Minutes of the Assets & Facilities Committee Meeting held on Thursday 22nd October 2026 at 11am at The Beechfield Centre, Beechfield Road, Fremington

Present: Cllr H Walker, J Cann, J Bridgeman, N Tamlin, B Sherborne, D Dixon, S Kingdom

Mrs J Wood, Administration and Projects Manager

2610/24 **Apologies for Absence**
Mr A Heighton (co-opted member, Barnstaple Youth Football Club).

2610/25 **Declarations of Interest**
None

2610/26 **Public Participation Period**
None

2610/27 **Minutes**
It was **resolved,** with no votes to the contrary**,** that the Minutes of the Extraordinary Assets and Facilities Committee held on the 2nd September 2026 be approved.

2610/28 **Update on Fremington Quay Works**
Prior to the meeting members were provided with a briefing note.

It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to note the information provided.

2610/29 **Draft Budgets 2027-2028**
The Administration & Projects Manager advised that there was an error with the budget sent out but this has now been rectified.

Cllr Bridgeman advised that he had spoken to the Executive Officer regarding the budget for Muddlebridge Allotments the draft budgets that had been circulated showed rental income and expenditure for year 2 but should be prepared on year 3 for 27/28, this will be amended accordingly prior to final consideration. With the additional income it could mean that the anticipated balance for the EMR will reduce to -£477.45 as at 31st March 2027. Cllr Bridgeman proposed that himself, the Executive Officer and the Administration Officer review the budgets and the agreed 3rd year increase. Cllr Walker suggested that any positive balance is put back into the EMR.

Regarding the EMR for the Beechfield Centre Cllr Walker proposed the installation of a fob access system at Beechfield Centre as an alternative to physical keys, highlighting that lost or unreturned fobs could be deactivated and reprogrammed. This followed recent issues with hirers forgetting to collect keys ahead of their bookings. Cllr Kingdom suggested retaining a key safe or keypad option for one-off hirers, and

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Cllr Bridgeman asked whether the fob could also operate the alarm system.

It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to note the draft budget 2027–2028, agree to both proposals put forward by Cllr Bridgeman and Cllr Walker, and request that the Administration & Projects Manager investigate the feasibility of introducing fob access in place of traditional keys.

2610/30 **Village Green**

Members considered a proposal from the Community Group regarding the erection of Christmas lights on the Village Green.

There was also a separate request from Cllr Biederman to place picnic benches on the Village Green that could also potentially double up as Christmas tree stands.

Councillors expressed concerns about the proposal for the erection of poles, noting that leaving unsightly poles in the ground would raise health and safety concerns and detract from the overall appearance of the Green. Members would happily consider any alternatives that the Community Group might suggest. The installation of picnic benches was also considered unsuitable due to concerns about antisocial behaviour, spill-out from the nearby pub and potential difficulties with grass cutting. It was noted that there are already sufficient benches on the Green and that attendees at events would generally bring their own chairs.

It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, not to proceed with the proposals, and for the Administration & Projects Manager to advise of the Council's concerns regarding the poles and benches and invite the Community Group to submit any further suggestions.

2610/31 **Biodiversity Improvements – Wildlife Pond**

Members considered the project proposal from the Maintenance and Amenities Operative regarding the wildlife pond. Members were advised that the Maintenance and Amenities Operative had applied for funding which should cover the cost of delivering the project, if the funding was unsuccessful costs would be reduced where possible. Cllr Tamlin has offered to help with the excavation of the pond.

Members welcomed the project, describing it as an excellent idea, and thanked the Maintenance and Amenities Operative for preparing a comprehensive and informative proposal document.

It was resolved, with no votes to the contrary, to agree to the proposal.

2610/32 It was **resolved** that under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item as it involves the likely disclosure of confidential information.

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Part B

2610/33 **Fremington Quay**

Cllr Walker updated Members on a recent meeting with the owner of the Stone Barn at Fremington Quay regarding a proposal to extend the building for commercial purposes, install a new water supply pipe, a septic tank, and a soakaway. The proposed works would affect land currently leased by Fremington Parish Council from the freeholder, North Devon Council.

The Parish Council had received supporting documents and correspondence outlining the proposals. The owner was seeking the Parish Council's agreement to either amend the existing lease or release the specific area required for the septic tank and soakaway, alongside permission to install the new water supply pipe.

Cllr Walker advised that elements of the proposal fell outside the boundary of the land leased by the Parish Council and were therefore outside the Council's jurisdiction. This included the proposed new water supply pipe, for which Devon County Council would need to be contacted.

Following a detailed discussion, it was **resolved,** with no votes to contrary, that the Parish Council seek professional legal advice regarding the terms of the existing lease with North Devon Council and the cost implications. The matter would be brought back to the next Assets and Facilities Committee for further consideration once this legal advice has been received.

2610/34 **Fremington Cemetery**

Members were advised of the potential opportunity to purchase land adjoining Fremington Cemetery to allow for future expansion. However, prior to consideration of the item, Members were informed that the land had since been sold. The matter was therefore not considered further.

2610/35 **Beechfield Changing Rooms**

Members were made aware of concerns regarding the Football Club's use of the field at Beechfield Centre, including:

- Public access: Concerns that members of the public were being charged an entrance fee and that stewards were preventing non-paying members of the public from accessing the field. The terms of the licence require the land to remain accessible to the public and do not grant the Club exclusive use of the site.
- Alcohol sales: Concerns regarding the sale of alcohol on Parish Council-owned land without the appropriate licensing arrangements.

The Administration & Projects Manager did add there were no concerns with the cleanliness of the changing rooms and for the most part items were being removed after matches.

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Members considered the need to address these concerns and ensure compliance with the licence; it was proposed that the Administration & Projects Manager draft a formal letter for the Chairman of the Assets and Facilities Committee to sign and send to the football club to address the concerns raised.

Meeting ended at 12.27pm

Signed: …….. Dated: ……

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