

BUCKFASTLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 18th November 2025 at 6.30pm.

Present: Councillors: Paul Georghiades (Chair), John Bailey, Steven Burch, Sue Clarke and Judith Hart (Town Clerk).

Press: None

25/24. Apologies for absence: Cllr Ron Fox

25/25. Councillors invited to declare any interests: None

25/26. To approve and sign the minutes from the Finance Committee held on 10th September 2025:

Minutes signed by Cllr Georghiades

25/27. To receive the current Grants Report for 2025/26:

Noted.

Cllr Clarke to meet with the Chair of The Bungalow Youth Project regarding use of the building for Victoria Park and swimming pools events as this would reduce the cost of hiring other venues. It was agreed that the building is underused and this would be beneficial to both organisations.

Victoria Park trustees continue to look at other sources of funding for the pool.

25/28. To discuss expenditure of the new Community Infrastructure Levy:

Following recent receipt of £1,608.23 from Teignbridge District Council for expenditure on the provision, replacement, maintenance, improvement or operation of community infrastructure such as the public toilets, Members agreed the following recommendation to the December full Council meeting:

Recommendation: To resolve that the above CIL payment is ring-fenced and carried over to the 2026/27 budget for expenditure on a community asset when required and in accordance with the set criteria.

25/29. 2026/27 Draft Budget discussion:

Some Councillors and the Clerk expressed concern regarding the increasing number of grant applications that are submitted solely for running costs to keep some organisation afloat which is becoming unsustainable.

Cllr Burch: A huge amount of time is spent on grants to the detriment of other topics.

With the prospect of asset transfer how can the Town Council sustain the current volume of grants and resource new assets too?

Members agreed that tough decisions lie ahead regarding the implications and impact of Local Government Reorganisation in 2027 on the resources and capacity of the Town Council.

Preparation for the possible transfer of generally poorly maintained, non-revenue generating community assets such as the public toilets and green spaces, if the Council chooses to do so, will

require a significant increase to the budget and precept together with prudent financial planning.

The Clerk had circulated two draft budgets. One which included all current obligations with estimated increases where applicable and a new budget £15,000 budget towards the possible transfer of the public toilets. This is estimated to cover only half the annual cost of maintenance, cleaning, utilities, insurance, consumables, required water testing etc. To date despite requests to Teignbridge District Council as the asset holder no breakdown of costs for the toilets has been provided and current estimates are based solely on research and information from other towns and parishes.

The second draft budget option is to remove the smaller and larger grant budgets (currently £8,000 each) for one year to meet the above deficit. This would not place a significant impact on the precept or additional financial burden to residents.

Following further discussion, it was agreed that a third option should be considered which includes the new proposal but retaining half the smaller and larger grants budget (£4,000 each) as detailed below:

Option A (v1) – Budget with annual increases plus an additional £15,000 towards the transfer of one TDC owned asset. This equates to an increase of 16.75% to the budget from £172,250 to £201,100 and would increase the Town Council's portion of the Council Tax by 13.77% to a Band B property at £1.64 per month.

Option B (v2) – Option A together with a cut to the Larger and Smaller Grants budget by 50%. This equates to an increase of 12.01% to the budget from £172,250 to £193,100 and would increase the Town Council's portion of the Council Tax by 9.25% to a Band B property at £1.10 per month.

Option C (v3) – Option A together with the removal of both the Larger and Smaller Grants for a period of 12 months. This equates to an increase of 7.46% to the budget from £172,250 to £185,100 and would increase the Town Council's portion of the Council Tax by 4.72% to a Band B property at 56p per month.

Recommendation: Members of the Finance Committee recommend to December full Council to select Option B by resolution.

25/30. Questions and comments from the public: No public in attendance.

25/31. Items requiring urgent attention: None

Meeting closed at 8.10 pm.