



**Minutes of the Community Committee meeting held on Tuesday, July 28, 2026 at
18:30 in Credition Library, Belle Parade, EX17 2AA**

Present: Cllrs Liz Brookes-Hocking, Jim Cairney, Guy Cochran, Giles Fawssett, Vix Frisby, Joyce Harris and Steve Huxtable

Apologies: Cllr Tim Stanford

In Attendance: 6 members of the public

Minute Taker: Emma Anderson

MINUTES

39 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Cllr Brookes-Hocking opened the meeting and members introduced themselves.

40 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair opened public question time by prioritising written questions already submitted before the meeting.

- Public Question Time is now expressly limited to matters on the agenda. However, item 50.2 is merely described as a "verbal update", with no written report or indication of what that update will contain. As "verbal updates" appear quite often, how are members of the public supposed to ask informed questions about an agenda item when the relevant information is not disclosed until after Public Question Time has ended? Will the Council either publish written updates with the agenda or allow public questions to be asked when the verbal update is actually given? The Chair explained that item 50.2 was intended only as a minimal verbal update on an ongoing project and said that, if a point later required fuller debate, the committee could consider suspending standing orders.
- The agenda states that the proposed letter was drafted by Councillor Backhouse, yet the letter is presented for signature by the Chair of this committee, without acknowledging Councillor Backhouse as its author. Why is the letter not clearly attributed to the councillor who drafted it? If it is intended to become the Council's corporate position once approved, would it not be clearer and more appropriate for it to be sent by the Town Clerk on behalf of Credition Town Council, rather than appearing to be a letter personally written by the Committee Chair? Original authorship could also become important at a later date, if it becomes the subject of a complaint or FOI request. The Chair clarified that the proposed paddling pool letter needed to be issued corporately rather than in the name of an individual councillor, as an individual councillor cannot work alone. During public question time, Cllr Backhouse (attending as a member of the public) clarified that she had wanted the paddling-pool guidance letter to come from the committee as a whole rather than from her individually.

- a) The report considers where large containers might be placed but appears to give little consideration to the practical consequences for pedestrians, drivers, businesses and maintenance. Before any locations are recommended, will the proposed group be required to obtain DCC Highways approval and assess pavement gradients, container stability, crossing sightlines, minimum unobstructed widths, wheelchair and pushchair access, underground services, loading and deliveries, watering costs and responsibility for clearing fallen leaves?
- b) As there is no mention of them in the report, will affected High Street businesses also be consulted before a tree is proposed directly outside their premises, where it could obscure their frontage or signage? The Chair confirmed consultation with Devon County Council and Mid Devon District Council had always been intended and some advice had already been received.

A member of the public then asked whether members of the public can publicly criticise or challenge a councillor's actions or decisions. The Chair explained that the question did not relate to an item on this agenda and therefore could not be dealt with under this committee. She advised that, if a formal answer was sought, the question should be submitted in writing to the relevant committee chair by noon the day before the meeting and said the matter could be discussed further with the Mayor to determine whether any committee was appropriate.

A further public question concerned the evidence or formula that was used for the proposed allotment rent increase. The Chair said she was not personally responsible for the allotment rents and could not give the formula but confirmed that this information would be provided. This question was covered further under agenda item 49 where the Deputy Clerk advised that previous increases had been informed by comparative work on other allotment sites in the area.

41 APOLOGIES

Decision: It was **resolved** to receive and accept apologies from Cllr Stanford (on holiday).
(Proposed by Cllr Brookes-Hocking)

42 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

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

There were no declarations of interest.

42.2 TO CONSIDER ANY DISPENSATION REQUESTS (REQUESTS SHOULD BE MADE TO THE TOWN CLERK PRIOR TO THE MEETING)

No dispensation requests had been received.

43 ORDER OF BUSINESS

There were no changes to the order of business.

44 CHAIR'S AND CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

45 COMMUNITY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Decision: It was **resolved** to approve the minutes of the Community Committee meeting held on 07 July 2026. (Proposed by Cllr Harris)

46 MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL PLANNING APPLICATIONS:

Members reviewed the following planning application:

26/00853/CAT | Notification of intention to crown lift to 6m mature Beech tree on the south aspect only and pollard at 3m Judas Tree within the Conservation Area | Three Corners Pounds Hill Crediton Devon EX17 1DT

Decision: It was **resolved** to recommend **NO OBJECTION**. (Proposed by Cllr Brookes-Hocking)

Task: Submit planning comments to MDDC. @Emily Armitage

47 MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL PLANNING DECISIONS:

Members **noted** the planning decisions.

48 CREDITON URBAN TASKFORCE [CUT!]

Members received and **noted** the report.

49 ALLOTMENT RENT

The committee considered the report on allotment rents for 2026-27. Members mentioned the recent and potential expenditure on troughs, wall repairs, water leaks and boundary maintenance. The Deputy Clerk explained that previous increases had included comparison work against other allotment sites in the area. Cllr Harris recalled that historic rent level had been very low. She argued that a steady annual increase of 5 per cent was preferable over imposing a sharper rise in a future year. Cllr Huxtable questioned whether an increase was necessary in light of the previous year's figures, observing that expenditure had been in the region of £3,000 while rental income had been close to £5,000.

Decision: It was **resolved** to increase the annual allotment rent for 2026-27 by 5 per cent, taking the charge from 30 pence to 31.5 pence per square metre. (Proposed by Cllr Harris)

50 NEWCOMBES MEADOW PADDLING POOL**50.1 TO CONSIDER SENDING A LETTER REGARDING PADDLING POOL GUIDANCE TO PWTAG AND HSE AND AGREE ANY ACTIONS (DRAFTED BY CLLR BACKHOUSE)**

The committee considered the draft letter prepared by Cllr Backhouse. The Chair described the purpose was to seek clearer guidance for paddling pools, on the basis that available advice was geared more towards swimming pools and did not readily address the specific circumstances of the existing paddling-pool arrangement.

Standing orders were suspended

A member of the public welcomed the draft letter and agreed that it would help create an evidence base for future decisions. He questioned how much weight should be given to Mid Devon District Council's (MDDC) views in light of local government reorganisation and raised concerns about risk, liability, and insurance. In response, the Chair advised that MDDC currently own the facility and would therefore carry present liability. It was also acknowledged that, if the town council were to take on a future facility, insurance implications would need to be considered as part of that process.

Standing orders were reinstated

Decision: It was **resolved** to send the paddling pool guidance letter to PWTAG and HSE on behalf of the whole committee. (Proposed by Cllr Fawssett)

50.2 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE ON THE NEWCOMBES MEADOW WATER PLAY CONSULTATION

The Deputy Clerk provided a verbal update on the Newcombes Meadow Water Play Consultation. Members were informed that the survey had closed on Sunday and that 696 responses had been received. The paddling pool working group are due to meet to review the results and consider how they will be presented to the Community Committee. It was also noted that Cllr Fawssett had taken the place of Cllr Frisby on the working group. Contingency costs were said to be under active investigation, and members were advised that the consultation results and associated costings would come to the next meeting. The verbal update was **noted**.

51 EAST STREET/CHARLOTTE FLORAL DISPLAYS

The committee considered the report on floral displays for the junction of East Street and Charlotte Street. Members welcomed the fact that a local resident had volunteered to look after the planters.

Decision: It was **resolved** to purchase four barrel-style planters for East Street/Charlotte Street junction at the quoted cost of £501.70 including delivery. (Proposed by Cllr Harris)

Task: Order four barrel-style planters for East Street/Charlotte junction. @Emma Anderson

52 TREES ON THE HIGH STREET

Cllr Brookes-Hocking introduced her report regarding trees on the High Street.

The discussion then widened into a debate about climate resilience, public realm improvement, and practical constraints. Cllr Fawssett strongly supported planting, arguing that hotter summers made shade increasingly necessary and that the council should be ready with deliverable proposals when funding became available. Cllr Harris remained opposed, citing the danger caused by fallen leaves, particularly in wet conditions.

It was observed that some advice had already been received from Devon County Council on factors to consider and suitable tree types. In response to concerns about leaf fall, members discussed the possibility of selecting non-deciduous species and ensuring any planting was subject to regular maintenance.

Decision: It was **resolved** to set up a High Street Tree Task & Finish Group under the remit set out in the report. (Proposed by Cllr Brookes-Hocking)

Decision: It was **resolved** to appoint Cllrs Brookes-Hocking, Fawssett, Frisby and Huxtable to the High Street Tree Task & Finish Group. (Proposed by Cllr Brookes-Hocking)

53 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the date of the next meeting would be Tuesday 15 September 2026. The meeting closed at 19.05.

54 REPORTS PACK

Signed

Dated.....