387 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was noted as being on Tuesday, 20 January 2026, at 19.30.

**2026/388 REPORTS PACK**

Signed .....

Dated.....