HONITON TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Full Council Meeting of the Town Council on Monday 8 June 2026 at 7.00pm**

**Present**

**St Michael's Ward**
Cllr C Doran
Cllr R Fowles
Cllr C Maunder
Cllr R Sexton
Cllr J Wilson
Cllr R Wallis

**St Paul's Ward**
Cllr D Hayler
Cllr S Sexton
Cllr J Taylor

**In attendance**
Stephen Hill, Town Clerk
Heloise Marlow, Deputy Town Clerk
Cllr R Collins (EDDC)
Cllr R Jefferies (DCC)
7 Members of the Public

**26/50 Apologies for absence**
Cllr R Coombs (personal)
Cllr S Atherton (personal)
Cllr M Baldock(personal)
Cllr S Craddock (personal)
Cllr C Kolek (personal)
Cllr S Thorne (personal)

**26/51 Declarations of Interests**
None

**26/52 Dispensations**
None

**26/53 Public Question Time for items on the agenda**
None received.

**26/54 Co-option**
Council received presentations from:

- Steve Keene
- Jadie Larcombe
- Gordon Martin

All three left the meeting at 19.25pm

**<u>Members RESOLVED to co-opt Mr Steve Keene and Ms Jadie Larcombe for the vacant seats in St Paul's Ward in line with the Council's co-option policy.</u>**

Cllr Larcombe returned to the meeting at 19.30, signed her Declaration of Office and joined the meeting
Cllr Keene gave his apologies and left the meeting.

**26/55 Reports from District and County Councillors**

Cllr Jefferies presented the attached report.

Cllr R Fowles queried the figures provided regarding highways maintenance. Cllr Jefferies confirmed that whist the funding allocated should reduce the pressure, additional government funding was required.

Cllr Taylor queried whether the extra weight of EV's had been considered.

Cllr Jefferies advised that it was HGVs and larger vehicles that caused the most damage to the roads.

Cllr Wallis asked what plans DCC had to engage with Town Council once the decision on LGR, expected in mid-July, had been announced.

Cllr Jefferies confirmed that there was a DCC information event on 22nd June. He had no information regarding DCC's plans post decision.

Cllr Collins thanked the Mayor for his invite to the recent Mayor Making event. He had attended 5 EDDC meetings over the last month. EDDC's Planning Committee meeting on 9th June 2026 would be considering the application for a care home at Honiton Bottom Road

Cllr Wallis queried what responses to the planning application Cllr Collins had received and whether they were positive or negative.

Cllr Collins responded as follows:

- he had not received any positive feedback from members of the public.
- the comments he had provided to EDDC were not included in the Planning Officer's report to the EDDC Planning Committee.
- he had concerns regarding the structural impact on nearby residents' houses which already have cracks in their walls, and any pile driving would exacerbate the problems.
- The site was given to Honiton Town. Devon County Council built Littletown School and then Millwater School. The site had a covenant but in 2023 Devon County Council had the covenant removed allowing the original landowners to receive a percentage of the proceeds of sale.
- This was another Honiton community asset lost.
- He had spoken against the site being allocated for housing as part of the EDDC Local Plan.

**26/56 Reports from Honiton Town Council Members with Special Responsibilities and/or on Outside Bodies**

Cllr S Sexton confirmed that she had attended:

- the Citizens Advice meeting on 8.6.26 with Cllr Thorne.
- Honiton Carers meeting
- TRIP meeting

Cllr R Sexton confirmed that he had attended the first meeting of the Honiton Centre Management Board, renamed “Love Honiton” at which a number of projects and ideas were discussed, to include weeding of the High Street.

**26/57 Reports and Recommendations from Working Groups and Meetings.**

The reports were **NOTED**.

**26/58 Correspondence: 8th May 2026 – 6th June 2026**

Members **NOTED** the item.

**26/59 Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 11th May 2026**

Cllr Wallis: Paragraph 26/13 to be amended to record that he had been co-opted to a vacant seat in St Michaels Ward.

Cllr Fowles requested that Mr S Bonnetta be added to the membership of the Beehive Low Carbon Working Group. This had not been requested at the meeting on the 11th of May but could be actioned under item 26/61.

Cllr Wilson advised that he had not volunteered to be a Council representative for the Honiton Hospital & Community League of Friends.

Cllr R Sexton queried why the Subscriptions list was not on the agenda further to item 26/27. The Town Clerk confirmed that due to staff annual leave, the list had yet to be updated and instead would be brought to Member in July.

**Members RESOLVED to approve the minutes of Full Council 11th May 2026 subject to the above amendments**

**Proposed by Cllr Wallis and seconded by Cllr Wilson**

For 7; Against 0; Abstentions 3.

**26/60 Minutes of Previous Meetings**

Members **NOTED** the item.

**26/61 Membership of Committees and Working Groups**

Cllr Fowles proposed that Mr Shaun Bonetta be added to the Beehive Low Carbon Working Group membership.

Cllr Wallis volunteered for the Youth Council Working Group.

Cllr S Sexton proposed that Cllr Thorne be added as a Council representative for Citizens Advice East Devon and Honiton United Charities.

**Members RESOLVED to make the changes above.**

**Proposed by Cllr R Sexton and seconded by Cllr Wallis.**

For 9; Against 0; Abstentions 1

**26/62 Employment Policies**

Cllr Wallis queried whether the General Information should be updated to reflect the new HMRC mileage allowance of 55p per mile.

Cllr Fowles suggested that the wording should be changed to allow for the mileage allowance to be in line with HMRC guidelines rather than a specific rate.

**Members RESOLVED to approve the Employment Policies as previously reviewed, approved and recommended by HR Committee April 2026.**

**Proposed by Cllr Fowles and seconded by Cllr Doran**

For 8 Against 0; Abstentions 2

**26/63 Arrangements: Vacancy, Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)**

Cllr Taylor raised the following points:

- 14d HR Committee to Decide upon preferred permanent Town Clerk, RFO or other role/s when it should be a recommendation to Full Council to make the decision.
- The vacancy should be advertised publicly.
- Any appointment must be confirmed by Full Council.

Cllr S Sexton confirmed that Full Council would confirm any appointment and the recruitment process would be public. The HR Committee would merely make a recommendation to Full Council.

Members discussed the following:

- Confidentiality of applications.
- Practice to have an appointment panel which would make recommendations to Full Council.
- Public recruitment process.

**Members RESOLVED a. to setting an Earmarked Reserve of £2k for recruitment and up to £30k for temporary appointment of a locum Officer/s and any acting up compensation (alternatively costs are balanced by savings on staff salary budget 26/27).**

**Proposed by Cllr Wallis and seconded by Cllr Doran**

For 9; Against 0; Abstentions 1

**Members RESOLVED to**

**b. Confirm the temporary acting up appointment of the Deputy Town Clerk as Interim Town Clerk & RFO.**

**c. Delegate to the HR Committee to make HR arrangements for the intervening period eg line management, acting up, Delegation and compensation salary**

**d. Delegate to the HR Committee to recommend to Full Council upon preferred permanent Town Clerk, RFO or other role/s.**

**e. Delegate to the HR Committee to make arrangements for recruitment to post/s, including information pack/s, advertisement/s, interviews.**

**Recommendations to Full Council, conditional offer/s (subject to Full Council appointment); and**
**f. Delegate to the Deputy Town Clerk/Interim Town Clerk & RFO (in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy of HR Committee) to appoint temporary locum Officer/s.**
**Proposed by Cllr Doran and seconded by Cllr R Sexton**
For 8; Against 1 (Cllr J Taylor); Abstention1.

**26/64 Beehive Low Carbon Project Implementation Plan (PIP).**
Cllr Fowles confirmed that this had been discussed at the last Beehive Low Carbon Working Group meeting and there had been no comments.
Cllr Taylor queried whether HTC were subsidising a third party not registered for VAT with HTC claiming back the VAT and if HTC's auditor had been notified?
Cllr S Sexton noted that under the new lease HCC was responsible for some maintenance and HTC responsible for purchase of equipment.
Cllr Fowles confirmed that no equipment was due to be purchased, with existing equipment leased by ECO (a VAT exempt Charity). The reference to BMS in the PIP relating to a sensor which operates the heating; reducing CO2 used at the Beehive would be measured by a CO2 meter and reduction in complaints will be measured by a reduction in ticket refunds.
**Members RESOLVED to approve the Beehive Low Carbon PIP**
**Proposed by Cllr Doran and seconded by Cllr Fowles**
For 8; Against 1 (Cllr J Taylor); Abstentions 1.

**26/65 Solar Panels Legal Agreements**
Cllr Fowles confirmed that the original lease between ECO and HTC had expired and the current lease was between HTC and ECO. ECO wish to extend the power purchase agreement at 9p per unit. If the PPA is changed the unit charge increases to 18p per unit.
**Members RESOLVED to approve appointment of a solicitor (costs from the Beehive low carbon £31k, 26/27 budget) to advise and prepare any draft new/extended/replacement agreements that may be needed to regularise Beehive solar panel agreements eg lease and Power Purchase Agreement.**
**Proposed by Cllr Doran and seconded by Cllr Fowles**
For 8. Against 1 (Cllr J Taylor); Abstentions 1.

Cllr Taylor left the meeting at 20.43pm and returned at 20.47pm

**26/66 Gate to Plate: Eat Festivals**
The Deputy Clerk confirmed that the new agreements contained a flat rate annual fee of £2850pa.

Cllr R Sexton spoke in favour of the event but recognised that some shop owners opposed it. The Deputy Clerk confirmed that she would circulate to Members the email received from Eat Festivals which addressed those concerns.

**Members RESOLVED to:**

a) **Continue Gate to Plate**

**Proposed by Cllr Taylor and seconded by Cllr Wallis**

For 7; Against 0; Abstentions 3

Members discussed whether to enter into a 3 year contract or a rolling contract with Eat Festivals:

- Gate to Plate was a legacy event from the current King's visit to Honiton.
- Food festival celebrating local farming/produce.
- Tourism was one of HTC's priorities.
- Draft agreements prohibited Honiton Town Council from delivering or commissioning another party to deliver a food and drink festival in Honiton.

b) **Enter a new ongoing contract with Eat Festivals for Gate to Plate events**

**Proposed by Cllr S Sexton and seconded by Cllr Maunder**

For 6; Against 2; Abstentions 2

**26/67 Extension of Meeting**

**Members RESOLVED to extend the meeting to 9.30pm.**

**Proposed by Cllr R Sexton and seconded by Cllr Wallis**

For 8; Against 1; Abstentions 1

Cllr J Larcombe left the meeting at 9pm.

**26/68 Earmarked Reserves (EMR)**

Cllr S Sexton suggested that the £5k Youth Council EMR be reduced to £2k with the balance of £3k allocated to Youth grants instead.

Cllr Taylor spoke against the creation of a Youth Council. Cllr S Sexton spoke in favour.

**Members RESOLVED to reduce the Youth Council EMR from £5k to £2k, add £25k to Dowell Street wall EMR, £30k EMR for temporary employment of support, £7.5 CIL EMR, £8.5K Beehive Maintenance EMR and £5k new website EMR.**

**Proposed by Cllr Maunder and seconded by Cllr Fowles.**

For 8, Against 1 (Cllr J Taylor).

**26/69 Q4 25/26 Financial Report**

Council **NOTED** the

a) 2025/26 financial report; and
b) Reconciliation of accounts to end March 2026 – Current, Nationwide & Savings Account.

**26/70 Annual Governance & Accountability Report (AGAR) 2025/26**

Cllr Taylor spoke against approving the AGAR 2025/26 for unspecified reasons.

a. **Members RESOLVED to approve Section 1: Annual Governance Statement 2025/26**

**Proposed by Cllr R Sexton and seconded by Cllr Fowles.**

For 6; Against 1 (Cllr J Taylor); Abstentions 2

b. **Members RESOLVED to approve Section 2: Accounting Statement 2025/26.**

**Proposed by Cllr S Sexton and seconded by Cllr Fowles**

For 7; Against 1 (Cllr J Taylor); Abstentions 1

The date of announcement was 15th June 2026, commencing 22nd June 2026 until 31st July 2026.

**26/71 Accounts**

The Town Clerk presented 3 further invoices for approval:

a) IAC Audit and Consultancy – Internal Year End Audit 25-26 £474.00
b) CV Photography – Mayor Making 2026 - £100
c) Riverside Plant Nurseries – Hanging Baskets and Plants - £2,386.50

**Members RESOLVED unanimously to approve the schedule of payments for May 2026 and the additional 3 invoices as listed above.**

**Proposed by Cllr S Sexton and seconded by Cllr Maunder**

Cllr J Taylor left the meeting at 21.26

**26/72 Exempt Business**

**Members RESOLVED unanimously to take the following item into exempt business.**

**Proposed by Cllr Wallis and seconded by Cllr R Sexton**

**26/73 Appointment of Communications Officer**

**Members RESOLVED unanimously the appointment of a Communications Officer.**

**Proposed by Cllr R Sexton and seconded by Cllr Fowles.**

**26/74 Annual Leave 25/26 and Carry Over to 26/27**

Members **NOTED** annual leave 25/26 and **RESOLVED unanimously to approve arrangements for pay/carry over to 26/27 to be Delegated to the Town Clerk (in consultation with the Council Chairman and Deputy).**

**Proposed by Cllr Doran and seconded by Cllr Wallis.**

**26/75 To close the meeting**

The meeting closed at 9:35pm.

**Signed Chair** **13th July 2026**