



Minutes of the Oversight Committee of the Democratic Services held on Tuesday, March 11, 2025 at 19:00 in The Bungalow, 8 North Street, Credition, EX17 2BT

Present: Cllrs Steve Huxtable, Liz Brookes-Hocking, Guy Cochran (part meeting), Rachel Backhouse, Jim Cairney, Giles Fawssett and Joyce Harris

Apologies: Cllr N Letch

Minute Taker: Rachel Avery, Town Clerk

MINUTES

186 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Cllr Huxtable opened the meeting at 19.02 and members introduced themselves.

187 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public in attendance.

188 APOLOGIES

Decision: The apologies of Cllr N Letch (personal) were **noted**.

189 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUEST FOR DISPENSATIONS

189.1 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.

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

There were no dispensation requests.

190 CLIMATE EMERGENCY

It was **noted** that decisions will be made with the climate emergency at the forefront of decision and policy making.

191 ORDER OF BUSINESS

There were no changes to the order of business.

192 CHAIR'S AND CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Clerk reminded members about the Civility and Respect Pledge, urging them to be mindful of their interactions with fellow councillors, staff, and the public. Cllr Huxtable advised members that an extraordinary Council meeting at Mid Devon District Council would be taking place the following day to discuss the simplification of local government structures, which would be held online via Teams. The link for the meeting could be found on the Mid Devon District Council's website.

193 OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Decision: The minutes from the Oversight Committee meeting held on Tuesday, 11 February 2025, were **approved** as a correct record. (Proposed by Cllr Harris)

194 FINANCE**194.1 TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE TRANSACTIONS BETWEEN 01 FEBRUARY 2025 AND 28 FEBRUARY 2025**

Decision: The transactions between 01 February 2025 and 28 February 2025 were **approved**. (Proposed by Cllr Backhouse)

194.2 TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE BANK RECONCILIATION TO 28 FEBRUARY 2025

Decision: The bank reconciliation to 28 February 2025 was **approved**. (Proposed by Cllr Harris)

194.3 TO NOTE BANK ACCOUNT BALANCES TO 28 FEBRUARY 2025

The bank account balances as of 28 February 2025 were **noted**. It was **noted** that £6000.00 had been received by Crediton Heart Project for the invoice to the architect for Union Road Toilet Block.

194.4 TO NOTE YEAR TO DATE SPEND

The year-to-date report was **noted**. There was a suggestion to improve the readability of the expenditure reports by duplicating the expenditure descriptions on both sides of the report for easier comparison.

194.5 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL REPORT FROM THE TOWN CLERK REGARDING END OF YEAR ALLOCATIONS OF EARMARKED RESERVES

The Town Clerk provided a verbal report on the end-of-year allocations of earmarked reserves. It was proposed that £120,000 be allocated to various reserves, including new allocations for events such as the Food Festival and community projects like the telephone box initiative. The detailed proposal would be presented at the full Council meeting next week.

195 INTERNAL AUDIT 2024/25

It was **noted** that the audit, conducted in October, had identified areas for improvement, and updates were provided on the actions taken. Most issues were minor, and progress had been made in addressing them. Specific items such as insurance valuations and cash handling were discussed, and further responses from the insurance company were awaited. The overall progress was satisfactory, and it was anticipated that remaining actions would be completed by the next full Council meeting, for approval.

196 2025 EVENTS

The Events Officer's report was reviewed:

- VE Day - request for £4500.00 from earmarked reserves to fund these events. The recommendation was accepted despite concerns about potential weather disruptions and insurance costs
- Big Boniface Bash – request for £5500.00 with activities including community participation and entertainment. The recommendation was accepted. There was a suggestion to explore alternative sources for the Christmas tree to reduce costs
- Food Festival – it was noted that to ensure the sustainability, additions to earmarked reserves should be considered.

Decision: It was **resolved** to approve the budgets, for approval by Full Council.
(Proposed by Cllr Harris)

197 GRANTS 2025-26

197.1 TO CONSIDER A LARGE GRANT APPLICATION FROM WELCOMING REFUGEES IN CREDITON

The application from Welcoming Refugees in Crediton for £3000.00 was considered, with concerns raised about its compliance with the current grants policy, particularly regarding direct financial support to individuals.

Cllr Cochran joined the meeting at 20.08

Decision: It was **resolved** to invite the applicant to a meeting to discuss options and gather more information, including signed-off accounts. (Proposed by Cllr Huxtable)

197.2 TO CONSIDER A LARGE GRANT APPLICATION FROM CREDITON YOUTH FOOTBALL CLUB

The committee reviewed the application from Crediton Youth Football Club for £1800.00.

Decision: It was resolved to approve the application. (Proposed by Cllr Harris)

197.3 TO NOTE SMALL GRANTS AWARDED

Decision: It was resolved to note the awards of small grants. (Proposed by Cllr Brookes-Hocking)

198 DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL PENSION FUND

Cllr Backhouse provided a verbal report on the Devon County Council Pension Fund. She highlighted ongoing discussions with Brunel representatives and other local government pension scheme funds to ensure investment policies reflect the UN guiding principles on business and human rights. Initial meetings had taken place at the officer level, and further updates would be provided as discussions progressed.

199 REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF POLICIES

The Complaints Policy was reviewed.

Decision: It was **resolved** to review and revise the complaints policy to ensure a logical conclusion to complaints. (Proposed by Cllr Cochran)

200 HIGH STREET BRACKETS

200.1 TO RECEIVE THE TOWN CLERK'S REPORT REGARDING THE FLAG PROJECT AND TO AGREE ANY RECOMMENDATIONS THEREIN

The Town Clerk provided a detailed report on the Flag Project, highlighting the concerns raised by local businesses about the safety of the brackets and the potential impact on Christmas decorations. A further full survey to assess the safety of the brackets, with the

cost and feasibility of replacements also being considered, would be investigated, alongside obtaining legal advice on liability issues and further advice from insurers.

Decision: It was **resolved** to seek quotes for the survey, legal advice on liability issues, and consult with insurers regarding the Flag Project. (Proposed by Cllr Brookes-Hocking)

200.2 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE TOWN CLERK REGARDING CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

The Town Clerk provided a brief update on the Christmas lights, noting that Devon County Council were updating their policy on Christmas light infrastructure. The policy update might not be completed in time for the current year, which could impact the installation of Christmas lights. The council discussed the practicality of using existing brackets and the need for legal advice on liability issues.

201 CREDITON YOUTH SERVICE

201.1 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE REPORT FROM THE LEAD YOUTH WORKER REGARDING YOUTH WORK ACTIVITIES

The Lead Youth Worker presented a comprehensive report on youth work activities, highlighting the success of various programmes and the challenges faced by the service. The council acknowledged the efforts of the youth service team in managing the move from Old Landscore School to the hub and maintaining reasonable attendance numbers. The importance of qualitative and quantitative data in measuring the success of objectives was discussed, along with the need for ongoing funding.

202 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The council noted that the next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 8 April 2025.

203 PART II

Decision: It was **resolved** to approve the exclusion of the public and press were from the meeting under section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. (Proposed by Cllr Huxtable)

204 YOUTH SERVICE REPORT

The confidential report was **noted**.

205 YOUTH SERVICE REPORT

The confidential report was **noted**.

206 STAFFING REPORT

The confidential report was **noted**.

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The confidential report was **noted**.

208 EVENTS AND TOWN CENTRE OFFICER

Decision: It was **resolved** to move this item, in full, to an additional meeting of the Oversight on Tuesday 25 March at 10.00. (Proposed by Cllr Huxtable)

208.1 TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED TITLE OF THE ROLE

208.2 TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE RECRUITMENT PACK, TO INCLUDE JOB DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION

208.3 TO APPROVE THE SALARY COLUMN POINT

208.4 TO APPROVE AN APPLICATION, SHORTLISTING AND INTERVIEW TIMELINE

209 REPORTS PACK

Signed

Dated.....