

BUCKFASTLEIGH WEST PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on 4th March 2025 at 7.00pm **in Scoriton Village Hall**

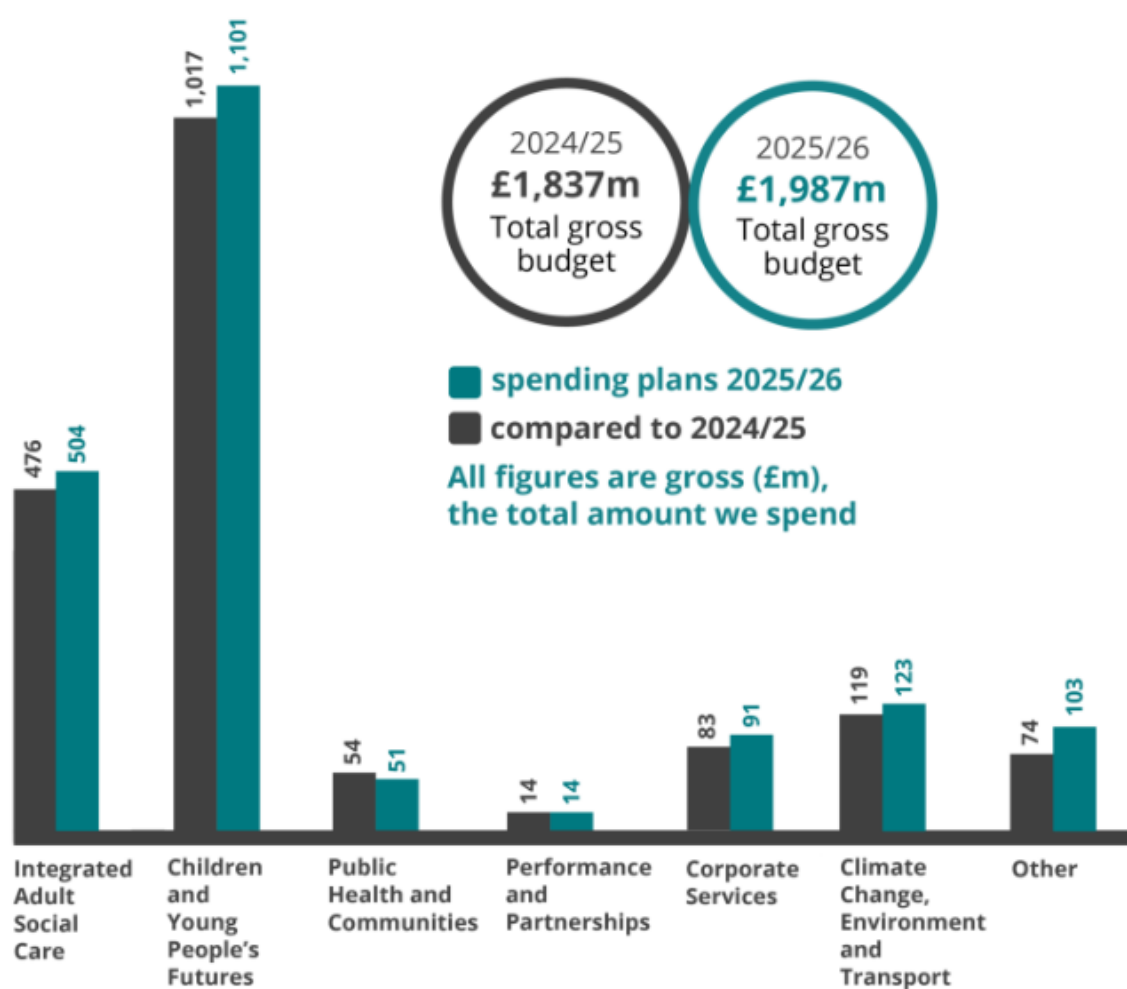
Present – Cllrs Feasey (Chairman), Knowling, Le Marchant and Rolls
Dist Cllr Hancock, and County Cllr Thomas Clerk - Karen Gilbert.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - NONE

Full reports available from the Clerk - all reports circulated to Cllrs in advance
DEVON COUNTY

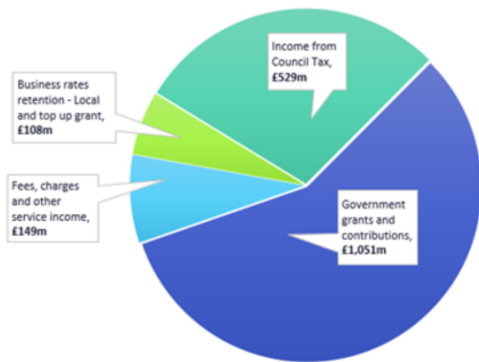
Since last month, County has agreed its budget for 2025/26 which includes the usual 2.99% rise in council tax plus the extra 2% for integrated care.

This graph, representing spending, is quite useful:

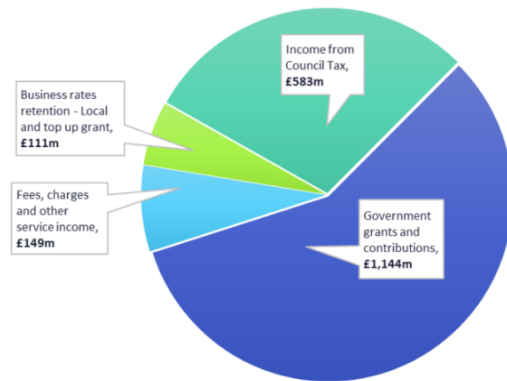


The pie charts below illustrates where the money comes from:

2024/25 Gross Income £1,837 millions



2025/26 Gross Income £1,987 million



SOUTH HAMS DISTRICT COUNCIL

SHDC Budget

At its February meeting the Council agreed to a rise of 2.99% in its share of the Council Tax. That's the maximum allowed by the Government without a referendum, and also the increase the Government expects SHDC to agree when it calculates Council spending. The increase, roughly £200,00 will be totally swallowed up by the increase in Employers' National Insurance contributions, for which the Government has only provided partial support. Our Rural Services Grant, worth £500,000 and which compensates rural councils for the extra cost of delivering services in a sparsely populated area, has been abolished. No members voted against the budget. The average increase in Parish and Town precepts across the District is 21%, reflecting the additional burden being shouldered by these because of the tight grip on spending by bigger authorities.

Local Authority Reform

The Devon District Councils – minus Exeter – have issued the following statement on their preferred option for Local Government Reform:

"National government signalled in December 2024 its intent to end the current system of District and County Councils and smaller unitary Councils. Instead, these are to be replaced by unitary Councils covering much larger areas, with a guideline minimum population of 500,000 people. We are proud of our track record in delivering high quality and cost-effective public services. Each of our Councils is well established and has, over many years, built a connection with local communities such that we understand how best to tailor the delivery of these services to meet the needs of local residents. We are also very concerned that the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) as stipulated by government including the timetable runs the real risk of financial unsustainability from inception. The most significant funding challenges facing the people of Devon concern Adult and Children Social Care, SEND, and NHS funding. Government proposals address none of these, but rather risks uprooting the very organisations holding the line today. However, it is our duty to respond to answer national government's demand for structural change through LGR.

We are united in our belief that the interests of the nearly 1 million people of Devon and Torbay will not best be served by a single 'mega' Council covering the entirety of this area. As districts, we have therefore reached initial agreement to work towards the formation of two new Councils that combine our existing areas as follows;

- A Unitary combining the South Hams, Teignbridge and West Devon areas with Torbay
 - A Unitary including East, Mid and North Devon alongside Torridge District and the City of Exeter
- There is considerable further work to do to develop these proposals. We want to maintain local distinctiveness whilst seeking to secure ongoing service improvements. We are having to move at pace to meet the initial deadline set by national government for Interim Plans to be submitted by the 21st March. Final decisions on the content of the Interim Plans will continue to be made by

individual Councils and we will engage with all our Devon council colleagues on an ongoing basis. We are mindful that the LGR process is fast-changing still and until submission date further options may need to be considered in addition to the currently preferred option.

We are in active dialogue with Torbay Council concerning the potential for a new unitary council covering a wider geography encompassing the 4 areas described above. We also recognise that Plymouth City will be looking to change their boundaries, which is a matter for government to decide on.

We are resolute in our shared commitment to engaging with our residents, partners and stakeholders to help shape these proposals going forward. This includes in the period through to November and the submission of final proposals. We will provide ongoing updates as we reach key milestones.”

25/03/01 Apologies for absence - Cllrs Brent and Owen - apologies accepted

25/03/02 Approval of Minutes - The Minutes of the regular meeting held on 4th February 2025 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record

25/03/03. Declarations of interest - None **Dispensation requests** None

25/03/04- PC admin -

a) There were no Co-option applications to consider

b) Update re Website - Cllr Feasey advised that the missing documents had been loaded onto the new site and that the new emails were now working

c) The Annual Parish Meeting was set for 1st April 2025 . Cllr Le Marchant advised that she had found a speaker from Scoriton and Buckfastleigh Twinning Association

The Clerk apologised in advance and asked that a minute taker should be sourced

25/03/05 - Clerks Report

The Clerk advised that she had not received the Parish Statement from the Chairman - as requested by DALC

She also informed the Council of a call from a Parishioner advising that the delivery of salt had not been received as expected - and also that the hedges in Wallfaord Road were very overgrown

ACTION ; CLERK TO INVESTIGATE THESE MATTERS

25/03/06- Planning - NONE

25/03/07 Finance - Approval of cheques - AGREED by all

K Gilbert	Expenses 02/25 + ink	£90.69
Information Commissioners Office	Fee 25/26	£52.00

25/03/08 Councillor reports

a) Tree Warden report. - No report

b) Councillors reports from other meetings. Cllr Knowling advised that the AGM of the Country Show had taken place but that he had been unable to attend . It appeared that , despite new Members coming forward , the show committee was still in need of additional volunteers

c) Footpaths Warden Report. - No report

25/03/09 - Village Matters

a) Highways - It was reported that there had been an accident on Susan's Road due to the icy conditions one morning . Cllr Rolls asked whether there was a grit bin in that area

ACTION ; CLERK TO CONSULT DCC MAP

b) Village Hall - Cllr Le Marchant advised that no further Committee meetings had taken place

**25/03/10. Date/time of next meeting Annual Parish Council meeting. 1st April 2025
at 7pm followed by a brief Parish Council meeting**

There being no further business the meeting was closed at. 7.50 pm