

**LANGPORT TOWN COUNCIL**  
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**Minutes of the Meeting of The Joint Council Committee  
held on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2026 at 7.00pm  
in Langport Town Hall**

**Present:**

**Langport Town Cllrs:**

Sean Dromgoole (Chair)  
Sarah Peterkin  
Robert Crumb  
Michele Crumb  
Ian MacNab  
Alan Wilson  
Alan Donald  
Stephen Glas  
Bill Paterson

**Huish Episcopi Parish Cllrs:**

Julia Gadd  
Arwyn Harris  
Edward Keirle

In attendance –Huish Episcopi clerk Julie Ferguson and Langport Town Council clerks Gerard Tucker and Morag Kelly

**JC2025/22 Apologies for absence**

Cllrs Saunders, Wood, Redfearn, Horsgood (HEPC) Cllr Gherasim (Langport)

**JC2025/23 Declarations of interests**

Members to declare any interests, including Disclosable Pecuniary Interests they may have in agenda items that accord with the requirements of the Town Council's Code of Conduct and to consider any prior requests from members for Dispensations that accord with Localism Act 2011 s33(b-e) (NB this does not preclude any later declarations) .

There were no declarations of interest


**JC2025/24 To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Joint Council Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2025 (LGA 1972 sch 12, para 41 (1))**

The minutes of the previous meeting were considered a correct record and were duly signed by the Chair

**JC2025/25 Preparation for the merger of Huish Episcopi Parish Council and Langport Town Council and to consider the next steps:**

To include – **a)** To consider a minor amendment to the Terms of Reference.  
On presentation of the previously discussed Terms of Reference (ToR) to Langport Town Council, it was observed that the ToR made reference to the need to follow the Standing Orders of Huish Episcopi Parish Council. Langport Councillors requested that this was amended to read '... in accordance with Huish Episcopi Parish and Langport Town Council's Standing Orders ....' This minor amendment was **AGREED** by majority.

**b)** To consider the appointment of Working Parties, to include Membership, Purpose and Timescale.

 08/03/26

Cllr Gadd informed that she had held a discussion with a SC Electoral Services Manager, Steven Lake from the Constitution and Governance department who was recommending that the new council has no wards. She further reported on information that he had provided:

- Both LTC and HEPC will cease to be councils on 31st March 2027, all councillors cease to be councillors from then. The new council comes into being on April 1st 2027 but there will not be any councillors until after May 6th.
- Any staff will be transferred over to the new council under TUPE unless they do not wish to be and will be clerking during the interim period.
- Somerset Council will appoint interim councillors (probably the two local SC councillors plus another) to administer any matters in the interim between 1st April and the new council after elections on May 6th 2027.
- A SC legal team will examine and list assets, liabilities etc of both councils.

Cllr Harris presented a brief summary of discussions held with Huish Episcopi Parish Council and Langport Town Council on the subject of working parties. It was accepted that there is too much detail required for reports, discussions and recommendations to be determined only at the quarterly meetings of the JCC. The committee discussed the formation of appropriate groups, concluding:

- Personnel to be a Task and Finish Group (On receipt of the appropriate guidance, the purpose and function of the group will be complete)

*Working Groups*

- Finance, to include grants and Service Level Agreements
- Planning, to include Neighbourhood Planning
- Communication
- Governance

Having identified the areas where specific research and work is required, it was **RESOLVED** that each council (HEPC & LTC) will report this recommendation at their next meetings. It was widely accepted that this work will commence after Somerset Council's full meeting, assuming that the merger is approved. Councillors recognised that much of this work was unfamiliar to them and **RESOLVED** to seek professional guidance when and where appropriate. It was further clarified that the work of existing committees, finance, tourism and marketing, personnel will continue within each council as appropriate.

c) To receive any information on the anticipated start date for the new council. It remains anticipated that the proposed merger of the two councils will take effect from May 2027. Somerset Council are expected to receive a report recommending approval at their next meeting scheduled for February. Following this anticipated approval, directional support is expected on a number of areas, including staffing, asset management, management of the council during purdah etc from Somerset Council. In the event that the guidance is not provided or available, professional support may be considered from other providers. With so many uncertainties on the detail, this item will be revisited at the next meeting of the JCC.

Cllr Harris suggested that as the merger is such an important stage in the history of Langport and Huish Episcopi, a summary document is prepared capturing the key events during their existence. The idea was warmly accepted, although there were no volunteers forthcoming to take a lead.

The clerk informed that he had been approached and held a discussion with the clerk at Balsall Common in Warwickshire, who are at the same stage of a merger as ourselves. The suggestion that Cllrs Gadd and Dromgoole join him at the next discussion in March was agreed with an invitation extended to the two chairs at Balsall Common and Berkswell.

### JC2025/28 Clarification of the process of drawing down S106 funding

A refresh of the Section 106 funding is required. The HEPC clerk offered to circulate the revised list after the meeting. The suggestion that the new Finance working group previously discussed and approved would take a lead in the allocation and drawing down of S106 funding was **AGREED**.

### JC2025/29 Additional car park update

The Highways Consultant previously appointed met with a representation from both councils recently. Five sites previously identified were presented to him, plus an additional site off Westover. Site visits of each site assisted the consultant in understanding topography, highways and access concerns. On receipt of his report, this item will be included on a future agenda for further discussion.

### JC2025/30 To update on the proposed Transport Hub

A trial was recently conducted where a double deck bus visited Langport and circumnavigated the island in the precinct. An update is required from the lead officer on the viability of the larger vehicle movements and other items which have been suggested. A meeting with the officer has been requested.

Cllr MacNab enquired if the committee felt that sufficient consultation had been conducted. On receipt of the final report and recommendations, it was suggested and **AGREED** to host a 'drop in' session where people attending can raise their questions and share concerns on a 1-2-1 basis with the Somerset Council officer and a few Councillors. This will be organised soon after the pending meeting previously detailed.

### JC2025/31 To revisit the previous decision for dogs to be on kept on leads whilst on Cocklemoor

The previous discussion and recommendation to request that dogs are kept on leads whilst using Cocklemoor has met with some disapproval. A vibrant discussion resulted in a vote being conducted:

1. The suggestion if the current situation of dogs being allowed to exercise without being on leads should continue met with no support.
2. A suggestion that dogs should be kept on leads for the whole time (year round) met with limited support.
3. A suggestion that dogs should be kept on leads between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 30<sup>th</sup> September was supported by the majority.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that a recommendation will be submitted to both HEPC and LTC Councils at their next meetings recommending approval of the request that all dogs using Cocklemoor between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 30<sup>th</sup> September are kept on leads.

The date of the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March at 7.00pm.  
The meeting closed at 8.25pm

