



NORTHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Town Hall, Windmill Lane, Northam EX39 1BY

Acting Town Clerk: Guy Langton (CiLCA, PSLCC)

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To all members of the Council:

You are hereby summoned to attend the **PARKS and RECREATION COMMITTEE** meeting on

Wednesday 15th July 2026 at 6:30pm

at The Town Hall, Windmill Lane, Northam for the transaction of the business listed on the agenda below.

Membership:

Cllrs Jeremy Bell, Louis Bach, Barry Edwards, Peter Hames, Claire Hodson, Niki Tait, Jane Whittaker Plus the Mayor, Cllr Sam Newman-McKie (ex-officio).

Questions by the public

There will be a period for questions by the public. In accordance with Standing Order 3, members of the public may make representations, ask questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of any Council business at Full Council, and at Committee meetings in respect of business on the agenda.

Anyone wishing to ask questions is requested to notify the Town Clerk prior to the meeting.

Recording, photographs and filming

In accordance with the Council's policy on filming and recording of Local Council and Committee meetings (available to read in the Chamber) and arising from the *Local Government and Accountability Act 2014* the press or public may audio-record, photograph or film meetings, or report from the meeting using social media. As such, members of the public may be recorded or photographed during the meeting. Anyone wishing to record or photograph the meeting must notify the Town Clerk before the commencement of the meeting.

Public attendance at Council and Committee meetings

As a public body, Northam Town Council understands the need for transparency and accountability. The Council will therefore seek to conduct meetings using practices and procedures set out within the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, which states:

Subject to subsection (2) below, any meeting of a body exercising public functions, being a body to which this Act applies, shall be open to the public.*

Subsection (2) states:

Where a meeting is open to the public, a body may, by resolution exclude the public from the meeting (whether during the whole or part of the proceedings) whenever publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons stated in the resolution and arising from the nature of that business or of the proceedings; and where such a resolution is passed, this Act shall not require the meeting to be open to the public during proceedings to which the resolution applies.

Therefore, the Council's policy is to allow public access to meetings unless the business being transacted is confidential or there are 'other special reasons' to exclude the public.

Guy Langton

Guy Langton, Town Clerk & RFO

Date of issue: 9th July 2026

Members are requested to turn off or silence their mobile phones for the duration of the meeting.

AGENDA

- 1 To receive and approve apologies for absence, in accordance with Local Government Act 1972 s85(1)** *All apologies must be notified to the Town Council offices by 5pm on the day of the meeting.*
- 2 Chair's announcements**
- 3 To receive any dispensations and disclosable pecuniary or other interests** *Members are reminded that all interests must be declared prior to the item being discussed.*
- 4 To agree the agenda as published.**
- 5 To confirm as a correct record and sign the minutes of the PARKS and RECREATION COMMITTEE held on 20th May 2026 (p3-p9)**
- 6 Public Participation**
Members of the public are permitted to make representations, answer questions and give evidence in respect of any item of business included in the agenda. Each member of the public is entitled to speak once only in respect of business itemised on the agenda and shall not speak for more than 4 minutes. The period of time which is designated for public participation in accordance with standing orders shall not exceed 20 minutes.

Representatives from the Friends of the Westward Ho! Park (FOTWHOP) and the Westward Ho! Volunteer Gardeners have been invited to attend and speak in relation to Item 8.
- 7 To receive an update on actions (p10,11)**
- 8 To receive a report from the Chair of FOTWHOP (p12, verbal)**
- 9 To update members on the MUGA Project at Westward Ho! (p12)**
- 10 Construction of Step at Blackies Footpath (Ref: 2507/194) (12,13)**
- 11 Modular Pump Track Proposal (p14,15)**
- 12 Request from Torrington Tennis Club for Court Hire (p15)**
- 13 Harbour to Hedge Project – Anchor Park Update (p16)**
- 14 Volunteer Litter Picking – Westward Ho!**

**Northam Town Council – Minutes of the Parks and Recreation committee meeting held
Wednesday 20th May 2026 at 6.30pm in the Town Hall, Windmill Lane, Northam.**

Present: Cllrs Jeremy Bell, Louis Bach, Barry Edwards, Peter Hames, Claire Hodson and Niki Tait.

In attendance: Ian Rawle – Parks & Buildings Manager.
Christine Hutchins – Friends of Westward Ho! Park (FOTWHOP).

2605/042 To elect a Chair for the Committee

Cllr Bell nominated Cllr Hames as Chair of the Parks and Recreation Committee. The nomination was seconded by Cllr Tait. The matter was put to a vote. All members were in favour.

2605/043 To elect a Deputy Chair for the Committee

Cllr Bell nominated Cllr Tait as Deputy Chair of the Parks and Recreation Committee. The nomination was seconded by Cllr Hames. The matter was put to a vote. The majority of members were in favour, with one member voting against.

2605/044 To receive and approve apologies for absence, in accordance with Local Government Act 1972 s85(1)

Cllr Whittaker and Cllr Sam Newman-McKie apologised, the reasons for which were accepted.

2605/045 Chair's Announcements

The Chair has no announcements. The Parks and Buildings Manager informed members that there is an error on page 11, item 14. The cost of the preferred option would be met from cost code 136 (Westward Ho!) rather than cost code 139 (Parks and Recreation).

2605/046 To receive any dispensations and disclosable pecuniary or other interests

Members were reminded that all interests must be declared prior to the item being discussed.

2605/047 To agree the agenda as published

It was **resolved** to agree the agenda as published.
Proposed Cllr Bell, Seconded Cllr Tait (all in favour)

2603/692 To confirm as a correct record and sign the minutes of the Parks and Recreation Committee held on 18th March 2026

It was **resolved** that to approve the minutes as a true and correct record, which were signed by the Chair.
Proposed Cllr Hodson, Seconded Cllr Bach (all in favour)

2603/693 Public Participation

Members of the public are permitted to make representations, answer questions and give evidence in respect of any item of business included in the agenda. Each member of the public is entitled to speak once only in respect of business itemised on the agenda and shall not speak for more than 4 minutes. The period of time which is designated for public participation in accordance with standing orders shall not exceed 20 minutes.

There was one member of the public present, in addition to Christine Hutchins, who would be invited to contribute at the relevant time.

2605/048 To receive an update on actions (below)

Action		November 2025	January 2026	March 2026	May 2026
1	To seek legal advice regarding installation of a step at Blackies (Ref: 2507/194 Construction of Steps and improvement of 'desire line' surface at Blackies Footpath)	Added to actions	If access and steps are created for public use, they must meet safety standards and be regularly inspected to avoid liability. Public liability insurance should be considered. Permission is needed from the landowner, and if the access meets a road or pavement, Highways approval is required. Planning permission may also be needed. Further checks with insurers, legal advisors, and the landowner are recommended.	In progress.	In discussion with DCC Public Rights of Way Officer
2	Permanent PumpTrack	Added to actions	Burrough Farm preferred site, Lord's Meadow less suitable. Obtain expert advice and cost estimate. If feasible, seek Full Council approval and go to tender. Explore funding opportunities (Sports Lottery, Section 106, others).	In progress.	Researching funding and contractor cost (by in and place using contractors and NTC staff)
3	To connect the Tarmac/wetpour path to the play area at Lords Meadow		Added to agenda.	Works planned for the end of March, ready for Easter Holidays.	Complete
4	To replace damaged and diseased Silver Birch trees at Lords Meadow		Added to agenda.	On Agenda.	Complete
5	Explore and develop alternative summer activities for Lords Meadow		Added to agenda.	Not Started.	Seeking quotation and availability

6	MUGA WWH!		-Meet with Contractor to discuss plans -investigate Planning, contact Environmental Health	- Contractor appointed to revise MUGA plans following feedback -Design reduced in size due to planning constraints -Additional noise mitigation included (anti-vibration posts and revised fencing) -Changes remain within approved budget	On Agenda
7	Pavilion WWH!		-Survey completed -Plans being developed for options (new build or renovation) -Demolition costs currently being obtained	No Change	-Survey completed -Plans being developed for options (new build or renovation) – Philip Hinton currently preparing draft plans -Demolition costs currently being obtained
8	Planned works for all Parish Play Parks and Annual Inspection Report		Inspections carried out	On Agenda	On Agenda
9	Hedge laying Lords Meadow		Contact Steve McCulloch for quotation and advice.	In talks with Steve McCulloch.	Awaiting quotation.

Members **noted** the update from the Parks and Buildings Manager on Actions 1–9. Cllr Bach also provided information on fundraising websites and examples of similar facilities delivered by other councils.

2605/049 To receive a report from the chair of FOTWHOP (Verbal)

Christine Hutchings provided members with an update on the park group. Members were advised that the group's AGM would take place the following evening. An update was also provided regarding current funds held by the group, including monies raised through the 200 Club.

It was noted that participation in the 200 Club had reduced, with 97 numbers currently in the draw. Members acknowledged that a number of factors may be contributing to this, including the current cost of living pressures affecting ticket sales.

Councillors suggested that future plans and projects relating to the park be displayed on notice boards to help promote awareness and community engagement.

This was **noted** by the Committee

Action Point: Parks and Buildings Manager to investigate options for promoting future park plans and projects on local notice boards to help improve community engagement and awareness.

2605/050 To update members from the MUGA Working Group.

It was **noted** that work was progressing on the submission of a Lawful Development Certificate for the proposed development. Members were also advised that the draft tender documentation would be reviewed by the Council's solicitor prior to issue, in order to ensure the documentation is appropriate and robust.

Members further **noted** that public consultation and engagement with local residents would be undertaken once the necessary amendments had been completed, including the preparation and distribution of a consultation letter or leaflet outlining the proposed project and opportunities for feedback.

It was requested that, in future, the minutes of the MUGA Working Group be circulated to all councillors.

This was **noted** by the Committee

Action Point: Parks and Buildings Manager to circulate the MUGA Working Group minutes to all councillors going forward.

2605/051 To discuss and note the planned works for all Parish play parks and review the annual inspection report from The Play Inspection Company Ltd

Members received an update from the Parks and Buildings Manager regarding the planned works arising from the annual playground inspection report undertaken by The Play Inspection Company Ltd.

The Parks and Buildings Manager outlined a programme of both reactive and non-reactive maintenance works across the play areas, including ongoing monitoring and treatment of rust-affected equipment due to the coastal location of the sites.

Cllr Edwards suggested contacting the Building Research Establishment (BRE) to seek recommendations regarding suitable paint systems and treatment methods for play equipment affected by corrosion, noting that they would be well placed to provide advice given the Council's proximity to the sea and the associated environmental conditions.

Members **noted** the report and discussed the importance of proactive maintenance to extend the lifespan of the equipment and maintain safety standards.

Action Point: Parks and Buildings Manager to contact the Building Research Establishment (BRE) to seek advice on suitable paint systems and treatment methods for play equipment affected by coastal corrosion.

2605/052 Windmill Lane Allotments - Condition of Boundary Wall Adjacent to Allotments

Members received an update regarding concerns over the condition of a boundary wall adjacent to the allotment plots at Windmill Lane Allotments.

Members were advised that sections of the wall are showing signs of deterioration and may be unstable, creating a potential risk of collapse or subsidence into neighbouring allotment plots and therefore posing a possible safety concern.

Following discussion, members agreed that the owner of the wall should be contacted and advised that responsibility for the maintenance and repair of the wall rests with the landowner.

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Members **noted** the update regarding the condition of the boundary wall adjacent to the allotments and **agreed** that correspondence be issued to the landowner regarding responsibility for repairs.

Proposed Cllr Bach, Seconded Cllr Tait (all in favour)

ACTION POINT: Town Clerk to contact the landowner regarding the deteriorating condition of the boundary wall adjacent to Windmill Lane Allotments, advising that responsibility for inspection, maintenance and any necessary repairs rests with the landowner due to the potential safety risk posed to adjoining allotment plots.

2605/053 Replacement of Benches at Westward Ho! Tennis Courts

Members considered options for the replacement of the existing benches at Westward Ho! Tennis Courts.

Members were advised that, due to the site's close proximity to the coast, the existing benches have been subject to significant weathering from the marine environment, including timber deterioration and corrosion to metal components caused by salt exposure.

The Parks and Buildings Manager presented three recycled plastic bench options for consideration, noting the benefits of recycled plastic materials in coastal locations due to their durability, resistance to rot and corrosion.

Following discussion, members agreed to proceed with Option 2, Members noted that the total cost of £738 including VAT and delivery for three benches would be met from Cost Code 136 (Westward Ho! Park).

Members **agreed to proceed** with Option 2 for the replacement benches at Westward Ho! Tennis Courts at a total cost of £738 including VAT and delivery, to be funded from Cost Code 136 (Westward Ho! Park).

Proposed Cllr Hames, Seconded Cllr Hodson (all in favour)

ACTION POINT: Parks and Buildings Manager to proceed with the purchase and installation of three recycled plastic benches (Option 2).

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7:36 pm.

Signed.....Dated.....

Item 9 update on actions

Action		November 2025	January 2026	March 2026	May 2026	June/July 2026
1	To seek legal advice regarding installation of a step at Blackies (Ref: 2507/194 Construction of Steps and improvement of 'desire line' surface at Blackies Footpath)	Added to actions	If access and steps are created for public use, they must meet safety standards and be regularly inspected to avoid liability. Public liability insurance should be considered. Permission is needed from the landowner, and if the access meets a road or pavement, Highways approval is required. Planning permission may also be needed. Further checks with insurers, legal advisors, and the landowner are recommended.	In progress.	In discussion with DCC Public Rights of Way Officer	On Agenda
2	Permanent PumpTrack	Added to actions	Burrough Farm preferred site, Lord's Meadow less suitable. Obtain expert advice and cost estimate. If feasible, seek Full Council approval and go to tender. Explore funding opportunities (Sports Lottery, Section 106, others).	In progress.	Researching funding and contractor cost (by in and place using contractors and NTC staff)	On Agenda
6	MUGA WWH!		-Meet with Contractor to discuss plans -investigate Planning, contact Environmental Health	Contractor appointed to revise MUGA plans following feedback -Design reduced in size due to planning constraints	To update P & R in July 2026.	On Agenda

				-Additional noise mitigation included (anti-vibration posts and revised fencing) -Changes remain within approved budget		
7	Pavilion WWH!		-Survey completed -Plans being developed for options (new build or renovation) -Demolition costs currently being obtained	No Change	-Survey completed -Plans being developed for options (new build or renovation) – Philip Hinton currently preparing draft plans -Demolition costs currently being obtained	Awaiting 3 plans – (Demo, New Build, Refurbishment)
8	Planned works for all Parish Play Parks and Annual Inspection Report		Inspections carried out	On Agenda	On Agenda	Works started.
9	Hedge laying Lords Meadow		Contact Steve McCulloch for quotation and advice.	In talks with Steve McCulloch.	Awaiting quotation.	Awaiting Site visit from Steve McCulloch.

Item 8 To receive a report from the chair of FOTWHOP (*Verbal*)

Item 9 To update members from the MUGA Working Group.

The MUGA Working Group met on 29th June 2026 to review progress on the project.

The Working Group received updates on the current status of the Lawful Development Certificate application, with a decision anticipated on 11 August 2026, together with the project budget, funding position and proposed programme.

The Working Group reviewed the draft specification for the Multi-Use Games Area and the proposed Invitation to Quote documentation, including site preparation requirements, construction management arrangements and the proposed communications plan.

The Working Group also considered the procurement approach and agreed to recommend that, subject to a favourable outcome of the Lawful Development Certificate application, the Council undertakes the procurement outside its current Procurement Policy, which is due to be updated, by advertising the opportunity on the Council's website and seeking quotations from specialist contractors.

The Working Group noted the positive response received during the public consultation and will continue to oversee the project as it progresses.

Recommendation:

That Members **note** the update from the MUGA Working Group.

Item 10 Construction of Step at Blackies Footpath (Ref: 2507/194)

To consider whether to pursue the installation of a step at Blackies Footpath following Minute 2507/194.

Further investigation has identified that it may be possible to improve access by installing a single step at the location. However, officers have identified a number of practical and legal considerations.

If the Town Council were to install a step for public use, it would assume responsibility for ensuring that the structure meets the appropriate safety standards and is subject to regular inspection, maintenance and repair. This would create an ongoing liability for the Council and may have implications for its public liability insurance.

Officers have made enquiries but have been unable to establish ownership of the land. As a result, the Council is not currently in a position to seek the necessary landowner's permission for any works.

Free verbal legal advice has also been obtained, which confirmed that the installation of a disclaimer or "use at your own risk" sign would not remove or limit the Council's legal responsibilities should it construct the step.

Whilst formal written legal advice could be sought, this would incur additional cost.

In light of the potential liability, the inability to identify the landowner, and the likely cost of obtaining further legal advice, the officer recommendation is that the Council does not pursue the installation of a step. Members may instead wish to leave the existing informal access unchanged, allowing individuals to decide whether to use the route at their own discretion.

Recommendation

That, having considered the potential liabilities, the inability to identify the landowner and the likely cost of obtaining formal legal advice, Members **agree** not to pursue the installation of a step at Blackies Footpath and to leave the existing informal access unchanged.

Item 11 Modular Pump Track Proposal

To consider whether the Council wishes to pursue the provision of a modular pump track as an alternative to a permanent pump track installation.

Members will recall previous discussions regarding the potential installation of a permanent pump track within the Parish.

Following further investigation, officers are of the opinion that a modular pump track would provide a more practical and cost-effective solution. A permanent pump track would significantly exceed the estimated cost of a modular installation and would require substantial construction works.

The recommended option is the Classic Edition modular pump track, which offers the following features:

- Marine-grade plywood construction.
- 1-metre track width.
- Non-slip fibreglass riding surface.
- Stationary whilst in use but highly mobile if relocation is required.
- Cost-effective compared with a permanent installation.
- Flexibly expandable to allow future additions.
- Lightweight modular construction.
- No Planning Permission required.
- Heat, cold and weather resistant.

Initial enquiries indicate that the estimated cost of a modular pump track would range between £49,300 and £63,500, depending on the size and configuration selected.

A modular pump track would provide the Council with greater flexibility, as it could be installed at a number of suitable locations, including:

- Burrows Farm.
- Lords Meadow.
- Anchor Park.

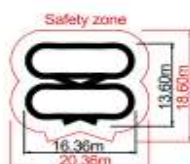
As the track is modular and can be dismantled and relocated, there is also potential for it to be hired or loaned to other local councils or community organisations when not required, providing opportunities to maximise its use.

Before officers undertake further work in obtaining detailed quotations, investigating funding opportunities and assessing suitable locations, Members are asked to indicate whether they wish to pursue the modular pump track option in preference to a permanent installation.

Recommendation:

That Members **consider** whether they wish officers to progress investigations into the provision of a modular pump track as an alternative to a permanent installation and, if supported, authorise officers to obtain detailed quotations, investigate funding opportunities and assess the suitability of Burrows Farm, Lords Meadow and Anchor Park as potential locations.

INFINITY LOOP



£49,300 + VAT

Options

- Custom RAL Colours + £2,370 + VAT
- Steel Frame T03 + £4,730 + VAT

Rideable surface area: 94m²

Track length: 75m on the centreline

Entry/Exit and City Armour included

SPEEDSTAR



£53,500 + VAT

Options

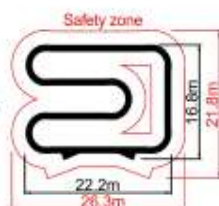
- Custom RAL Colours + £2,580 + VAT
- Steel Frame T03 + £4,730 + VAT

Rideable surface area: 104m²

Track length: 85m on the centreline

Entry/Exit and City Armour included

SIDEWINDER



£54,500 + VAT



Options

Custom RAL Colours + £2,720 + VAT

Steel Frame T03 + £5,430 + VAT

Steel Frame T03 + £4,730 + VAT

Rideable surface area: 113m²

Track length: 97m on the centreline

Entry/Exit and City Armour included

SWITCHBACK



£63,500 + VAT



Options

Custom RAL Colours + £3,160 + VAT

Steel Frame T03 + £6,330 + VAT

Steel Frame T03 + £4,300 + VAT

Rideable surface area: 134m²

Track length: 118m on the centreline

Entry/Exit and City Armour included

Item 12 Request from Torrington Tennis Club for Court Hire

The Council has received a request from Torrington Tennis Club to hire two tennis courts on two separate evenings each week from the date of approval until the end of August 2026.

The requested booking times are between 6.00 pm and 9.00 pm, with the exact evenings (Monday to Sunday) to be confirmed once the league fixtures have been finalised.

The Club currently uses the tennis courts at Atlantic Racquet Centre (ARC) for its league matches. However, due to increasing demand for the ARC courts, the Club has been advised that it may no longer be able to retain its existing bookings. It has therefore approached Northam Town Council to enquire whether the Council's tennis courts could accommodate its league fixtures.

Members should **note** that, if **approved**, this is likely to become a recurring request during future league seasons.

Recommendation

That Members **consider** the request from Torrington Tennis Club to hire two tennis courts on two evenings per week between 6.00 pm and 9.00 pm, from the date of approval until the end of August 2026 and determine whether to **approve** the request.

Item 13 Harbour to Hedge Project – Anchor Park Update

Members are provided with an update regarding discussions with representatives from the Harbour to Hedge community group and Appledore School in relation to a potential partnership project at Anchor Park.

Harbour to Hedge is a recently established community group whose aim is to improve biodiversity by creating and connecting habitats, supporting local wildlife and encouraging community involvement through practical conservation and educational activities.

Initial discussions have identified that the group's objectives align well with Northam Town Council's existing environmental initiatives, including habitat improvements, wildflower areas and hedge-laying works undertaken at Burrows Farm.

The group has expressed an interest in working collaboratively with the Council and Appledore School to develop biodiversity and educational projects within Anchor Park. The project has the potential to involve local volunteers, school pupils, youth groups and other members of the community, whilst supporting the Council's environmental objectives.

A meeting will be arranged with representatives of Harbour to Hedge and Appledore School to discuss how a partnership could operate in practice, including identifying potential projects within Anchor Park together with any maintenance, funding and resource implications.

Any future proposals arising from these discussions will be brought back to Members for consideration.

Recommendation

That Members **note** the update regarding discussions with Harbour to Hedge and Appledore School concerning a potential partnership project at Anchor Park.

Item 14 Volunteer Litter Picking – Westward Ho!

Members are asked to review the attached risk assessment relating to volunteer litter-picking activities within the Westward Ho! area.

The risk assessment identifies the potential hazards associated with the activity and the control measures required to minimise risks to volunteers and members of the public.

If approved, volunteer litter-picking activities will be undertaken in accordance with the control measures set out in the risk assessment.

Recommendation

That Members **review** the attached risk assessment for volunteer litter picking within the Westward Ho! area and, if satisfied, **approve** its use for organised volunteer litter-picking activities.