

MINUTES of the Meeting of the **BUDGET & POLICY COMMITTEE** held on **TUESDAY 21st OCTOBER, 2025 at 6.30pm** at the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, DRAKE ROAD, TAVISTOCK**

PRESENT

Councillor Mrs A Johnson	Chairman & Deputy Mayor (ex-officio)
Councillor J Moody	Vice Chairman (in the Chair)

Councillor S Hipsey	Mayor (ex-officio)
Councillor P Ward	Immediate past Mayor (ex-officio)

Councillor B Smith

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk, General Manager, Office and Finance Manager

163. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for Absence had been received from Councillors Mrs M Ewings and R Poppe.

164. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED THAT the Minutes of the Meeting of the Budget & Policy Committee held on Tuesday 2nd September, 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman (Appendix 1).

165. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made at this point in the Meeting.

ITEMS CIRCULATED FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

166. WHITCHURCH DOWN MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Committee received and considered the Draft Whitchurch Down Management Plan 2025-30 (Appendix 2) as considered and endorsed by the Whitchurch Down Consultative Group at its recent Meeting.

In the ensuing discussion:

- The breadth, format and content of the document was commended;
- It was noted that a small number of minor amendments, as yet unincorporated, had been suggested by the Consultative Group.

RECOMMENDED THAT subject to the incorporation of the amendments as suggested by the Consultative Group (see supplementary addendum

below) Tavistock Town Council endorse and adopt the Whitchurch Down Management Plan 2025-30.

Supplementary Addendum

- *Page 3, addition of –"cricket"*
- *Page 10 – amendment to 'air cadets' in place of 'army cadets'*
- *References page – deletion of duplicate references.*

167. FORD STREET & MAYNARD ALMSHOUSE CHARITY

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk (Appendix 3) in connection with the above and pursuant to a request from the organisation concerned in order to facilitate a change of status to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

In the ensuing discussion particular reference was made to the work of the Charity, background/history, nominating role of the Town Council, benefits of a CIO structure (including regarding contracting arrangements, managing liability and more streamlined operations). The Council at present appointed two Trustees and had been afforded the opportunity to indicate whether, under the new structure, it wished to request that arrangement to continue.

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council:

- a) Agree the request as submitted;
- b) Indicate it wished to request a right to continue to appoint trustees to the new CIO.

ITEMS CIRCULATED FOR INFORMATION ONLY

168. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION & DEVOLUTION

It was reported that an Officer Meeting had been held recently with the Borough Council to outline areas of concern/priority on behalf of the Town to help inform next steps and, if at all possible, protect critical community assets and infrastructure in a new local government landscape.

In particular reference had been made to the importance of ensuring robust future proof arrangements for the continuance of critical local strategic assets (presently) under the control of the principal authority after local government reorganisation including:

- a) Recreation (outdoor) – the Crowndale Playing Fields (more information sought);
- b) Transport – the Bus Station (consideration of arrangements to protect the asset had been requested);
- c) Recreation (indoor) – Meadowlands and associated contractual arrangements;
- d) Culture – The Wharf and Car Park.

It was acknowledged it was unlikely that the Borough Council would be in a position to comment further prior to the November deadline for reorganisation submissions to Government. However, the Committee noted and endorsed the importance of the foregoing infrastructure assets to the wellbeing of the town.

169. URGENT MATTERS BROUGHT FORWARD AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN

In view of the timelines associated with the following the Chairman agreed to take the following items, for information only, at this point in the Meeting.

a) LIBRARIES IN DEVON

The Committee noted a consultation being undertaken by Devon County Council on the future of the Library Service in view of funding challenges ([Residents to be asked for their views on the future of Devon's library service - News](#) refers) and referenced the importance of libraries as safe spaces for learning, development, skills and support. It was not clear at the present time whether there was either a risk to the service locally or a potential financial implication for the Council (and if so of what quantum).

b) AUDIT 2024-2025

It was noted the External Auditor had failed to report on the Council's finances in accordance with the allocated deadline (30th September).

Preliminary correspondence indicated that the only matter anticipated to arise was a figure of £500 which, in the view of the External Auditor, had been mis-posted arising from a timing issue relating to bank clearance of card payments as at year end.

c) TOIL

Work was being undertaken on various staffing policies. However, at present the Council did yet not have a policy in respect of time off in lieu (toil) which addressed the position when an employee gave notice and toil had already been accrued. In the meantime it was suggested to, and endorsed by, the Committee that subject to manager and Clerks consent up to one weeks toil could be paid on termination of employment. Requests for any more/different would be brought to the Committee and Council for decision if/as appropriate.

d) APPOINTMENTS

The Committee received and welcomed notice of appointments to the roles of Office and Finance Manager and Town Hall & Events Manager.

e) ABBEY REMAINS PROJECT – FUNDING PROGRESS

The General Manager provided an update in connection with the above, most especially:

- i) Receipt of confirmation of a grant in the sum of £195,449 from Historic England; and
- ii) Preliminary discussions with National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) regarding an imminent resubmission, with minor amendments/enhancements, now match funding was in place which gave grounds for cautious optimism.

The Committee welcomed the funding award received and the collaborative work being undertaken with both funder and Tavistock Heritage Trust in connection with the upcoming application to NLHF.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

170. PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and having regard to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted it was:-

RESOLVED THAT the press and public be excluded from the Meeting for the following items of business.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

171. GOOSE FAIR 2025 & BEYOND

(**CONFIDENTIAL** - by virtue of relating to matters of a legal, financial, staffing or contractual nature and/or affecting persons other than the Council).

The Committee was provided with an oral update from the General Manager with particular regard to issues arising from a temporary demise to the Council and the associated constraints imposed by the landlord. These were inconsistent both with normal event practice and placed a disproportionate and excessive strain on event delivery. It was presently unclear to what extent, if any, this was a reflection of changed personnel/a lack of event understanding, or a change in organisational approach.

The Council had throughout sought to work collaboratively on the matter but, unless there were a change in approach to better reflect recognised

event delivery standards - as well as both the legal and insurance positions, it was unlikely that taking a future licence (which in principle would serve to assist the other party in any event), would be either sensible or sustainable. It was very much to be hoped that going forward the level of co-working already evidenced in other aspects of the event with the other party could be reproduced in this regard.

The importance of Goose Fair to the Town was acknowledged, alongside the value (and dependence) contingent on an informed and constructive collaboration between the core partners, most especially local government in the town at both tiers, and the Showmen and Traders, on whom it was dependent for its success.

Noted That: the active collaboration of Castlebridge School in its first year was reported and welcomed.

172. GUILDHALL VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE (LICENCE TO OCCUPY)

(**CONFIDENTIAL** - by virtue of relating to matters of a legal, financial, staffing or contractual nature and/or affecting persons other than the Council).

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk in connection with the above (Appendix 4). The operation of the current arrangement was welcomed and an indication from the licensee that it supported the proposal was noted.

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council offer THT a new licence, on comparable terms to the current, for the identified premises to run from 31st March, 2026 - 31st March, 2028.

Noted That: the Committee noted the duration was unaffected by the current Local Government Reorganisation timetable and reflected an appropriate arrangement for the premises/activity in the circumstances.

173. TENANCY MATTERS

(**CONFIDENTIAL** - by virtue of relating to matters of a legal, financial, staffing or contractual nature and/or affecting persons other than the Council).

The Committee considered the following:

a) Tenancy Matter – Debts and Guarantor

An oral update was provided regarding the date allocated for proceedings in connection with debts outstanding to the Council, together with a recent unsatisfactory 'offer' received which provided no security or confidence as to discharge. Should a meaningful offer,

consistent with the parameters previously set out by the Council be received, it would be considered.

b) Tenancy Matters – the Meadows

An oral report was provided regarding a request for a prospective ancillary use from a Head Tenant. A further report would be made when sufficient information became available to consider the request.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

174. ASSETS/PUBLIC CONVENIENCES(S)

(**CONFIDENTIAL** - by virtue of relating to matters of a legal, financial, staffing or contractual nature and/or affecting persons other than the Council).

The General Manager provided an oral update on the progress of recent discussions with the Borough Council regarding the potential transfer of the Guildhall Toilets to the Town Council with particular regard to:

- a) Capital contribution;
- b) Implications arising from the tendering of cleaning services;
- c) Associated timeframes;
- d) Assurances sought regarding the future of other facilities in the Town.

175. BEDFORD SQUARE USAGE & NON-STANDARD ACTIVITIES

(**CONFIDENTIAL** - by virtue of relating to matters of a legal, financial, staffing or contractual nature and/or affecting persons other than the Council).

The Committee was advised of operating arrangements for Bedford Square with particular reference to:

- i) Underlying arrangements with other statutory bodies;
- ii) For general assemblies of small numbers of persons representing interest groups or equivalent, the application of a proportionate and light touch approach which did not necessarily require formal consents;
- iii) For potentially larger assemblies, in order for consent to use the space to be granted (which did not signify endorsement by the Council), a requirement that appropriately documented arrangements be submitted to the Council to demonstrate that a safe and properly managed event could be delivered by the event organiser.

There was particular concern regarding an anticipated upcoming event (which was purportedly large), where consent had not been sought for use and, to date, appropriate documentation relating to event management had been requested but not yet received. Should the event

organiser seek to proceed on that basis it would be necessary to advise both them, and the Police, that the Council gave no consent to the use of Bedford Square on the grounds that either no (or inadequate) information had been provided to demonstrate that a event safe for all attendees (and visitors/passers by alike or indeed the adjoining highway or premises) could be delivered.

The Committee endorsed the importance of the foregoing approach that was impartial, uniform/consistent, and underpinned by a commitment to ensuring public safety and the proportionate evaluation of risk.

The Meeting closed at 7.25pm

Signed:

Dated:
CHAIRMAN