

ANNUAL TOWN'S MEETING

Minutes of the Annual Town's Meeting held on 7th May 2026 at 6.30pm
held at The Baptist Church Hall, College Street, Burnham-on-Sea, TA8 1AR

Attendees Cllr Facey - Mayor, 8 Councillors, the Town Clerk, Deputy Clerk and Responsible finance officer and 7 members of the public.

1. Introductions and welcome from the Mayor, Councillor Mike Facey

Councillor Facey welcomed members of the public to the meeting and introduced all the Councillors.

2. Official noting of the Town Councillor apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Flurry, Mills and Wynn.

3. To receive and approve the Minutes of the Annual Town's Meeting of 15th May 2025

The minutes of the Annual Town's Meeting held on the 15th May 2025 were received, approved and duly signed by the Mayor.

4. To receive a report from the Police

No report was submitted.

5. Presentation of Annual Reports 2025 - 26

The Mayor read his annual report.

A copy of reports from the Mayor, Town Clerk, Responsible Finance Officer and Committee Chairs were provided to all attendees. Copy attached.

6. Open Forum

Members of the public raised questions. All residents who wished to speak were residents within the town.

The issues raised were:

- *A member of the public asked what steps the Council would take to address heavy daily traffic on residential roads.*

Signed by Chair.....
Date.....



The Mayor explained the Town Council is not the authority responsible for highways or speeding issues. However he will raise the matter with the local constabulary, speak to Unitary Authority Councillors, report the concern at the next LCN meeting, where traffic officers will be present and write to the resident with an update once information is received.

- *A member of the public asked whether areas in Burnham and Highbridge could be designated as wild meadows and mown twice a year.*

Councillor Millard confirmed Somerset Council's interest in community-led environmental initiatives, including "No Mow May", and referenced similar work undertaken in Taunton and that they hope to explore bringing similar opportunities to Burnham and Highbridge.

The Mayor confirmed that the land in question belongs to Somerset Council.

- *A member of the public raised concerns about vehicles parking on the pavement outside a nursery on Adam Street restricting access for pedestrians.*

The Mayor will speak to the PCSO and write to the nursery to highlight the issue.

7. Town Mayor's closing remarks and thanks

The Mayor thanked all those who attended and the Town Council would follow up on all matters raised.



**Burnham-on-Sea
& Highbridge**

TOWN COUNCIL

Annual Reports 2025-2026

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| MAYOR'S REPORT | 3 |
| TOWN CLERK'S REPORT | 4 |
| RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT | 5 |
| FINANCE & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE REPORT | 7 |
| HR SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT | 10 |
| ASSETS & AMENITIES COMMITTEE REPORT | 11 |
| PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT | 14 |

MAYOR'S REPORT

By Cllr Mike Facey (Mayor)

It has been a great honour and privilege to be your Mayor for the past council year.

I would like to thank my fellow councillors for their support throughout the year.

I have attended over 81 events during the year representing the Council and the residents of our two towns.

My time spent supporting and fundraising with my two charities, In Charley's Memory and Hillview Junior Carnival Club, have been enjoyable working with the local community.

Pre-Christmas time is exceptionally busy with civic duties i.e.. VJ Day, Remembrance Parade, church service at Highbridge, pre-carnival fireworks display, switch-on of both towns' Christmas lights.

There are, in my mind, two exceptional events that stand out. The honour for myself and my consort, Leanne, to represent our towns at Wells Cathedral at a Royal British Legion Somerset Service to commemorate the 80th year of the end of World War II.

Secondly, was the amazing Civic Carol Service at St Andrews Church. Many thanks go to the Reverend Cheryl Hawkins, the Town Band, St Andrews School Choir and to all those that attended.

I would also like to thank the Headteacher, Mr. Dan Milford, at King Alfred's School and Academy for inviting me on many occasions to visit and join in school events.

It was an enjoyable evening when we hosted a civic evening at the Princess Theatre for the volunteers who work so hard to support the council and community.

Civic Awards took place at the Princess Theatre in early March. It was a pleasure to present awards to residents who go out of their way to help individuals and the community etc. etc.

Finally, I would like to thank the Town Clerk and her staff for their guidance and patience throughout my year as Mayor.



TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

by Katherine Noble (Town Clerk)

The Town Council have now completed a full year of maintaining the public conveniences, which has been a steep learning curve! Danfo were appointed as the Council's cleaning contractor and the service has worked well for the majority of the time.

The Estates Team worked hard at the cemeteries over the winter months, carrying out a significant amount of tree and hedge maintenance. They have also been sprucing up noticeboards and bus shelters across the towns. The flowerbeds have been maintained with assistance from the Growing Group. The Caretaker/Cleaner has kept the Princess and Council Offices clean and tidy and has undertaken improvements such as refurbishing the Green Room.

The Responsible Finance Officer has continued to ensure the Council meets all audit requirements, that financial data is available to the public via the website, and that the accounts are managed stringently. The RFO has also processed numerous grant applications and administered the community infrastructure levy (CIL) monies.

Staff have continued to work hard at the Princess Theatre and Arts Centre. The team are always looking out for new and interesting shows and have booked several sell-out performances this year. Several participation groups have started up, including the Open Art Studio and due to high demand, indoor curling is now held twice per week. The Theatre would not run without the help of the amazing volunteers.

The administration staff have been very busy responding to residents' queries and questions, as well as providing assistance to Councillors and managers and helping with arranging events e.g. Civic Awards and the Remembrance Parade. The Reception Team now also process bookings for the Theatre, helping to ensure the phone lines are manned during office opening hours.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the team for their hard work and commitment. Thanks to the Managers for their help and support and in particular, the Deputy Clerk for assisting me with day-to-day challenges.

The Council has a dedicated and loyal staff team, all of whom want to provide the best possible service to the residents of Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge.

RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT

By Nicole Brooks (Responsible Finance Officer)

Council Tax (Precept)

For 2025/26 the Town Council requested a precept of £1,324,115 which equates to £194.62 per annum, an increase of £51.21 to a Band D property for the Town Council element of the Council Tax.

Grants

The Council agreed grants to 24 local organisations for £32,069 and 9 local businesses for £9,800, totalling £40,699. This financial support enabled the groups that applied to put on events in the towns, it has supported the sustainability of the local clubs and has enabled a variety of projects to be undertaken by local businesses and organisations. Applicants are required to complete an application and provide a copy of their constitution and bank account as well as details of how they will spend the grant. There is a monitoring form in place that enables the Town Council to ensure that the grant funding has been used appropriately. The council has already received positive feedback from the majority of applicants. The next round of grants will be June 2026.

Resources

| EXPENDITURE | Estimated year-end figures 2025-26 |
|--|---|
| Staff Costs and Expenses | £484,332 |
| Administration. Office & Running Costs | £122,851 |
| Democratic & Civic | £14,559 |
| Grants | £43,399 |
| Cemeteries | £33,584 |
| Princess Theatre | £249,397 |
| Joint funding with other Councils | £39,582 |
| Other Assets & Community Services | £155,103 |
| Events inc Christmas lights displays | £50,922 |
| Total expenditure | £1,193,729 |
| Income received | £269,380 |

Total estimated income for the year = £269,380

Total estimated expenditure for the year = £1,193,729

Estimated Earmarked reserves = £1,141,595

Estimated general reserves = £630,000

Please note a full breakdown of the year-end income and expenditure report will be presented to the Council and published in June 2026.

Procedures & Protocols

The Council constantly strive to maintain a high standard of accounting practices which are reviewed and audited regularly both internally and externally. Internal auditors have signed the Council off in 2025-26 as being fully compliant to the current accounting standards, with no reportable findings.

2026 - 27

On 19th January 2026 the Town Council agreed a budget of £1,437,785 for the 2026/27 financial year which includes projected income of £151,570 and expenditure of £1,589,355. The expenditure will be funded by a precept of £1,437,785, which will form part of the council tax along with the requirements of Somerset County Council and Police. This equates to an increase in the Town Council element of £7.44 per year to a Band D property to £202.06.

FINANCE & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

By Cllr Ganesh Gudka (Chair of Finance & Governance Committee)

Committee Members

Cllr Alan Matthews (Vice Chair), Cllr Peter Clayton, Cllr Roger Keen, Cllr Mike Murphy, Cllr Kate Pearce, Cllr Cath Searing, Cllr Barbara Vickers

As before I would like to start by thanking and congratulating our officers for the continued steady control over the Council's finances. Our RFO, Nicole Brookes, has developed and applied processes to maintain a stable and ordered environment. This has been evidenced with clean internal and external audit reports that have recognised the progress made.

I would like to thank Cllrs. Mills and Clayton for conducting the quarterly checks that are required as part of the oversight mechanism for all councils and I am glad to report these have confirmed continued day to day control over payments and receipts.

In the previous three years a lot of progress has been made bringing Financial and Risk Management policies and procedures up to date, so this year these frameworks were rolled forward with only minor updates.

We have maintained our investment in the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund to make the best use of cash balances and this has delivered a substantial amount of interest income of over £70,000. Whilst we do not expect such high returns to continue, due to a change in the timing of receipt of the precept from Somerset Council, the use of the deposit scheme will still deliver a useful income stream in 2026/27.

In the previous year, power and insurance contracts were fixed for three years, so this year there were few contracts to review. The committee did ratify a decision to change the supplier of alarm monitoring and keyholder services on the grounds of reliability and value for money and approved a new contract for the provision of Health and Safety advice and resources.

During the year the lease agreement for the public toilets around the town were agreed, finalising the process of the town taking control of these from Somerset Council. Amongst the benefits of this were the opportunity for us to agree more appropriate opening hours and consider how the office adjacent to the toilets in Apex Park can be used for the benefit of the community.

The Committee has also recently accepted an update to the CCTV Service Level Agreement.

Difficulties collecting debts owed by the tenant of the café at the Princess led to the Council offering the concession to a new tenant. We continue to pursue the previous debt through legal channels having expended a considerable amount of time trying to support the previous tenant in routes to pay the debts owed.

During the year we once again had the opportunity to support local community groups and charities through the award of just over £32,000 of grants. A summary of grants awarded is included in the RFOs report.

The committee also successfully disbursed £9,800 to support shops in Burnham with repairs and improvements to their shop fronts. Nine businesses were able to benefit from these grants. For the 26/27 year we have budgeted a similar fund to support shops in Highbridge.

Grants summary:

| ORGANISATION | Requested for | Awarded | 2025-26 |
|---|----------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Burnham-on-Sea CADS | Community Event | £2,000 | 28.04.25 |
| BOS Fest | Community Event | £2,000 | 28.04.25 |
| Burnham Heritage Group | Capital grant | £650 | 24.03.25 |
| The Brightwell | Revenue grant | £300 | 09.06.25 |
| Air Cadets | Capital grant | £400 | 09.06.25 |
| In Charleys Memory | Revenue grant | £1,400 | 09.06.25 |
| BEES | Capital grant | £2,000 | 09.06.25 |
| Academy Swim Team | Revenue grant | £2,000 | 09.06.25 |
| Burnham Boat Owners Club | Capital grant | £2,000 | 09.06.25 |
| Weston Hospicecare | Revenue grant | £797 | 09.06.25 |
| BOS Gig Rowing Club | Capital grant | £2,000 | 09.06.25 |
| Fritzlar Twinning Society | Community Event | £800 | 09.06.25 |
| Hillview Junior Carnival Club | Community Event | £2,000 | 09.06.25 |
| Burnham & Highbridge Men & Ladies Sheds | Capital grant | £1,522 | 13.10.25 |
| Burnham-on-Sea Swimming Club | Revenue grant | £1,500 | 13.10.25 |
| Burnham Area Youth (Bay) Centre | Revenue grant | £950 | 13.10.25 |
| HBOS Carnival Club | Community Event | £2,000 | 13.10.25 |
| Burnham & Highbridge Choral Society | Community Event | £1,000 | 13.10.25 |
| Burnham Community Centre | Community Event | £1,200 | 13.10.25 |

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|----------|
| Burnham District Pantomime Society | Revenue grant | £1,000 | 13.10.25 |
| Young Somerset | Revenue grant | £2,000 | 13.10.25 |
| Burnham BMX Club | Capital grant | £1,000 | 13.10.25 |
| Octopus Childrens Daycare | Capital grant | £800 | 13.10.25 |
| Burnham & Highbridge Gateway Club | Revenue grant | £750 | 13.10.25 |
| | Grants Made total | £32,069 | |
| | Returned unspent funds | £1,170 | |
| | Grants Made Expenditure | £30,899 | |
| Barber Jacks | Shop Front Grants | £1,500 | 09.02.26 |
| Beauty Oasis Spa | Shop Front Grants | £750 | 09.02.26 |
| Black Rock Vets | Shop Front Grants | £750 | 09.02.26 |
| Café Beans | Shop Front Grants | £1,500 | 09.02.26 |
| Central Hair Studios | Shop Front Grants | £2,000 | 09.02.26 |
| CJ Hole | Shop Front Grants | £500 | 09.02.26 |
| Prim n Proper | Shop Front Grants | £1,000 | 09.02.26 |
| Regency Residential | Shop Front Grants | £300 | 09.02.26 |
| The Chatterbox | Shop Front Grants | £1,500 | 09.02.26 |
| | Shop Front Grants Expenditure | £9,800 | |
| | Total Grant expenditure | £40,699 | |

The discussions around the 26/27 budget and precept were subject to fewer step-changes and shocks than previous years. Whilst the journey of devolution of services from Somerset continues, for the following year much of the cost can be funded through Earmarked Reserves. As a result we were able to recommend a relatively modest increase in the precept to Council.

HR SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

By Cllr Sharon Perry (Chair of HR Sub-Committee)

Committee Members

Cllr. Peter Clayton (Vice-Chair), Cllr. Ganesh Gudka, Cllr. Roger Keen, Cllr. Alan Matthews, Cllr. Lesley Millard, Cllr. Barbara Vickers

The HR Sub-Committee meets on an ad-hoc basis to consider all matters of human resources, including staff establishment, grading and conditions of service, as well as training for councillors and staff. The Sub-Committee has met on 8 occasions this year (2025-2026).

Overview of the year 2025-2026

Recruitment

Following the restructuring of staffing throughout the Town Council in 2024-2025, this year has been one of consolidation.

The post of Estates Manager is currently vacant. We hope that the recruitment process for this pivotal role will commence shortly and look forward to a full complement of staff in this team.

Policies

The HR Sub-Committee reviews staffing policies in light of good practice and legislative updates. This year, we have reviewed and updated the following: a Flexible Working Policy; and an IT, Cyber Security and Email Policy.

Appraisal and Training

Members of the HR Sub-Committee undertook the appraisals of the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk at the beginning of the new financial year and reviewed the targets set at an appropriate time. A system of appraisal now cascades from these two post-holders to all staff working at the Council.

Over the past year, councillors have undertaken training on the following topics: Code of Conduct Training; and, Data Protection Regulations, Councillors Essentials – Roles & Responsibilities and Employment Law and HR Essentials

The Town Council remains committed to providing training that enables staff to competently and safely undertake the responsibilities of their roles and to further their professional development. This year, staff have undertaken many courses relating to Health and Safety and courses to enable them to take on new responsibilities, such as trailer towing.

ASSETS & AMENITIES COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee Members

Cllr Peter Clayton (Chair of Assets & Amenities Committee), Cllr Sharon Perry (Vice Chair), Cllr Ben Metcalfe, Cllr Lesley Millard, Cllr Paul Mills, Cllr Mike Murphy, Cllr Cath Searing, Cllr Barbara Vickers, Cllr Paul Wynn

During 2025–26, the Assets & Amenities Committee held eight meetings, including two extraordinary meetings. The Committee oversaw a wide range of projects and operational matters relating to council-owned facilities.

Overview of Committee meetings and decisions

June 2025

An extraordinary meeting on 9th June was convened to agree the specification for appointing a new café concession at the Princess Theatre & Arts Centre.

July 2025

Councillors discussed the refurbishment of the public conveniences at Apex Park, which had recently transferred to the Town Council from Somerset Council as part of the devolution process.

The Princess Theatre Manager reported strong audience attendance, with one September show already sold out and another with only five tickets remaining. The Committee formally recognised the commitment and hard work of the Theatre's volunteers.

August 2025

A contractor was appointed to carry out the Apex Park public conveniences refurbishment, with works commencing in early October and subsequently completed successfully.

The 2025–2028 Business Plan for the Princess Theatre & Arts Centre was approved.

The Princess Theatre Café Concession was awarded to Aroma Café Bar.

Approval was given to purchase a replacement flagpole for Highbridge, which had broken.

October 2025

Proposed fees and charges for 2026–2027 were reviewed and recommended for approval to the Finance & Governance Committee. These included:

- Signal Box and room hire fees

- Princess Theatre & Arts Centre hire fees
- Cemetery fees and charges

Spring bulbs were planted in various flowerbeds through the towns and at Marine Cove.

Following a traffic incident, the Love Lane bus shelter was removed due to damage. After consultation with local schools confirming continued use of the stop, the Committee agreed to purchase a replacement shelter, which was installed in November.

December 2025

The draft committee budget for 2026–2027 was reviewed and recommended to the Finance & Governance Committee, before being considered at Full Council.

Approval was given to purchase two replacement Union Jack flags for the towns' flagpoles.

Summer floral displays for the towns were agreed, incorporating a mix of sustainable and bedding plants, which will be planted in May/June 2026.

The Committee were informed that due to high demand, Kurling sessions at the Princess Theatre had increased to two sessions per week.

The new Highbridge flagpole was installed and used for the Remembrance Service.

January 2026

An extraordinary meeting on 12th January approved the replacement of deteriorating footpaths at Brent Road Cemetery, addressing uneven surfaces and accessibility concerns.

February 2026

The Committee agreed to allow Rescued, Recycled, Reused to operate its Community Clothing initiative from the Apex Office on Wednesdays.

The Theatre Manager reported successful uptake of ticket cancellation protection and confirmed a 12-month extension to the technical services contract.

A Community Litter Pick collected 17 bags of litter across Burnham and Highbridge and will now take place quarterly.

April 2026

A task and finish group was appointed to review dog waste facilities in both towns.

The Committee received a letter of thanks from the Highbridge Festival for the support provided by the Princess Theatre team.

Regular hirer fees for the Theatre were reviewed.

The Committee were advised that several noticeboards had been refurbished.

The replacement of the Brent Road Cemetery paths commenced, with completion expected by the end of May.

It was noted that repairs to the Highbridge Cemetery wall were due to commence at the end of April/early May.

All allotment tenancy agreements for the forthcoming year were returned.

PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee Members

Cllr Alistair Hendry (Chair of Planning Committee), Cllr Barbara Vickers (Deputy Chair), Cllr Julie Flurry, Cllr Peter Clayton, Cllr Paul Wynn, Cllr Ben Metcalfe, Cllr Kate Pearce

Overview of the year 2025-2026

The Planning Committee meets every 3 weeks, with occasional extraordinary meetings called when applications come in that need to be looked at prior to the next planned meeting. Since May 2025 the Planning Committee has met on 19 occasions and considered and commented on 74 planning applications.

The Committee has been consulted on 8 applications regarding trees, either notification of proposed TPO's or felling. The Committee have also responded to correspondence on 10 occasions. There have been 6 premises licencing applications relating to outside seating and variations of hours. The Committee has also considered 9 Certificates of Lawfulness.

The public can have their say on planning applications by attending the meetings and can have up to 3 minutes to address the Planning Committee. We politely request that they inform reception of their intention to speak prior to the meeting, and we welcome their views.