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Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Tuesday, January 20, 2026 at 19:30 at Crediton Library, Belle Parade, Crediton, EX17 2AA

Present: Cllrs Steve Huxtable, Guy Cochran, Giles Fawssett, Joyce Harris, Liz Brookes-Hocking, Rachel Backhouse, Tim Stanford and Vix Frisby

Apologies: Cllrs John Downes, Jim Cairney, Natalia Letch and Paul Perriman

In Attendance: Tim Steer and Roger Blake (Railfuture)
Two members of the public
One member of the press

Minute Taker: Rachel Avery, Town Clerk

MINUTES

2026/389 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Cllr Huxtable opened the meeting and members introduced themselves.

2026/390 CHAIR'S AND CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr Huxtable reminded those in attendance that this was a council meeting with members of the public present who are entitled to speak during the meeting. He requested that if any member of the public wished to speak, they should notify him as soon as the discussion begins rather than waiting until later. This was aimed at facilitating smoother communication and ensuring public participation was managed effectively.

The Town Clerk advised that she had spoken to M Group regarding the gateway sign, who had advised that they were yet to be ordered. She intended to contact DCC as a matter of urgency, as she had been informed that they had been.

2026/391 RAIL FUTURE

Tim Steer, representing Railfuture, presented an update on the North Devon Rail Line Alliance. Railfuture is an independent organisation focused on improving rail services. Tim highlighted CTC's previous support for reconnecting Bideford to the rail network and provided updates on the campaign's progress. He discussed the challenges faced by the North Devon line, including capacity issues, the need for modernisation, and the importance of improving service frequency to two trains per hour. The presentation included detailed plans for upgrading the line's resilience and extending services to Bideford. Tim also mentioned the formal recognition of these plans in strategic transport documents and the upcoming publication of two complementary business cases. He requested a motion of support from CTC to join the Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance, emphasising the broader stakeholder involvement and the benefits of improved rail connectivity. Councillors

raised questions about infrastructure, car parking, new stations, and government support, which were addressed.

Roger Blake from Railfuture also spoke, underscoring the importance of joining the alliance and participating in wider discussions to address rail service improvements.

Task: Motion of support to join the Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance at the next meeting of Full Council.

2026/392 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The following comments and questions were raised:

- Dissatisfaction with the response received from a staff member regarding the replacement of a notice board
- Concerns around the significant staff and admin budget
- Queried the need for feasibility study expenditure for Old Lanscore School
- The proposed precept increase and the high percentage of precept spent on staff costs, questioning the efficiency and necessity of clerical staff duties.

Questions were noted, and the Chair assured that responses would be provided and made available on the Council's website.

2026/393 APOLOGIES

Decision: It was **resolved** to receive and accept apologies from Cllrs Perriman (illness), Cairney (attending another meeting), Downes (attending another meeting) and Letch (holiday). (Proposed by Cllr Cochran)

2026/394 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

2026/394.1 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.

2026/394.2 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.

2026/395 ORDER OF BUSINESS

There were no changes to the order of business.

2026/396 TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

Councillor Backhouse highlighted that she had raised queries regarding the minutes of the meeting held on 6 January 2026, specifically about the page numbering, date, and overall competence of the CCTV agreement. After discussion, it was agreed that the minutes would be amended to address these concerns before approval.

Task: Amend the minutes of the meeting held on 6 January 2026 to address concerns about page numbering, date, and overall competence. *@Rachel Avery*

2026/397 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

DALC: Cllr Brookes-Hocking highlighted councillor training from DALC.

Crediton Twinning Association: Cllr Huxtable advised that a visit to Avranches is likely this year.

Chamber of Commerce: Cllr Cochran stated that no further meetings have been arranged.

2026/398 DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Councillor Downes had provided a written report detailing updates on gritting at Joseph Locke Way, the bus shelter at Joseph Locke Way, and financial support for Redlands surgery. Councillors discussed the need for modern access facilities for the bus shelter and agreed to keep the matter on the agenda for further updates.

2026/399 FINANCES

The Council received and approved transactions between 01 December and 31 December 2025. Councillor Rachel Buckhouse raised concerns about the publication of personal data in the transaction list and the expenditure on services from Breakthrough Communications. The Clerk clarified the services provided by Breakthrough Communications and confirmed their usefulness. The bank reconciliation as of 31 December 2025 was approved, and the bank balances were noted. The year-to-date spend and earmarked reserves balances were also noted.

2026/399.1 TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE TRANSACTIONS BETWEEN 01 DECEMBER AND 31 DECEMBER 2025

Cllr Backhouse raised concerns about the publication of personal data, with the Town Clerk confirming that the data provided was in line with legislation.

Cllr Backhouse queried the payment of services to Breakthrough Communications. The Clerk clarified the services provided by Breakthrough Communications and confirmed their usefulness.

Decision: It was **resolved to approve** transactions between 01 December and 31 December 2025. (Proposed by Cllr Huxtable)

2026/399.2 TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE BANK RECONCILIATION TO 31 DECEMBER 2025

Decision: It was **resolved to approve** the bank reconciliation to 31 December 2025. (Proposed by Cllr Harris)

2026/399.3 TO NOTE BANK BALANCES TO 31 DECEMBER 2025

Decision: The bank balances as of 31 December 2025 were **noted**.

2026/399.4 TO NOTE YEAR TO DATE SPEND

Decision: The year-to-date spend was **noted**.

2026/399.5 TO NOTE EARMARKED RESERVES BALANCES

Decision: The Earmarked Reserves balances were **noted**.

2026/400 VIREMENTS REPORT

Decision: It was **resolved to approve** all recommendations in the Virements Report. (Proposed by Cllr Backhouse)

2026/401 STANDING ORDERS

Decision: It was **resolved to approve** the Standing Orders with proposed amendments made by the Standing Orders Task and Finish Group. (Proposed by Cllr Cochran)

2026/402 MANOR OFFICE

The Town Clerk provided a report on the progression of discharge of planning conditions at Manor Office. The council discussed the challenges faced in meeting the conservation requirements and the additional costs involved, acknowledging the importance of completing the planning conditions to bring the building back into use.

Decision: It was **resolved to approve** the expenditure of £3,450.00 from earmarked reserves to cover the necessary work for the progression of discharge of planning conditions at Manor Office. (Proposed by Cllr Brookes-Hocking)

2026/403 OLD LANDSCORE SCHOOL

2026/403.1 TO RECEIVE THE PROPOSALS FROM DEVON COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

The council received and reviewed the proposals from Devon Communities Together. The discussion highlighted the need to assess existing feasibility documents and consult with the community.

2026/403.2 TO APPROVE ANY SPENDING FROM EMR 344 (OLS PROJECT) IN RELATION TO AGENDA ITEM 2026/402.1

Decision: It was **resolved to approve** the initial feasibility review at a cost of £1,800.00 using earmarked reserves. (Proposed by Cllr Brookes-Hocking. Cllrs Fawssett and Backhouse voted against)

2026/403.3 TO RECEIVE THE OLS INSURANCE VALUATION REPORT BY THE DEPUTY TOWN CLERK AND TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDATION THEREIN

Decision: It was **resolved to approve** the reduction in the building insurance from £850,000 to £650,000 based on the updated valuation. (Proposed by Cllr Brookes-Hocking)

2026/404 DATA RETENTION POLICY

The council discussed the data retention policy, specifically the timescale for retaining live-streamed meetings.

Decision: It was **resolved to approve** a retention period of 30 days for live-streamed meetings in line with Meta's policy, with additional internal checks. (Proposed by Cllr Huxtable. Cllr Fawssett voted against, Cllr Backhouse abstained)

2026/405 NEWCOMBES MEADOW PADDLING POOL

The council noted the email from Mid Devon District Council regarding the Newcombes Meadow Paddling Pool. The email outlined the next steps for upgrading the paddling pool and toilet block, including obtaining updated quotes and discussing project specifications. Members expressed concern about potential delays and emphasised the need to keep this item on the agenda to ensure timely progress.

2026/406 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Decision: The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday, 3 February 2026.

2026/407 REPORTS PACK

Signed

Dated.....