



**DRAFT - MINUTES OF THE LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CLAREMOUNT HOUSE ON
MEETING OF THE COUNCIL MONDAY 8TH DECEMBER 2025**

Start 7.00pm

Present: Cllr T Saunders (Chair)
Cllr C Evans (Co-opted member joined the meeting at 7.10pm)
Cllr J Gregory (Co-opted member joined the meeting at 7.10pm)
Cllr C Harris
Cllr S Hillier
Cllr N Holbutt (Co-opted member joined the meeting at 7.10pm)
Cllr R Holmes (Vice Chair)
Cllr S Holmes
Cllr M Jones
Cllr P Johns
Cllr T Lindsay
Cllr G Phelps
Cllr E Taylor

In attendance: L Bendall (Deputy Clerk – Minute Taker)
S Fieldhouse (Finance Assistant)
H Sleeman (Business Administrator)

Members of the Public: Two members of the public (Dean Forest Gateway Working Group)

Councillor Saunders welcomed all present and gave the usual 'housekeeping' announcements.

Open Forum

No items raised

1.	<u>CO-OPTION ONTO LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL</u>
	<p>To review and consider appointment of Co-option Councillors onto Lydney Town Council</p> <p>Cllr Jones proposed and Cllr Hillier seconded that Niall Holbutt be co-opted onto Lydney Town Council. Resolved: Unanimously Approved</p> <p>Cllr Johns proposed and Cllr Phelps seconded that Jon Gregory be co-opted onto Lydney Town Council. Resolved: Unanimously Approved</p> <p>Cllr Harris proposed and Cllr Lindsay seconded that Celia Evans be co-opted onto Lydney Town Council. Resolved: Unanimously Approved</p>

	<p>Cllrs C Evans, J Gregory and N Holbutt (all East Ward) were co-opted onto the council. The Deputy Clerk witnessed the Signing of Acceptance of Office and Cllrs Evans, Gregory and Holbutt joined the meeting at 7.10pm</p> <p>The Deputy Clerk provided a welcome pack to Cllrs Evans, Gregory and Holbutt which included a Declaration of Interest form which needs to be completed and returned to the Forest of Dean District Council (FoDDC) within 28 days of taking office.</p>
2.	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies were received and noted from Cllr Cave.</p>
3.	<p><u>DECLARATION OF INTERESTS</u></p> <p>To receive Declarations of Interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda, in accordance with Lydney Town Council's current Code of Conduct in respect of Members.</p> <p>No declarations of interest were received.</p>
4.	<p><u>MINUTES</u></p> <p>To consider approving as a correct record the minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Monday 10th November 2025.</p> <p>It was proposed and seconded that the Meeting of the Council minutes held on Monday 10th November 2025 be accepted as read and correct.</p> <p>Resolved: Majority Approved</p>
5.	<p><u>REPORTS</u></p> <p>To receive <u>urgent</u> reports from Members of the Town, District and County Councils</p> <p><u>County Council Reports</u> No reports received</p> <p><u>District Council Reports</u> Cllr McDermid gave his apologies</p> <p><u>Town Council Reports</u> Cllr Saunders provided a brief update on current staffing matters.</p> <p>Following an emergency situation in the town, concerns were raised regarding public defibrillators. A local businessman has offered to purchase and install a public defibrillator at Hylton Court, with a request that the Council undertake the weekly maintenance checks. The Council confirmed it would be able to assist, and a meeting will be arranged to discuss this further.</p> <p>The Market Towns Officer recently attended a meeting regarding the proposed new doctor's surgery. The following indicative timeline was shared:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board approval expected in December 2025 • Detailed planning work beginning January 2026 • Purchase and legal services completion aimed for March 2026 • Planning application to FoDDC in May 2026 • Building works commencing January 2027 • Expected completion January 2028

	<p>A prototype market stall cover has been received; the grounds team will install it to ensure suitability before works commence on the remaining stall covers.</p> <p>Dates for the diary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thursday 18th December Carols in the Bandstand at Bathurst Park, starting at 4.30pm Sunday 21st December St Mary's Annual Concert, starting at 6pm <p>Cllr Saunders advised that a weather warning is in place for tonight and tomorrow due to Storm Bram.</p> <p>Cllr Harris shared an update from District Cllr McDermid regarding the proposed development of two bungalows on Albert Street. An extension has been granted until January to allow additional drainage and ecology reports to be completed. A further extension has been requested until March 2026 to allow the ecology report to conclude. Cllr McDermid confirmed that the planning application will not be reviewed until this date and will keep the Council updated.</p>
	<p>It was noted that the Chair approved for Agenda Item 15 to be brought forward for discussion. For the purpose of the minutes, the items will be recorded in the same order as listed on the agenda.</p>
6.	<u>FINANCIAL MATTERS / RFO REPORT</u>
6.1	<p>Payments</p> <p>(a) To approve accounts for payment as detailed by the RFO It was proposed and seconded for payments totalling £24,343.02 be approved Resolved: Majority Approved</p> <p>A query was raised regarding the sand recently purchased for sandbag use. It was noted that two bags were initially purchased from Travis Perkins, and the remaining sand was obtained from SWM Builders Merchants, who kindly donated a number of bags free of charge. A suggestion was made to use SWM Builders Merchants in the first instance as their prices were lower.</p> <p>Chair proposed additional invoices totalling £1203.32 to be approved Resolved: Majority Approved</p>
6.2	<p>Income and Expenditure Reports/ Earmarked Reserves/ Bank Reconciliations for 30.11.25 and Cashbook Statement for 30.11.25</p> <p>To receive and approve the above financial reports Chair proposed for the Income and Expenditure Reports, Earmarked Reserves and Bank Reconciliations for 30.11.25 and Cashbook Statements for 30.11.25 be approved. Resolved: Majority Approved</p>
6.3	<p>Direct Debit Card Report</p> <p>To note the Debit Card report for November 2025 Noted</p>

6.4	<p>To consider and approve the Draft Lydney Town Council Budget for the Financial Year 2026/27</p> <p>To review and approve the Draft Budget for the financial year 2026/27</p> <p>The draft budget for 2026/27 was reviewed and it was proposed and seconded to accept and approve the Lydney Town Council Budget for 2026/2027 using £30,000 from General Reserves.</p> <p>Resolved: Majority Approved</p>
7.	<p><u>TOWN CLERK'S REPORT</u></p> <p>To receive an update from the Town Clerk</p> <p>Town Clerk's report received and noted.</p> <p>Cllr Holbutt expressed an interest to visit Listening Post's new premises within Lydney, office to arrange.</p>
8.	<p><u>COMMITTEE BUSINESS REFERRED TO THE COUNCIL AND REPORTS FROM THE CHAIRS OF COMMITTEES, SUB COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES AND FROM LEAD COUNCILLORS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair of Regeneration gave a brief update to the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) advising that a small number of tweaks were to be made which were being dealt with. • Cllr Hillier advised that water was being retained well at East Marsh, which was helping to mitigate flooding in other areas of Lydney.
9.	<p><u>CORRESPONDENCE TO NOTE</u></p> <p>To consider a response to any correspondence received</p> <p>(a) Forest of Dean District Council - Intention to Apply for UNESCO Biosphere Noted and any members wishing to provide feedback to contact the office.</p> <p>(b) The Economic Impact of the South West's Visitor Economy 2024 Noted</p>
10.	<p><u>CHRISTMAS 2025</u></p>
10.1	<p>To receive a report on Christmas Event 2025</p> <p>A report on the Christmas Event 2025 was received and in summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The permanent grotto significantly improved setup and takedown; a minor lighting issue was quickly resolved. • Indoor setup went smoothly, with thanks given to staff supporting the hall arrangements. • The SEN Quiet Hour was successful and well received. • The parade benefitted greatly from the last-minute attendance of Christmas Dubs, bikers, and a vintage car. • Some issues were experienced due to behaviour from visiting rugby supporters and traffic attempting to leave during closures. • The light switch-on proceeded smoothly, and grotto attendance was high, with positive feedback on children's gifts and the new ticket system. • Indoor areas were busier than usual due to cold weather; the Balloon Man remained very popular.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall feedback was extremely positive, and the event was considered successful despite minor challenges. <p>A suggestion was made to rotate the presents each year to ensure children do not receive duplicates.</p> <p>Cllr S Holmes thanked Cllr Saunders and all those involved for their hard work in making the event a special day.</p> <p>Cllr Saunders confirmed that Glos County Council had granted permission for the igloo to be sold, with no requirements to return any funds. The sale of the igloo will be discussed at January's council meeting.</p>
10.2	<p>To approve the date for Christmas Event 2026</p> <p>Members discussed the proposed date for the 2026 Christmas event, noting a preference to avoid clashing with other Forest towns. Consideration was given to holding the event on Sunday 29th November 2026. A straw poll was held to gauge councillor views, with the majority favouring Sunday 29th over Saturday 28th November.</p> <p>Cllr Saunders will liaise with traders and local schools and churches to confirm availability for the proposed Sunday date.</p> <p>The Chair proposed that the item be deferred until January to allow further information to be obtained.</p> <p>Resolved: Majority Approved</p>
11.	<p><u>MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH GLOUCESTERSHIRE & WORCESTERSHIRE 4X4 RESPONSE (GW4X4)</u></p>
	<p>To consider and approve the proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Lydney Town Council and Gloucestershire & Worcestershire 4x4 Response, enabling the provision of emergency and resilience support services during adverse weather or significant incidents, and to authorise the Clerk to sign the agreement on behalf of the Council.</p> <p>Chair proposed to approve the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Lydney Town Council and Gloucestershire & Worcestershire 4x4 Response.</p> <p>Resolved: Unanimously Approved</p>
12.	<p><u>ADDITIONAL CCTV</u></p>
	<p>To receive and approve a quote for installation of installing additional CCTV in and around town.</p> <p>It was proposed and seconded to accept the quote from RedHand to purchase four additional CCTV cameras within Lydney with associated funds to be taken from Budget Code EMR 339 CCTV.</p> <p>Resolved: Unanimously Approved</p>
13.	<p><u>STAFFING UPDATE</u></p>
	<p>To receive and note staffing updates</p> <p>Cllr Saunders provided a staffing update. It was noted that the Finance Assistant's weekly contracted hours had increased from 20 to 30 hours. The Assistant Clerk had formally accepted the role of Deputy Clerk.</p> <p>Noted</p>

14.	<u>BANK SIGNATORIES</u>
	To consider adding the Deputy Clerk as an authorised bank signatory Chair proposed to approve the Deputy Clerk being added as a signatory to Lydney Town Council bank accounts. Resolved: Majority Approved
15.	<u>DEAN FOREST GATEWAY</u>
	To receive an update from Dean Forest Gateway Working Group An update was received from the Working Group and is summary: The Working Group provided an update on the Dean Forest Gateway project, which proposes approximately five miles of safe, off-road walking and cycling route linking Lydney to the Forest. The project has been in development for nearly 20 years and is now nearing completion. Updated bat, habitat, flora and fauna surveys were requested and have been carried out, with results showing positive outcomes and little to no negative environmental impact. Time has also been spent engaging with landowners to offer reassurance and outline route details. Further discussions are planned with the Walk Wheel Trust regarding the possibility of including the Dean Forest Gateway within National Cycle Route 42, which would give the route strategic status and assist in overcoming potential objections under the National Planning Framework. FoDDC continue to support the project. A decision on submitting the scheme to planning is expected within the next three weeks. Cllr Saunders thanked the Working Group for their update and for their ongoing hard work.
16.	<u>SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT CRITERIA FOR 2026/2027</u>
	To review and approve adopting the new Service Level Agreement criteria for 2026/2027 Following review and discussion Chair proposed this Agenda Item be deferred until the January council meeting, a request for any feedback and suggestions relating to the new SLA criteria to be received by 2 nd January 2026 to enable the Chair and Vice-Chair of Finance & Scrutiny to review. Resolved: Majority Approved
17.	<u>LYDNEY TOWN CENTRE MONITORING REPORT</u>
	To receive the updated Lydney Town Monitoring Report The updated Lydney Town Monitoring Report was received and noted.
18.	<u>DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING</u>
	Full Council – Monday 12 th January 2026, 7pm, in the Council Chamber, Claremont House, High Street. Lydney

Meeting closed at 9.16pm