



Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Tuesday, July 7, 2026 at 19:30 at Credition Library, Belle Parade, Credition, EX17 2AA

Present:	Cllrs Steve Huxtable, Liz Brookes-Hocking, Guy Cochran (part meeting), Giles Fawssett, Jim Cairney, John Downes, Rachel Backhouse, Vix Frisby, Joyce Harris, Natalia Letch and Tim Stanford
Apologies:	Cllr Paul Perriman
In Attendance:	9 members of the public 1 member of the press Inspector Mark Arthurs Tim Bland, Events and Town Centre Officer (part meeting) Cath Kelly, Lead Youth Worker (part meeting)
Minute Taker:	Rachel Avery, Town Clerk

MINUTES

2026/017 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Cllr Huxtable opened the meeting and members introduced themselves.

Cllr Huxtable opened public question time with the following statement:

*Town council meetings are meetings **IN** public, not meetings **OF** the public. The law allows members of the public and the press admission to town council meetings so that they can observe democracy in action.*

It is important that councils make decisions transparently and openly, allowing members of the public to give their views and raise issues that the council may wish to consider, but it is also important to remember that members of the public do not have a formal role in the governance of the council, proposing or making decisions at local council meetings, including with regards to the minutes of meetings.

Clearly members of the public may also want to share their views on council priorities and actions, and indeed have the right to scrutinise council activities, and offer constructive comments.

All questions and comments must be factual, polite and restricted to matters over which the council has direct authority at Full Council meetings – for committee and sub-committee meetings the comments and questions must be in respect of items on the agenda.

The public participation session at council meetings is one of the options available, but more commonly letters/emails and telephone calls to the council, are avenues used by the majority of members of the public.

Members of the public must not publicly critique any employees or councillors performance or ability. This is especially true in the light of our signing of the pledge on Civility and Respect. Public criticism of staff and/or councillors is not welcome in any form and will not be tolerated at town council meetings.

All staff are employed by the council, not the community, and as employers the council manages its staff professionally and appropriately, but this is not done publicly, nor is it a matter for public oversight.

Should a complaint against staff and/or councillors be necessary details of the process is available on the CTC and MDDC websites.

A member of the public raised concerns about persistent antisocial behaviour around the bus stop and former bank area on the High Street, including drinking, rough sleeping in nearby doorways, and unsanitary conditions on the pavement. Cllr Huxtable said he would confer with the police after the meeting and requested the resident's contact details so the matter could be taken forward. A second member of the public added that they had noticed people sleeping in doorways early in the morning.

A member of the public raised a series of questions about the Manor Office project, focusing on the apparent capital cost, the risk of delay or cost escalation, the inability to accommodate a full council meeting on the ground floor because of conservation constraints, and whether disabled access could be reconciled with the flood-prevention measures at the entrance. The Chair did not open the matter for debate at that stage and confirmed that a full response would be provided separately.

A member of the public asked about disruption from the Tesco-related road works and queried what representations had been made on behalf of residents. In his role as County Councillor, Cllr Cairney replied that the works were Tesco's responsibility rather than a Devon County Council (DCC) project, although the county council handled the legal road closures. He said he had first discussed the matter with Tesco around four and a half months earlier, had met Tesco, the DCC Highway Officer, and the contractor, and was due to meet the site manager again the following day. He added that promised advance communication and leaflet drops had not taken place, that complaints had increased pressure to move quickly, and that recent high temperatures had caused difficulties with laying and cooling the surface material.

A member of the public questioned the proposed High Street Christmas lighting contract, asking why only one quote appeared to have been obtained for a 3-year arrangement at £11,000.00 per year excluding VAT, and whether the council was being asked to commit before permissions and all installation-related costs were confirmed. Cllr Huxtable said those points would be addressed when the council reached the substantive agenda item.

A member of the public asked who would open, close, test, and supervise the paddling pool if responsibility changed; members indicated that current and forward costings were believed to include twice-daily water testing but would confirm the detail.

2026/018 APOLOGIES

Decision: It was **resolved** to receive and accept apologies from Cllrs Perriman (personal). (Proposed by Cllr Huxtable)

2026/019 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

2026/019.1 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS (DPI'S) IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

No personal interests or disclosable pecuniary interests were declared in respect of items on the agenda.

2026/019.2 TO CONSIDER ANY DISPENSATION REQUESTS (REQUESTS SHOULD BE MADE TO THE TOWN CLERK PRIOR TO THE MEETING)

No dispensation requests had been received.

2026/020 ORDER OF BUSINESS

There were no changes to the order of business.

2026/021 CHAIR'S AND CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcements were made by either the Chair or the Town Clerk.

2026/022 TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

Decision: It was **resolved** to **approve** the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Tuesday 05 May 2026. (Proposed by Cllr Backhouse)

2026/023 TOWN COUNCIL COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

Minutes of the following meetings were reviewed:

- Community Committee held on 12 May 2026

Decision: It was resolved to ratify the minutes of the Community Committee held on 12 May 2026. (Proposed by Cllr Cairney)

- Oversight Committee held on 12 May 2026

Decision: It was resolved to ratify the minutes of the Oversight Committee held on 12 May 2026. (Proposed by Cllr Huxtable)

2026/024 POLICE REPORT

Standing orders were suspended (Proposed by Cllr Huxtable)

Inspector Mark Arthurs introduced himself as the Neighbourhood Policing Inspector for Mid Devon and explained the scale of the sector, which covers 62 parishes and towns. He said that frequent attendance at town and parish meetings was not realistic, but argued that the relationship with local councils needed to be modernised through more direct and effective communication.

He thanked councillors for their community role and said his team's work focused on medium- to long-term community problems rather than only immediate incidents.

A central message was that residents should not rely on social media to contact the police. Inspector Arthurs said tagged posts on local Facebook pages were not an effective reporting route and urged use of the police website, 101, and the community messaging service previously known as DC Alert. He undertook to provide the clerk with contact details for the local policing team, his own email address, and Sergeant Sarah Stevens' email address, so that councillors and residents could escalate concerns where they felt a matter had not been handled properly.

He outlined current resources as 8 neighbourhood police constables supervised by Sergeant Sarah Stevens, 4 police community support officers in post (though there should be 8), and the wider support of response officers handling 999 calls. He also noted opportunities for local insight patrols and recruitment. In crime and antisocial behaviour terms, he reported 116 antisocial behaviour incidents across Mid Devon in the last 90 days, equivalent to 1.29 incidents per day, and 15 incidents in Crediton town in the same period, or 0.14 per day, while cautioning that under-reporting remained a significant issue.

Inspector Arthurs encouraged councillors to help set policing priorities by feeding local concerns into the policing team so that additional resources could be requested where justified. He referred to neighbourhood support teams based in Exeter and Barnstaple that could be deployed where a defined problem warranted extra capacity. He stressed, however, that many persistent problems could not be solved quickly and often required district, county, health, and social care partners as well as police involvement.

Turning to crime figures available through the police website, he said recorded crime in Crediton town was up 30 per cent over the last 12 months, although some categories were heavily affected by low baseline numbers. He cited a 260% rise in shoplifting and said 126 shoplifting offences had been recorded. He linked part of that increase to improved reporting through business engagement, and a recent arrest that had led to conviction scheduled for the following morning, together with an application for a criminal behaviour order. He also noted that residential burglary was down 23%, robbery down 33%, rural Crediton was up 16%, and Mid Devon overall was up only just over 3%.

On antisocial behaviour in the town centre, Inspector Arthurs said Crediton had not attracted the hotspot funding that supported street marshals in Tiverton because local incident and risk levels were comparatively lower. He confirmed that the police, the Town Clerk, CTC, and MDDC had pursued a Public Spaces Protection Order, which was now in the pipeline and could be implemented in around 4 weeks. He said the order was expected to run for 3 years and would give both police and MDDC additional enforcement powers in the defined central area. He also reported that a previous funding bid for street marshals in Mid Devon had been unsuccessful.

Members and residents then pressed him on support for vulnerable people affected by any enforcement measures. In response, he said the PSPO was only one tool and that the broader issue required joint work with the NHS, and other agencies, because many of the individuals involved had wider needs. He acknowledged a point raised that police referrals did not always appear to reach the expected teams and would review this.

Further exchanges focused on whether the High Street problems described earlier could be resolved immediately. Inspector Arthurs said he could not promise that the situation would be fixed the next day, but explained that police had already been working on broader measures, and that local officers had even cleaned the area themselves on one recent occasion despite that not being a policing duty. He accepted that the police had not communicated their background work well enough and agreed that more public awareness was needed about what counted as antisocial behaviour and how to report it.

Standing orders were reinstated (Proposed by Cllr Huxtable)

2026/025 COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS

No written county or district councillor reports were available for circulation at that point in the meeting. The Town Clerk noted that a written report from District Cllr John Downes had been received and would be issued with the minutes.

2026/026 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

Hayward's Educational Foundation: Cllr Cairney said no meeting had been held but work had been carried out to improve the appearance of the tree that had previously caused concern.

Crediton United Charities: Cllr Harris reported that Crediton United Charities continued to meet regularly to discuss confidential matters.

Twinning Association: Cllr Huxtable reported that 11 members had travelled to Avranches in mid-June for a reception and long weekend, that the visit had been very well received, and that fundraising events were being planned ahead of the return visit next year.

Boniface Link Association: Cllr Harris reported regular meetings and a programme of forthcoming events, including a barbecue the following week, with broader plans still being developed to maintain links with the other Boniface communities.

Sustainable Crediton: Cllr Backhouse said the group still wanted Mel Stride MP to lend support to calls for an emergency climate briefing on the model of the COVID-era approach, and reiterated that an open invitation remained in place to attend Crediton for a second screening of the film.

Boniface Trail Association: Cllr Fawssett stated that a January visit to County Hall had produced an indication that fuller detail would follow within 2 months, but that no update had been received despite further chasing. The Town Clerk confirmed that a letter had been sent on 10 June and no reply had yet been received.

Age Concern: Cllr Frisby confirmed that she was due to meet the manager on 21 July.

Railfuture: Cllr Huxtable confirmed that he would be attending a meeting in Exeter on the coming Thursday, with a report back to follow.

2026/027 MEMBERS' REGISTER OF INTERESTS

Decision: The Town Clerk's report on Members' Registers of Interest was received and **noted**.

2026/028 NEWCOMBES MEADOW**2026/028.1 TO CONSIDER A RESPONSE TO MDDC REGARDING STYLE OF REPLACEMENT BENCHES (19 EXISTING SEATS AND A FURTHER 6 EMPTY BASES) USING S106 FUNDS**

The Town Clerk advised that the matter had first been discussed on 4 April 2023, when members had asked for fuller information on the 25 benches involved. That information had not been supplied.

Members favoured progressing the matter quickly, particularly while the earmarked Section 106 funding remained available.

Decision: It was **resolved** to **approve** a like-for-like approach to the replacement benches at Newcombes Meadow.

2026/028.2 TO RECEIVE THE REPORT REGARDING OUTDOOR GYM EQUIPMENT AND TO CONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATIONS THEREIN

Cllr Cochran left the meeting at 20.33

Cllr Brookes-Hocking introduced the recommendation not to proceed with the outdoor gym proposal, arguing that the project had remained unresolved for many years, had never been clearly requested by residents, and had become cost-prohibitive. She recalled earlier district-level interest in placing equipment in the park while charging CTC for the land, and said the current position still reflected MDDC's project rather than a CTC priority. She also noted that a previous sports funding application had failed in part because there was no clear evidence that the scheme was actually required.

Standing Orders were suspended (Proposed by Cllr Huxtable)

During public participation on this item, a resident asked whether the results of the earlier survey could be revisited, partly to judge what weight should be given to such consultation. The Town Clerk summarised the 2017 survey results as 31 responses in total, with 11 in favour, 13 saying the location was wrong, 2 wanting no equipment, and 5 opposed altogether. She added that only one location had been identified and that the Section 106 funding could not simply be moved to a different site.

Standing Orders were reinstated (Proposed by Cllr Huxtable)

Decision: It was **resolved** not to proceed with the outdoor gym proposal for Newcombes Meadow on the grounds that it was cost-prohibitive and insufficiently justified. (Proposed by Cllr Brookes-Hocking)

2026/029 MEMBER ATTENDANCE

Decision: It was **resolved** to **approve** the Town Clerk's report on Members' Registers of Interest. (Proposed by Cllr Harris)

2026/030 MANOR OFFICE

A member of the public sought to return to points raised earlier about the project, but the Chair declined to reopen discussion under this item

Decision: The Town Clerk's report on Manor Office was **noted**.

2026/031 OLD LANDSCORE SCHOOL

Members considered the quotations for a survey and valuation of Old Landscore School. The discussion quickly narrowed to whether any new survey work was needed at all, or whether spending could be limited by commissioning only a valuation based on the existing 2021 survey information.

The Town Clerk clarified that the valuation-only option would cost £600.00, based on utilising the existing 2021 survey.

Decision: It was **resolved** to **approve** a valuation only, at a cost of £600.00. (Proposed by Cllr Brookes-Hocking)

2026/032 HIGH STREET CHRISTMAS LIGHTING

Members considered a proposal for new High Street Christmas lighting based on a quote from the existing supplier, Event Power Engineering, for a 3-year arrangement at £11,000.00 per year excluding VAT. The Town Clerk explained that the wider procurement exercise had already been carried out less than a year earlier and that the current price came in below the figures previously considered in September 2025. She also clarified that the supplier's familiarity with the existing arrangements and liabilities around street fittings was relevant to the recommendation.

Members asked about infrastructure and compliance. The Town Clerk explained that the catenary wires were inspected annually and that new infrastructure would be used rather than relying on old tree/light fittings. She added that implementation would still depend on building owner consent, electrical agreements, DCC approvals, and confirmation that suitable heights and power supplies could be achieved for each span.

Cllr Brookes-Hocking stated that Christmas lighting was expensive but remained important to the character of the town, and that expanding the cross-street lighting would make a visible difference on a High Street that was otherwise difficult to decorate effectively. Cllr Letch seconded that view, saying cost control should not come at the expense of making the town feel bleak.

Cllr Backhouse suggested that, in the longer term, members might visit other towns to look at alternative approaches and more cost-effective ideas.

Cllr Huxtable clarified that approval was being sought in principle at a maximum installation cost under the quoted terms, with additional electricity and licensing costs still separate and some reduction possible if not all proposed spans could be delivered.

Decision: It was **resolved to approve** the quote from Event Power Engineering, in principle, for a 3-year arrangement at a maximum installation cost of 11,000 pounds per year excluding VAT, subject to the necessary permissions and site constraints. (proposed by Cllr Brookes-Hocking)

2026/033 ST LAWRENCE GREEN TELEPHONE BOX

Members considered the recommendation carried forward from the earlier Community Committee discussion so that work on the listed telephone box could begin without delay.

Decision: It was **resolved to approve** Contractor C (A Gibb Painting and Decorating), as recommended by the Community Committee. (Proposed by Cllr Brookes-Hocking)

2026/034 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was **noted** that the next meeting would take place on Tuesday 1 September 2026.

2026/035 PART II

Decision: It was **resolved to approve** the exclusion of the public and press were from the meeting under section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. (Proposed by Cllr Huxtable)

The Events and Town Centre Officer left the meeting
The Lead Youth Worker joined the meeting

2026/036 YOUTH WORK STAFFING

Consideration was given to the Part II report regarding Youth Work Staffing.

Decision: It was **resolved to approve** proposal 3.1.2 as detailed with the confidential report. (Proposed by Cllr Downes)

APPENDIX

2026/037 REPORTS PACK

Signed

Dated.....