

**Minutes of the Full Council Meeting of the Town Council on Monday 12 January
2026 at 7.00pm**

Present

St Michael's Ward

Cllr S Atherton
Cllr M Baldock
Cllr C Doran
Cllr J Fotheringham
Cllr R Fowles
Cllr C Maunder
Cllr R Sexton
Cllr L Wakefield

St Paul's Ward

Cllr S Craddock
Cllr D Hayler
Cllr C Kolek
Cllr A Pearsall (Chair)
Cllr S Sexton
Cllr J Taylor
Cllr H Turner

In attendance

Stephen Hill, Town Clerk
Heloise Marlow, Deputy Town Clerk
Cllr R Jefferies (DCC)
Cllr R Collins (EDDC)
3 Members of the public
2 Members of the public via Zoom
Cllr R Coombs via Zoom

25/198 Apologies for absence

Cllr R Coombs (personal)
Cllr S Thorne (personal)
Cllr M Sheen (personal)

25/199 Declarations of Interests

Cllr C Kolek – Pecuniary Interest (Item 25/220 and 25/221)
Cllr R Sexton – Personal Interest (Item 25/220 and 25/221)
Cllr S Sexton - Personal Interest (Item 25/220 and 25/221)

25/200 Dispensations

The Town Clerk confirmed he had granted Cllr Kolek a dispensation in relation to items 25/220 and 25/221 which allowed Cllr Kolek to remain in the meeting whilst these agenda items were being discussed, contribute to the debate but would prevent her from voting.

25/201 Public Question Time for items on the agenda

None received.

25/202 Reports from District and County Councillors

Cllr R Jefferies provided the [attached report](#).

Cllr Taylor queried the effect LGR would have on precepts and lead to the loss of the equalising tier of local government (“EDDC”).

Cllr R Jefferies left the meeting at 19:15pm

Cllr Collins advised as follows:

- Had voted against LGR at EDDC meetings.
- The cancellation of elections was an affront to democracy.
- Central government had stopped the funding for Neighbourhood Plans. Whilst EDDC had no funds to provide to Councils, EDDC still wished to support and provide advice to Councils and had retained Angela King as the Neighbourhood Plan officer and could provide small grants to Councils.

Cllr Kolek raise the issue of EDDC Cllrs not resigning when they no longer resided in the County.

Cllr Collins confirmed that EDDC Cllrs could remain on the Council by either attending one meeting within a 6-month period or if EDDC granted a dispensation. A Councillor cannot be forced to attend meetings.

The Town Clerk confirmed that it was for EDDC to apply the law, but that Honiton Town Council could consider at a future meeting the representation of Honiton at EDDC and what action it wished to take.

Cllr Collins advised that Honiton had no representation on EDDC’s Planning Committee. He has to request special permission to speak at meetings but is not able to vote. He urged Honiton Town Council to write to EDDC and urged Cllrs to write personally also.

25/202 Reports from Honiton Town Council Members with Special Responsibilities and/or on Outside Bodies

Cllr J Fotheringham provided a report on Operation Rudolph.

25/203 Reports and Recommendations from Working Groups and Meetings.

The Town Clerk suggested that there were no recommendations to approve arising from either the Maintenance Working Group or the Low Carbon Working Group. The reports were noted.

Cllr Fotheringham advised that the Footpath Working Group had arranged an inspection on 21st January 2026 to identify and prioritise work needed with HTC Maintenance.

The Town Clerk advised that the HCC/HTC Review Meeting had taken place 11.12.25 and had discussed the following:

- Changing Places facility
- Air conditioning in the JLA
- Dilapidations
- TOR for the Working Group
- Management of the lease, SMART targets and financial contributions.

Cllr Fowles queried whether HCC was looking at air conditioning in the JLA as the Beehive Working Group is looking at the air handling unit and whether cold air could be pumped into the JLA.

The Town Clerk confirmed that air conditioning was discussed at the HTC/HCC Review meeting, but no decision had been made.

25/204 Correspondence: 4th December 2025 – 6th January 2026

Members **NOTED** the item. The Town Clerk confirmed that one item of correspondence had been received and would be considered by the Town Management Committee meeting on 2nd February.

25/205 Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 8 December 2025

Members RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the Full Council meeting on the 8 December 2025

Proposed by Cllr Fowles and seconded by Cllr Fotheringham

For 9; Against 0; Abstentions 6.

25/206 Minutes of Previous Meetings

Members **NOTED** the item.

25/207 Membership of Committees and Working Groups

Cllrs R and S Sexton requested to join the Appeals Committee and the Transitional Committee.

Cllr R Fowles resigned as HTC representative for TRIP.

Cllr Fotheringham suggested that Charter Day should be removed as an Outside Body and confirmed that she would be declaring a pecuniary interest in Charter Day due to her company's involvement with the website.

The Town Clerk agreed that Charter Day be removed as an Outside Body and advised that a Cllr would be needed to assist with the contract management with Tonic Creatives.

Cllr Pearsall resigned from the Allotment Working Group and the Beehive Low Carbon Working Group.

Members RESOLVED unanimously to make the changes above.

Proposed by Cllr Kolek and seconded by Cllr S Sexton

Cllr Wakefield requested that the Strategy Committee start time be amended to 7pm from April 2026 onwards

Members RESOLVED to approve the draft Committee dates 26/27.

Proposed by Cllr Craddock and seconded by Cllr Wakefield

For 14; Against 1; Abstentions 0

25/208 Transitional Committee

Members RESOLVED elected Cllrs R Sexton, S Sexton, Taylor, Craddock, Doran, Wakefield and Pearsall to be on the Transitional Committee

Proposed by Cllr Wakefield and seconded by Cllr Kolek

For 14; Against 1; Abstentions 0

- 25/209 Appeals Committee**
Members RESOLVED to elect Cllrs R Sexton, S Sexton, Atherton, Fowles, Pearsall and Wakefield to be on the Appeals Committee
Proposed by Cllr S Sexton and seconded by Cllr Craddock
For 13; Against 1; Abstentions 1
- 25/210 Council Responses to Public Questions**
Members NOTED that Council will respond to Public Questions Time at/or after Full Council/Committees and RESOLVED unanimously to Delegate to the Town Clerk to respond on behalf of the Council (in consultation with Council Chairman, Deputy and/or relevant Committee).
Proposed by Cllr Craddock and seconded by Cllr R Sexton.
- 25/211 Away Day 10.11.25 New Priority Projects**
Cllr Fotheringham queried why the Away Day's facilitator's recommendation to assign projects as being medium/low etc had not been applied? Cllr Fotheringham also queried the proposal to have 3 lead Cllrs for each project and suggested that there were insufficient Cllrs to apply this.
The Town Clerk confirmed that the SET Committee had decided not to apply the labelling of projects suggested by the Away Day facilitator and had decided to recommend that more than 1 and up to 3 Cllrs be assigned to each project with Cllrs being able to overlap on differing projects.
Cllr Fotheringham questioned the practicality of Cllrs taking on more than 1 project especially working Cllrs, timescales involved and staff capacity.
Members RESOLVED to approve a revised list of Priority Projects: Sports, Youth Council, Market Improvements, Town Centre Regeneration/Experience, Tourist Information, Beehive Low Carbon and Communications.
Proposed by Cllr R Sexton and seconded by Cllr Fowles
For 11; Against 1 (Cllr J Taylor); Abstentions 3
- 25/212 Draft Biodiversity Policy**
Cllrs Kolek and R Sexton spoke in support of the policy but queried how the policy would be applied and monitored.
The Town Clerk confirmed that the Council's committees would need to implement and monitor the policy unless Councillors wished to reinstate the Climate Emergency Working Group which had been disbanded.
Cllr Kolek and Cllr S Sexton spoke in favour of reinstating the Climate Emergency Working Group. Cllr Fotheringham spoke against.
Cllr Kolek proposed that the Climate Emergency Working Group be reinstated and this was seconded by Cllr S Sexton.
For 6; Against 7; Abstentions 2
The proposal failed.
Members RESOLVED to approve the Biodiversity Policy.
Proposed by Cllr Kolek and seconded by Cllr Fowles
For 10; Against 4; Abstentions 1

25/213 Draft Dignity at Work Policy

The Town Clerk advised that this would bring together the Council's existing harassment and bullying together and was the model NALC policy tailored to Honiton Town Council.

The policy together with the Biodiversity Policy were part of the NALC criteria for the Silver Award applied for.

Cllr Fowles and Cllr R Sexton advised that they had some queries regarding the draft policy

Members discussed deferring approval of the policy for queries to be resolved and for the policy to go to the HR Committee meeting on 19.1.26

Members RESOLVED to defer approval of the draft Dignity at Work policy to the HR Committee meeting on 19.1.26

Proposed by Cllr Fotheringham and seconded by Cllr R Sexton

For 12; Against 2; Abstentions 1

25/214 Application for NALC Silver

Members **NOTED** that an application had been submitted 5.1.26 to NALC for the Silver Quality: Local Council Award Scheme.

25/215 Further Regulation 19 Local Plan Consultation

Mr Lees spoke against the inclusion of Honi_18 as a development site in the new EDDC Local Plan citing concerns regarding loss of wildlife, road safety, lack of infrastructure and water report. He had been advised by the Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee Cllr T Olive that EDDC would not grant planning permission for housing until SWW had delivered the infrastructure needed to accept the flows from new developments.

Cllr R Collins (EDDC) confirmed that he had attended the Strategic Planning Committee meeting but had not been allowed to speak as Honi_18 was not in his ward. There were no Honiton EDDC Cllrs on the Strategic Planning Committee. He suggested that HTC Cllrs watch the YouTube recording of the SPC meeting and confirmed that he opposed the inclusion of Honi_18 as a development site.

Cllr R Sexton noted that HTC was a consultee in the planning process with EDDC the decision maker. He agreed that the current infrastructure would not be able to cope with the additional demands from proposed housing.

Cllr Pearsall offered to speak with Mr Lees outside the meeting to share his experience on the A35 Parishes Group.

The Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that the current consultation was the last consultation EDDC would undertake. The Town Clerk advised against a legal challenge to the draft Local Plan.

Members RESOLVED unanimously to support the Planning Committee's comments on the further Regulation 19 Local Plan consultation.

Proposed by Cllr Craddock and seconded by Cllr Kolek

25/216 Devon Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

Cllr Hayler asked whether there was any further detail regarding the Honiton Wildlife areas which has been listed for transfer? The Town Clerk confirmed that there was no further detail at this stage.

Cllr Fotheringham noted that EDDC had failed to meet its own deadline for providing further detail and queried whether EDDC had the capacity to deliver and spoke in favour of a phased transfer of assets.

Cllr Pearsall was of the view that waiting until the new Unitary Authority was in place would lead to assets falling into disrepair.

Cllr Craddock was of the view that funds would be needed to support any asset transfer as many would require significant funding such as The Glen. He and Cllr R Sexton agreed that the new Transitional Committee would be able to review the asset transfers in detail prior to Full Council completing on any transfer.

Members NOTED progress and RESOLVED a short list of assets/services for transfer from EDDC to the Town Council.

Proposed by Cllr R Sexton and seconded by Cllr Doran

For 13; Against 2; Abstentions 0

25/217 Sports Allocations S106 and HTC Sports Funds

Cllr Craddock queried whether the figures in the report were the same as those agreed by the Working Group.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the Cricket Club is looking at other sources of funding and the HCC Ted Wragg Trust is currently unable to confirm the amount requested. Payment would be made to the other Sports Club in the meantime.

a) Members RESOLVED to recommend to EDDC allocation of S106 contributions to projects

Proposed by Cllr Pearsall and seconded by Cllr Fotheringham.

For 11; Against 0; Abstentions 4

b) Members RESOLVED unanimously to approve spend of Council sports fund Earmarked Reserve and budget.

Proposed by Cllr Pearsall and seconded by Cllr Craddock

25/218 Budget Consultation

Council **NOTED** the feedback to the Budget Consultation, which was reported to Finance & Policy Committee 15th December 2025

25/219 Extension of meeting

Members RESOLVED to extend the meeting to 10pm

Proposed by Cllr Wakefield and seconded by Cllr Craddock

For 14; Against 1; Abstentions 0

Cllr M Baldock left the meeting at 20.56pm

25/220 Budget 26/27 Report

Cllr Fotheringham provided the [attached report](#).

Cllr R Sexton queried the budget for works to the Dowell Street corner wall. The Town Clerk confirmed that there was £50k in earmarked reserves, £5k remaining from the 25/26 budget and a proposed £20k in the 2026/27 budget, totalling £75k.

a) Members RESOLVED to approve budget lines 4405/4410/4414/4430/4460/Low Carbon Beehive.

Proposed by Cllr Craddock and seconded by Cllr Fowles

For 10; Against 1 (Cllr J Taylor) Abstentions 3 (Cllrs Fotheringham, Kolek and R Sexton)

Cllr Fotheringham queried budget line 4270 and argued that with the list of assets sought from EDDC reduced to 7, the budget line should be reduced accordingly to £42k and spoke against the proposed budget increase.

Cllr Pearsall argued that the draft budget of £120k should be maintained as here would be other costs involved with LGR.

Cllr Doran queried whether there was national government support to assist with the costs of LGR and the proposed increase in reserves.

The Town Clerk referenced NALC precept 25/26 report and confirmed that other Councils were also increasing their budgets.

Cllr Pearsall advised that the current reserves were low and needed to be increased to cover 3 – 6 months running costs.

Cllr Taylor spoke against the proposed increase in reserves arguing that the Council only had to have reserves sufficient to cover contractual obligations.

Cllr Fotheringham requested a recorded vote.

Members RESOLVED the Council's 26/27 Budget at £1,051,545.00.

Proposed by Cllr Pearsall and seconded by Cllr S Sexton

For: Cllrs S Sexton, Hayler, Maunder, Fowles, Atherton, Turner, Wakefield, Pearsall (8)

Against: Cllrs R Sexton, Fotheringham and Taylor (3)

Abstentions: Cllr Doran, Craddock and Kolek (3)

b) Members RESOLVED the Precept 26/27 at £1,000,645.00

Proposed by Cllr Wakefield and seconded by Cllr S Sexton

For: Cllrs S Sexton, Hayler, Maunder, Fowles, Atherton, Turner, Wakefield, Pearsall.

Against: Cllrs Fotheringham and Taylor.

Abstentions: Cllrs R Sexton, Doran, Craddock and Kolek.

Cllr J Fotheringham left the meeting at 21.30pm

25/221 Accounts

Members RESOLVED to approve payments HTC 21404, 21420, 21421, 21423 and 21426.

Proposed by Cllr Craddock and seconded by Cllr S Sexton

For: 11. Against 1, Abstentions 1

Members RESOLVED to approve the remainder of the schedule of accounts for December 2025 payments

Proposed by Cllr Craddock and seconded by Cllr S Sexton

For: 11; Against 1 (Cllr J Taylor); Abstentions; 1

25/222 Exempt Business

Members RESOLVED unanimously to take the following items into exempt business.

Proposed by Cllr Craddock and seconded by Cllr R Sexton

25/223 Dowell Street Retaining Wall: Tenders

a) Members RESOLVED that negotiations commence with contractors to enable them to complete a Tender, award the contract and complete the JCT Contract.

Proposed by Cllr S Sexton and seconded by Cllr Craddock

For 12; Against: 1; Abstentions 0

b) Members RESOLVED that Delegated Authority be given to the Town Management Committee to complete those negotiations, tender and award the contract.

Proposed by Cllr R Sexton and seconded by Cllr Pearsall

For: 12; Against 1; Abstentions 0

25/223 To close the meeting

The meeting closed at 20.40pm.