



**DRAFT - MINUTES OF THE LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CLAREMOUNT HOUSE ON  
MEETING OF THE COUNCIL MONDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2026**

**Start 7.00pm**

**Present:** Cllr T Saunders (Chair)  
Cllr S Cave  
Cllr J Gregory  
Cllr C Harris  
Cllr S Hillier  
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 & RFO – Minute Taker)  
L Gay (Senior Administrator)

**Absent:** None

**Members of the Public:** Cllr A McDermid (District Councillor 7.03pm) and  
one member of the public

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

**Open Forum**

No items raised.

1.	<b><u>APOLOGIES</u></b>
	Apologies were received and noted from Cllrs N Holbutt and C Evans
2.	<b><u>DECLARATION OF INTERESTS</u></b>
	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. No declarations of interest were received.
3.	<b><u>MINUTES</u></b>
	To consider approving as a correct record the minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> March 2026. Chair proposed that the Meeting of the Council minutes held on Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> March 2026 be accepted as read and correct. <b>Resolved: Majority Approved</b>

4.	<b><u>REPORTS</u></b>
	To receive <i>urgent</i> reports from Members of the Town, District and County Councils
	<p><u>County Council Reports</u> No reports received</p> <p><u>District Council Reports</u> Cllr McDermid had no updates. However, Cllr R Holmes asked why the Forest of Dean District Council (FoDDC) April meeting had been cancelled. Cllr McDermid advised that it had been deemed there was insufficient business to constitute a meeting, and therefore agenda items would be carried forward to the May meeting.</p> <p><u>Town Council Reports</u> No reports received</p>
5.	<b><u>FINANCIAL MATTERS / RFO REPORT</u></b>
	<p><b>5.1 Payments</b> (a) To approve accounts for payment as detailed by the RFO It was proposed (CH) and seconded (TL) for payments totalling £23,972.06 be approved. <b>Resolved: Unanimously Approved</b></p> <p>A query was raised regarding an invoice relating to training; it was confirmed this was for councillor training.</p> <p>(b) To consider and approve the Standing Order payments The Chair proposed that the updated standing order payments to Forest Equipment Services Ltd be approved in accordance with the agreed contract. <b>Resolved: Unanimously Approved</b></p> <p><b>5.2 Income and Expenditure Reports/ Earmarked Reserves/ Bank Reconciliations and Cashbook Statement for 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026</b> To receive and approve the above financial reports Chair proposed that the Income and Expenditure Reports/ Earmarked Reserves/ Bank Reconciliations and Cashbook Statement for 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 be approved. <b>Resolved: Unanimously Approved</b></p> <p><b>5.3 Direct Debit Card Report</b> To note the Debit Card report for March 2026 Noted A query was raised regarding the renewal of the green waste licences and whether all bins were fully utilised. It was agreed that the office would check with the grounds team.</p> <p><b>5.4 Asset Register</b> To consider and approve the Asset Register to 31.03.26 Following review, it was Chair proposed for the Asset Register to 31.03.2026 be approved. <b>Resolved: Unanimously Approved</b></p> <p><b>5.5 Cyber Security Insurance Renewal</b> To note the Cyber Security Extension of Insurance cover from 24<sup>th</sup> March 2026 to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2026 to align with other council insurances Noted</p>

	<p><b>5.6 Internal Audit Report</b></p> <p>To note Internal Audit Report held Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2026, covering Periods October, November and December 2025</p> <p>Cllrs Harris and Jones undertook the quarterly Internal Audit for the period of October, November and December 2025. The audit went well with no concerns identified and thanks was extended to the Finance Assistant for their help. Internal Audit reports were noted.</p>
6.	<p><b><u>TOWN CLERK'S REPORT</u></b></p> <p>To receive the Town Clerk's report</p> <p>The Town Clerk's report was received and noted. A reminder was given regarding the upcoming Annual Town Meeting, and committee chairs were reminded to submit their reports as soon as possible.</p>
7.	<p><b><u>COMMITTEE BUSINESS REFERRED TO THE COUNCIL AND REPORTS FROM THE CHAIRS OF COMMITTEES, SUB COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES AND FROM LEAD COUNCILLORS</u></b></p> <p>Cllr Johns gave an update on Lydney's Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) and advised that, due to a change in legislation on 25th March, an addendum was required to ensure compliance with Regulation 18. The Council's consultants, Place Studios, have been commissioned to undertake this additional work, and it is anticipated that it will be completed by next week.</p> <p>Cllr Johns also advised that the response to the Forest of Dean District Council (FoDDC) Local Plan consultation had been submitted.</p> <p>Cllr Hillier recently attended a Tier 1 training session with Citizens Advice, which they found useful. Cllr Hillier also advised Council that the monthly Veteran Hive meetings are being relocated from Bream to Cinderford Rugby Club from May.</p> <p>Cllr Taylor confirmed that the Letters to Heaven post-box had been installed within the cemetery and had been well received by local residents.</p> <p>Cllr R Holmes has recently attended two meetings regarding FoDDC Biosphere Status, where there appears to be conflicting information.</p> <p>Cllrs Saunders, Gregory and Jones met with a member of the Commoners Association to discuss concerns regarding Biosphere Status and its potential impact on the Forest area.</p> <p>Cllr Saunders advised that recruitment for the Town Clerk and Head Grounds Person had begun and that first interviews were being held this week.</p>
8.	<p><b><u>CORRESPONDENCE</u></b></p> <p>To receive, note and agree any appropriate response to correspondence received from:</p>

8.1	<p>Forest of Dean District Council (FoDDC) advising that a bid has been submitted to Historic England to try and secure funding for a programme of shopfront improvements.</p> <p>Cllr S Holmes commented that concerns had been raised that the bid only included 20–25 properties across the four market towns, and that one-third match funding would be sought from landlords and stakeholders, with a focus on properties where match funding is available. It was also noted that the Council had not been consulted regarding the proposed funding bid.</p> <p>This was noted.</p>
8.2	<p>FoDDC advising of grant application made to Chewing Gum Task Force Grant Scheme.</p> <p>Correspondence noted and a comment was made that the council had not been consulted.</p>
8.3	<p>West Dean Parish regarding Biosphere concerns</p> <p>Cllr R Holmes commented that a petition had been started to pause the Biosphere application and that, at a recent meeting attended by the local MP, there was discussion regarding whether a judicial review could be initiated. It was noted that the approximately 500 consultation responses related only to social media platforms. It was also reported that local councils were consulted in 2021 via a letter issued under a different title “Forest You Want”.</p> <p>It was further commented that the Biosphere status documentation is considered to be jargon-heavy and would benefit from being simplified into a more accessible format to ensure the implications of the designation are clearly understood. It was also noted that there did not appear to have been a live consultation process.</p> <p>The Chair proposed that a letter be sent from Lydney Town Council to Forest of Dean District Council officers managing the project, raising the Council’s observations and concerns, and inviting them to attend the Annual Town Meeting to provide a platform for councillors and residents to ask questions.</p> <p><b>Resolved: Unanimously Approved</b></p> <p>Councillors were also encouraged to raise their concerns individually.</p>
8.4	<p>Gloucestershire Association of Local Councils (GALC formerly GAPTC) summarising their response to proposals for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Gloucestershire</p> <p>Noted; it was commented that Lydney Town Council had already submitted their own response to the proposed LGR.</p>
8.5	<p>Lydney Town Council’s response to FoDDC concerning the FoDDC Local Plan</p> <p>Noted, and the Chair thanked the councillors involved for their support and work in collating and submitting the response, as delegated by the Council.</p>
9.	<p><b><u>STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2030</u></b></p>
	<p>To review and update the Strategic Plan for 2023-2030</p> <p>Following review, Chair proposed for the following updates to be approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>staffing structure</li> <li>agreed budget for 2026/2027</li> <li>office hours</li> <li>committee members listings</li> </ul> <p><b>Resolved: Unanimously Approved</b></p>

10.	<b><u>BIODIVERSITY DUTY POLICY</u></b>
	To review and update the Biodiversity Duty Policy Following review, no changes were identified. However, it was noted that part of the new Head Grounds Person's remit would be to implement environmentally friendly weed control methods, further reducing the use of glyphosates. Policy was noted.
11.	<b><u>GLOUCESTERSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (GALC) FORMERLY GAPTC MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL</u></b>
	To receive, consider and decide on quote received detailing GALC membership renewal for 2026/27 Following discussion, it was proposed (SHo) and seconded (SC) not to renew the GALC membership for 2026/27. <b>Resolved: Majority Approved to not renew membership</b>
12.	<b><u>FOREST OF DEAN DISTRICT COUNCIL ASSETS</u></b>
	To review the current assets owned by Forest of Dean District Council (FoDDC) within Lydney, and to consider whether the Town Council wishes to express an interest in the potential transfer of any of these assets. Following discussion, the Chair proposed that councillors individually review the asset register and email Cllr P Johns with a list of assets and the benefits they would bring to the community. The councillors will then consider this as a working party and report back to Council for consideration and approval. <b>Resolved: Unanimously approved</b>
13.	<b><u>APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR 2026 – 2027</u></b>
	To consider the information provided and to determine the appointment of an Internal Auditor for the 2026/2027 financial year. Following discussion, the Chair proposed that this agenda item be deferred to allow further information to be obtained, including the availability of the previous internal auditor and obtaining costings from local accountants. <b>Resolved: Unanimously approved to defer</b>
14.	<b><u>YEAR-END CLOSE DOWN SUPPORT FOR 2026-2027</u></b>
	To receive and consider quotations for the provision of services to undertake the year-end close down of the Council's financial system for 2026/2027 and to agree the appointment of a supplier. It was proposed (JG) and seconded (SC) to approve Metta Media to undertake the year-end closed down of the Council's financial system for 2026/2027 be approved. <b>Resolved: Majority Approved</b>
15.	<b><u>METTA MEDIA – RIALTAS AND RFO SUPPORT</u></b>
	To receive and consider a quotation from Metta Media for Rialtas and RFO support for the 2026/2027 financial year and to decide on the appointment of the service. It was proposed (SC) and seconded (CH) to approve Metta Media for Rialtas and RFO support for 2026/2027, with the full invoice to be paid in a single payment. <b>Resolved: Unanimously approved</b>

16.	<b><u>DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING</u></b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Council Meeting (Full Council) – Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026, 7pm, in the Council Chamber, Claremont House, High Street. Lydney</li> </ul> <p><b>Please note this will be the meeting to elect the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and appointment members to internal and external committees.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Parish Meeting (Town Meeting) – Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2026 – Lydney Town Hall, High Street. Lydney 6pm</li> </ul>

Meeting closed at 8.28pm

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