



**Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Tuesday, December 16, 2025 at 18:30 at
Crediton Library, Belle Parade, Crediton**

Present: Cllr Rachel Backhouse, Guy Cochran (part meeting), Jim Cairney, Joyce Harris, Paul Perriman, John Downes and Liz Brookes-Hocking (part meeting)

Apologies: Cllrs Steve Huxtable, Giles Fawssett, Vix Frisby and Natalia Letch

In Attendance: Cllr Luke Taylor and Stephen Walford (MDDC Leader and CEO)
3 members of the public
1 member of the press
Tim Bland, Events and Town Centre Officer

Minute Taker: Rachel Avery, Town Clerk

MINUTES

2025/338 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

In the absence of Cllrs Huxtable and Fawssett, the meeting commenced with Cllr Backhouse being nominated as Chair.

Decision: It was **resolved** to elect Cllr Backhouse as Chair of this meeting.

(Proposed by Cllr Harris)

Cllr Backhouse welcomed all in attendance and members of the council introduced themselves.

2025/339 MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL LGR PRESENTATION

Cllr Backhouse extended a warm welcome to Cllr Taylor, Leader of Mid Devon District Council, and Stephen Walford, CEO of Mid Devon District Council, who were present to deliver a presentation on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). Cllr Taylor began his presentation by providing background information about himself, his tenure, and experience in local government. He then outlined the journey and rationale behind the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), which was initiated following the government's announcement of a White Paper on LGR. The primary goal is to merge the district and county councils into a single unitary authority to streamline bureaucracy and achieve significant cost savings.

Cllr Taylor highlighted the challenges posed by Devon's rural nature and the political diversity among its district councils. He explained the criteria set by the government, which included a population threshold of no more or less than 500,000 people for the new unitary authorities. He described the collaborative efforts among district councils to propose the best solutions, leading to the 4-5-1 proposal, which divides Devon into two unitary authorities: one encompassing East Devon, Exeter, Mid Devon, North Devon, and Torridge, and the other including South Hams, Teignbridge, Torbay, and West Devon.

Cllr Cochran joined the meeting at 18.53

The presentation emphasised the importance of maintaining local representation and the potential democratic deficit that could result from the reorganisation. He highlighted the importance of local services, such as waste collection, and the need for consistency across the new unitary authorities. He also addressed the financial implications, including the collective debt that the new authorities would inherit.

Stephen Walford added that the reorganisation aims to ensure continuity of services on the first day of the new unitary authorities, with a multi-year programme for convergence and policy decisions. He emphasised the government's deliberate policy of reallocating funds from rural areas to cities in the north and Midlands, which could strain the financial position of the new councils.

Cllr Brookes-Hocking joined the meeting at 19.03

Councillors raised concerns about the potential upheaval, the reduced settlement from the government, and the impact on local services. They also discussed the challenges of asset transfers and the need for effective communication to avoid frustrations. Both MDDC representatives reassured councillors that they would manage the process and ensure smooth communication.

A member of the public inquired about the funding and management of library services post-reorganisation. Cllr Taylor advised that while specifics are yet to be determined, services like libraries would likely continue under a unified management initially before any changes are decided by the new unitary authorities.

2025/340 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The following questions were raised:

- Why did the Town Clerk decide to incur costs for legal advice on document retention when free alternatives from NALC or the ICO are available?
- When will the retention of audio recordings begin, and what assurances can be given regarding their quality and accessibility for residents?
- Why was the order of agenda items arranged as it was, and how will fairness concerns be addressed regarding the paddling pool's funding so that it does not solely burden Crediton residents?

Cllr Backhouse confirmed that the order of the agenda will be amended accordingly, subject to member approval

What consultation process will take place following the decision on paddling pool expenditure?

- How effective is CTC's budget survey in capturing neutral views, and what steps are being taken to ensure balanced feedback?

2025/341 APOLOGIES

Decision: It was **resolved** to accept apologies from Cllrs Huxtable (illness), Fawssett (illness), Frisby (illness) and Letch (holiday). (Proposed by Cllr Cochran)

2025/342 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS



2025/342.1 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.

2025/342.2 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.

2025/343 ORDER OF BUSINESS

Decision: It was resolved to discuss the budgeting survey results (Agenda Item 351.1) before the paddling pool expenditure (Agenda Item 350), as the survey results would provide relevant context for the financial decisions regarding the paddling pool. (Proposed by Cllr Backhouse)

2025/344 CHAIR'S AND CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

2025/345 TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

It was noted that the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 02 December 2025 was deferred to the next meeting due to the need for amendments.

2025/346 COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Councillor reports were provided in the agenda pack.

2025/347 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

It was suggested to defer detailed reports from outside bodies to the next meeting, given time constraints and the relatively low activity during this time of year.

2025/348 FINANCE

2025/348.1 TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE TRANSACTIONS BETWEEN 01 NOVEMBER AND 30 NOVEMBER 2025

A query was raised regarding the stall holders' payments for the Christmas event. The Town Clerk confirmed that all stall holders had paid prior to the event.

Decision: It was resolved to approve transactions between 01 November and 30 November 2025. (Proposed by Cllr Harris)

2025/348.2 TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE BANK RECONCILIATION TO 30 NOVEMBER 2025

A query was raised about the high telephone and broadband costs, which were attributed to the transition to a new system and the addition of a dedicated line for CCTV.

Decision: It was resolved to approve the bank reconciliation to 30 November 2025. (Proposed by Cllr Cochran)

2025/348.3 TO NOTE BANK BALANCES TO 30 NOVEMBER 2025

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

2025/348.4 TO NOTE YEAR TO DATE SPEND

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

2025/348.5 TO NOTE EARMARKED RESERVES BALANCES

Decision: The Earmarked Reserves balances were noted.

2025/349 GENERAL RESERVE SPENDING

Decision: It was resolved to approve the recommendation to release funds from general reserves to terminate the broadband contract. (Proposed by Cllr Harris)

2025/350 NEWCOMBES MEADOW PADDLING POOL

2025/350.1 TO REVIEW AND RATIFY THE RECOMMENDATION TO PAY £12,000.00 TO MDDC FOR THE RUNNING COSTS OF THE PADDLING POOL

There was a detailed discussion about the breakdown of costs, which included salaries and other operational expenses. Members confirmed the revised total amount for the paddling pool running costs as £17,741.55, with the £12,000.00 contribution being agreed.

Decision: It was resolved to ratify the decision to pay £12,000.00 to Mid Devon District Council for the running costs of the paddling pool in this financial year (2025/26). (Proposed by Cllr Brookes-Hocking)

2025/350.2 TO RECEIVE THE REPORT REGARDING THE FUTURE OF THE PADDLING POOL AND TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE THE RECOMMENDATIONS THEREIN

The council received the report regarding the future of the paddling pool and discussed the recommendations. Key points included the need to upgrade the pump system and install a toilet facility, using approximately £150,000.00 from Section 106 money and contributions from CTC general reserves. It was noted that MDDC have expressed willingness to match fund the shortfall, amounting to a maximum contribution of £125,000.00.00 from each authority. It was acknowledged that those living outside of Crediton would not pay for this work, but would use the facility.

There was a debate on whether to conduct a broader survey beyond just the paddling pool, including various town services, possibly using the Kirton Quarterly to be used to help with surveying on a large scale with minimal outlay and effort. It was noted that this would be discussed at a future meeting. Cllr Brookes-Hocking highlighted the importance of a paddling pool consultation as a matter of urgency, once further information is provided. Members deliberated on the importance of engaging with the public to gather their opinions and ensure their needs are met.



Decision: It was **resolved** to consider the maximum allocation from earmarked reserves (£125,000.00) based on firm costings and community consultation. (Proposed by Cllr Downes)

2025/351 BUDGET 2026/27

2025/351.1 BUDGETING SURVEY RESULTS

The council reviewed the budgeting survey results, noting the small pool of respondents and the need to enlarge the survey sample for more representative feedback. It was suggested that members should all feed into any questions posed if a survey is conducted in the next financial year. It was also suggested to conduct a broader survey, possibly delivering it to households to ensure higher participation.

2025/351.2 BUDGET 2026/27

There were discussions about specific budget items, including photocopying costs, CCTV expenses, and the Millennium Cross cleaning.

It was **noted** that a full review of the budget would take place at a meeting scheduled for Tuesday 13 January, ensuring thorough scrutiny before finalising the budget.

2025/352 DOCUMENT RETENTION

Decision: It was **resolved** to defer this item to a relevant meeting in January due to time constraints. (Proposed by Cllr Backhouse)

2025/353 POLICY REVIEW

Decision: It was **resolved** to defer this item to a relevant meeting in January due to time constraints. (Proposed by Cllr Backhouse)

2025/354 STANDING ORDERS

Decision: It was **resolved** to defer this item to a relevant meeting in January due to time constraints. (Proposed by Cllr Backhouse)

2025/355 CCTV MONITORING TRANSFER TO EXETER CITY COUNCIL

Decision: It was **resolved** to defer this item to a relevant meeting in January due to time constraints. (Proposed by Cllr Backhouse)

2025/356 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The council noted that the date of the next meeting will be Tuesday, 06 January 2026.

The meeting was closed at 20.34.

2025/357 REPORTS PACK

Signed.....

Dated..... 6 Jan 26.....