

BUCKFASTLEIGH WEST PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting

held on 1st July 2025 at 7.00pm in Scoriton Village Hall

Present – Cllrs Brent (Chairman), Feasey, Rolls, Owen and Le Marchant

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - NONE

DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL

We have ended the last financial year in balance – but tough choices lie ahead

We have ended the 2024/25 financial year without going over budget, but only by relying on temporary savings and one-off government funding.

A report presented to cabinet today showed that we managed to stay within its £637.5 million budget and ‘balance the books’ despite growing demand for services like social care and support for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

We had been expecting to overspend by nearly £4 million in November but managed to avoid this through a mix of short-term measures, including delaying some projects, not filling vacant jobs, and using a one-off grant from government.

The report also showed that £40 million in planned savings were delivered across council services, though this fell short of the £50 million target.

Councillor James Buczkowski, Cabinet Member for Finance, said:

“This isn’t a moment to celebrate, but it is a moment to be honest. Officers have worked incredibly hard to help balance the books, and that deserves recognition.

“But let’s be clear: this balanced position was only achieved by using temporary fixes. “It’s not a sign that everything is fine. We’ve inherited a fragile financial position, depleted cash balances and a special educational needs deficit now over £169 million.

“The public deserves honesty. We are facing some of the most difficult financial conditions in decades, and we cannot keep doing things the old way. Our new administration is committed to rebuilding trust and making services more sustainable, by working differently, being open about the challenges, and focusing on what really matters to people.”

He added that the Council must now plan ahead carefully and work closely with partners to find better, more sustainable ways to support Devon’s communities.

SOUTH HAMS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Have your say on local government re-organisation

Last week we launched the first phase of our engagement on Local Government Reorganisation.

Please continue to encourage your residents to have their say.

Messages for residents:

- We need your help to shape the future of local government in Devon by letting us know what matters to you.
- Everyone with a connection to the South Hams is being asked what matters to them to help shape our final proposals so they reflect the needs and aspirations of people living and working in the area.
- Take part in the short survey here - www.southhams.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation
- Over the next few months, a series of engagement events around the South Hams will also be taking place. Details on how you can get involved will be available soon.

We are promoting the survey via social media so please do re-share to any of your local community groups and other networks.

Catbikes scheme launching later this month

Totnes' new e-bike scheme is all set to go live on Friday 20 June.

We've [announced the launch date](#), [unveiled the Catbikes page on the website](#) with full details on the scheme, and [published a video showing off Totnes and the scheme](#).

Messages for residents:

- The Catbikes scheme goes live on Friday 20 June
- Anyone wanting to hire a Catbike will need to download the Appbike app and register for the scheme on their smartphone before going for a ride
- The app is available to download from both the App Store on iPhone and the Google Play Store on Android phones
- The e-bikes will be available to hire from eight "bases" around the town

- It's free to sign up, and users can choose from two tariff prices depending on how long they want to hire an e-bike
- The scheme has been funded by a UK Government grant to help promote cycling in rural areas
- [Watch our video](#) on the scheme
- [Visit the website](#) and [read our PR](#) for more information

Government response to remote attendance and proxy voting consultation

Following time-limited Covid remote attendance permissions that expired in 2021, local authority meetings have been required to be held in a single, specified, physical 'place'.

On 24 October 2024, the government published a consultation on remote attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings. The consultation closed on 19 December 2024 and received 5,844 responses. The consultation sought views on the practical implications of allowing remote attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings.

In summary:

- The Government is of the view that in-person authority meetings remain vital for local democracy, but that hybrid and remote attendance, and proxy voting, will enable local authorities in England to develop more modern, accessible, and flexible working practices.
- The Government have carefully considered arguments for and against remote attendance and proxy voting, and we plan to legislate to support permanent provision in relation to both policies, when parliamentary time allows.
- On remote attendance, the Government plan to permit local authorities to develop their own locally appropriate policies, if they decide to hold remote meetings.
- On proxy voting, the Government plans to require principal (unitary, upper and second-tier) councils to implement proxy voting schemes, to provide consistency for members who are absent when they become a new parent, or for serious or long-term illness. We plan for this requirement to apply to meetings of full council. For all other meetings, proxy voting may be used but

will not be required, and substitute or pairing schemes may be more appropriate. The Government plan for other local authorities not listed above to be enabled but not required to implement proxy voting schemes, for any of their meetings, in the context of member absences for serious or long-term illness or becoming a new parent.

Read the full consultation results and Government response [here](#).

25/07/01 Apologies for absence – County Cllr Dan Thomas, Dist Cllr Pannell, Dist Cllr Hancock, Cllr Knowling and Clerk - Karen Gilbert - approved.

25/07/02 Approval of Minutes - The Minutes of the regular meeting held on 3rd June 2025 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record

25/07/03. Declarations of interest - None **Dispensation requests** None

25/07/04- PC admin - No co-options to consider

25/07/05 - Clerks Report - None

25/07/06- Planning - 0216/25 Full Planning Permission Hockmoor, Buckfastleigh, Devon, TQ11 0HN Change of use from one dwelling into two dwellings – SUPPORT

25/07/07 Finance - None

25/07/08 Councillor reports

a) Tree Warden report. – Nothing to report

b) Councillors reports from other meetings. No report

c) Footpaths Warden Report. - No report

25/07/09 - Village Matters a) Highways – No update **b) Village Hall** - No update

25/07/10. Date/time of next meeting – 2nd September 2025 There being no further business the meeting was closed at. 7.25 pm