



NORTHAM TOWN COUNCIL

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NORTHAM TOWN **ANNUAL ELECTORS MEETING**

The **ANNUAL MEETING OF ELECTORS** for **APPLEDORE, NORTHAM, and WESTWARD HO!** will be held on

**Tuesday 12th May 2025 in Northam Hall (Fore Street EX39 1AW)
at 6pm.**

The agenda for the meeting is set out below. All registered electors in the wards of Appledore, Northam and Westward Ho! are invited to attend.

Any elector registered in the wards of Appledore, Northam and Westward Ho! may ask a question of or raise any matters relating to the Parish.

All electors may vote on any resolutions proposed and the Council will take note of those decisions.

This is **the** opportunity to enable the community to make its voice heard.

Cllr Sam Newman-McKie, Mayor of Northam Town Council.

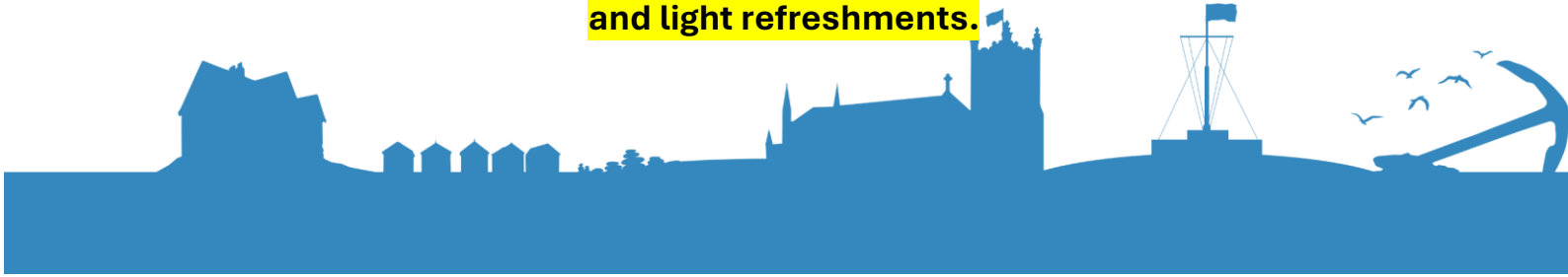
Date of issue: 6th May 2026

AGENDA

- 1 To receive apologies for absence
- 2 To confirm the Minutes of the Annual Electors Meeting held on 20th March 2026
- 3 To receive the reports from committee chairs, 2025-26
 - Environment & Maintenance Committee
 - Finance & Human Resources Committee
 - Parks & Recreation Committee
 - Planning & Development (including Northam Neighbourhood Plan)
 - Review Committee
 - Northam Burrows Charity Management Committee
- 4 To discuss matters raised by electors in the Parish

The Town Council is administering this meeting. Please direct any questions to the Town Hall, Windmill Lane, Northam, Bideford EX39 1BY Tel: 01237 474976 or by email to admin@northamtowncouncil.gov.uk

**The meeting will be followed by the Annual Grants Presentations
and light refreshments.**



**Minutes of the Northam Town Annual Electors' Meeting
20th March 2025 at 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Windmill Lane, Northam.**

Present: Cllrs Bach, Edwards, Hames, Himan, Hodson, Leather, Lo-Vel, Tait
(Mayor – in the chair) and Whittaker.

In attendance: Guy Langton – Deputy Town Clerk
Tina Tucker – Community Engagement and Administrative Officer
Corinne Williams – Finance Assistant and General Administrator
Members of the public

24-25/001 Apologies

Cllrs Lo-Vel, Newman-McKie, Roscoe and Singh gave their apologies.

24-25/002 To confirm the Minutes of the Annual Electors Meeting held on 17th April 2024

It was resolved to confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting as a correct record.

Proposed: Cllr Himan, Seconded: Cllr Edwards (all in favour)

24-25/003 To receive the following report:

Northam Town Council Mayor's Report

The report was read out by the Mayor.

24-25/004 To discuss matters raised by Parishioners

1. Cllr Whittaker addressed the meeting thanking all those that had signed her petition regarding parking charges at Bone Hill car park and noted that following resolutions at the District Council, from 1st April 2025, the charges would be removed for Saturday afternoons and all day on Sundays.

No response was required.

2. Mr Keith Lane, the Chair of the Twinning Committee thanked the Council for rehangng the Twinning decorations after the Chamber had been redecorated and commented that it was the 50th anniversary of the Town's Twinning in 2026.

No response was required.

There being no further matters raised, the meeting closed at 6:10pm and was followed by the Grant Presentations (at 6:30pm)

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

Reports from committee chairs 2025/26.

Environment & Maintenance committee

It is very satisfying to serve on a committee that is not only very well served by enthusiastic staff, but staff are also keen to implement practical proposals to enhance the green spaces of our town.

Earlier this year, for instance, a planting session was organised at Anchor Park in Appledore. This involved 30 very enthusiastic children from Northern and Appledore Schools who helped council staff plant apple trees, soft fruit and bluebells etc.

I believe the more people from our communities, and in particular are young people, we can involve in taking a practical interest in the green areas of our town, the better for all of us. On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank all the NTC staff for their care and diligence in maintaining our green spaces.

Councillor Jeremy Bell, committee chair.

Finance & Human Resources committee

Once again, I would like to thank the committee members for their commitment and their contributions to the financial agenda of the Council. This year the significant changes in our systems and banking arrangements introduced in 2024/25 have ensured that every penny of the public purse is well spent, monitored and reported to the entire Council and the community.

Despite some initial challenges with updating the existing banking arrangements, we have now agreed new accounts which attract interest, adding to the spending power of the Council. Also, the Council are investigating the proposal to open two further accounts for the May Fair in the Mayor's charitable fundraising. This will allow greater clarity and transparency for audit purposes and public scrutiny.

Decisions were made with the setting up of the budget to increase the precept the funding received from Torridge's collection of the Council tax by only 3.78%. This will cover costs of agreed pay increases for the staff, the anticipated increase in energy costs payable for our amenity spaces and keep pace with inflation.

Through the prudent approach to accumulating reserves, your Council was able to finance the purchase of replacement upgraded electrically powered maintenance equipment and a new vehicle to replace one of the fleet. These acquisitions will ensure your maintenance team. Function effectively to keep our green spaces in order. It has also enabled the introduction of electric battery charged appliances which can be charged using our own generated solar energy, demonstrating our commitment to climate change and the reduction in carbon emissions.

A fire risk assessment was undertaken at Northern Hall premises in 2024. The report identified several areas which required work to ensure that the safety of the building remained compliant with regulations. The reserves yet again proved vital in enabling works to commence some undertaken by the council's maintenance team, the major works being commissioned through the Council's procurement policy. These works have now been completed, thus spreading the expenditure over 2 years.

The council's tennis courts have successfully generated an income which will allow the annual contribution to the sinking fund and amounts to be set aside each year for £3,600 for the eventual refurbishment costs. The income will also allow for the subsidy

the tennis camps held once a week during the school summer holidays which were well attended, offering an affordable opportunity for the young people within our community.

In December, Northern Town Council approved grants to 41 community organisations totalling £26,670, this is budgeted for in 2026/27 financial year.

Approval was given by Torridge District Council to allow the procurement of an acoustic treatment of the Town Council Chamber to improve the facility for the hearing impaired and the quality of audio recordings. The works was completed in December 2025.

The Committee has approved funding for the continued training and development of all staff, ensuring compliance with legislative changes and acknowledging how they are all valued in delivering high-quality services to the community.

I am sure that I may have overlooked some areas of the work undertaken by the committee but I'm confident that the detailed minutes of the 13 meetings to be relied on to provide a transparent oversight of the decisions that have been implemented.

Councillor Claire Hodson, committee chair.

Parks & Recreation Committee

The Committee has been active in approving more enhancements in our parks and open spaces. At Anchor Park we agreed to sow additional wildflower areas along the lower side of the site, to plant fruit trees and to provide containers to fill with herbs and soft fruit. It was great to involve local schoolchildren from Appledore and St Margaret Schools in the planting. Heartening too was the sight of swathes of daffodils emerging by the playground in early spring.

At Lords Meadow it was a pleasure to see more areas of daffodils along the Park perimeter and we look forward to the hedge alongside Kimberly Park being laid next winter. Laying a hedge involves cutting the uprights in the hedge so that they can be bent down at an angle. This produces thicker growth which makes a denser hedge and improves biodiversity by providing cover and habitat for birds and small mammals. A useful addition to the play area at Lords Meadow was the creation of a connecting path to the perimeter footpath. The new hard surface now gives easy access to the play equipment rather than before having to go through muddy grass when there were wet conditions.

Another site owned by the Council is Burrough Farm which is now a very important local recreational asset and the allotment provides a great opportunity for local people to grow fruit and vegetables. The trees planted by the Council over the years around the allotment have matured and made a valuable visual improvement to the site. The hedge which has been laid alongside the National Trust land will now thicken and provide more habitat for wildlife and the new hedge planted by residents and Councillors on the perimeter of the football field is developing nicely.

Following the success of the temporary pump track installed for cyclists last summer in Lords Meadow the Committee is looking at possibly providing a permanent one at Burrough Farm between the football ground and the Leisure Centre.

Westward Ho! Park continues to provide a valuable outlet for local people. The tennis courts which were refurbished with grant funding have proved to be very well used and so has the new play equipment. The garden by The Pavilion and the planting in the beds

around the park are a delight and our thanks go to the excellent work of Friends of the Westward Ho! Park (FOTWHOP) in creating and maintaining them.

It is hoped that a decision will be made soon about the Pavilion in Westward Ho! park, whether to restore it or replace with a new building. Whatever is done, the building will provide an additional community facility in Westward Ho! to add to the Changing Places Toilet which has been provided at the side of the building. Another facility to be provided at that park is a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) to be located next the tennis courts, using Section 106 developer contributions arising from developments in Westward Ho! At present a revised plan is being drawn up to align with the advice of the District Council's Environmental Health team. Residents' views about the project will also be sought.

I should mention too the small site in Appledore next to St Mary's Church called Blackies which the Council owns and where more tree planting and more benches are being considered. There are also small play areas which come under the responsibility of the Committee at Appletree Gardens, Wren Close and Ridgeway Drive where the play equipment provided is subject to rigorous safety inspections every year, as is the skateboard track at Churchfields in Appledore.

Councillor Peter Hames, committee chair.

Planning & Development committee

(with responsibility for the Northam Neighbourhood Plan)

The Planning Committee has continued to carry out its good work. It should be noted that an application for housing development above Bloody Corner, Northam was recommended for refusal by the Committee and went to appeal after refusal by TDC. It was gratifying that the Inspector dismissed the appeal and concurred with both Councils' main reasons for refusal i.e. impact on the countryside and undeveloped coast.

Protection of the open countryside between Northam and Appledore is a strong theme in the draft Northam Neighbourhood Plan and I am pleased to report that after a long and arduous process the plan will probably go to Torridge Full Council in June and if approved by that Council will go to referendum, it is hoped at the end of August. Thanks are due to co-opted member Nick Arnold for the huge amount of work he has done on the Neighbourhood Plan and to our Clerk, Guy Langton.

Less positive news is that the Government is proposing to restrict the powers of District Councillors to use the process of calling in some planning applications for consideration at the planning committees of planning authorities rather than being decided by officers. The call in process is very important as a way of considering controversial applications which have been opposed by residents, or which need fuller discussion of relevant planning policies. A Government consultation has just finished and District Councillors have expressed strong opposition to the proposals.

I should report too that the formal process of preparing a new North Devon and Torridge Local Plan is about to commence in June and it is vitally important that residents make their views known about the Plan's policies and proposed allocations of land for development when they are submitted for public consultation.

Councillor Peter Hames, committee chair.

Review committee

It's been a busy year for our Review Committee as we went back to look at policies and documents of our Town Council, some of which hadn't been updated for some years and required thorough revision.

We considered 15 of our controlled documents, re-wording some, tweaking others to bring them up to date, including things like our annual grants policy, our safeguarding protocols and our maternity scheme for example. There is, of course, more work still to be completed.

My thanks go to the Town Clerk for his diligent and patient work and guidance and to the members of the committee who read each document through and suggested improvements and careful consideration to ensure robustness for the future.

- CCTV Policy (V0.1)
- Complaints (V1.1)
- Document Retention Policy (V0.2)
- Environmental (V1.1)
- Health & Safety Policy (V0.2)
- Honorary Freemen - Freewomen (V0.1)
- Investment Strategy (V0.2)
- Lone Worker Policy (V0.3)
- Protocol on the Death of a Senior
- National Figure (V0.3)
- Recruitment Policy (V0.4)
- Safeguarding Protocol (V1.1)
- Scheme of Delegation (v0.5)
- Standing Orders (V.01)
- Tennis Court Safeguarding (V0.1)
- Maternity Scheme (part of the staff handbook)

Councillor Sam Newman-McKie, committee chair.

Northam Burrows Charity Management Committee

Whilst not a standing committee of the Council, the Charity Management Committee's annual report will be included here when it has been received.

The key responsibility of the Northam Burrows Charity Management Committee is to look after the grazing on the Burrows, both by ensuring the correct level of grazing and also the rights of the graziers and helping to ensure the welfare of the animals.

Whilst not a standing committee of the Council, the charity is the responsibility of the council. Income results from selling the 1500 Burrows passes allocated to us from TDC. Any income over and above that needed for both administration of the charity, and our grazing responsibilities, may be given to local Charities under defined Criteria.

In terms of Grazing aspects of the charity this year:

- The Skern end fence has been extended to deter sheep from escaping.

- A new water trough has been installed close to the Westward Ho! gate.
- There is new signage to warn of dog fouling, livestock worrying and the effect of dogs on the wild bird population.

Substantial work to replace bridges, build new ones and other infrastructure to assist both Graziers and public on the Burrows still currently under discussion.

Since the charity was inaugurated, considerable financial reserves had built up so this year it was agreed to award grants totalling £39,917.80 to the following organizations selected from many applications:

Committee Grants awarded by Charity Management

Appledore Baptist Church	£750.00
Friends of Northam School	£2,926.20
St Marys Hall	£6,500.00
Northam Library - Libraries Unlimited	£9,500.00
Westward Ho! Men's Shed	£528.00
St Margarets Church	£8,000.00
Westward Ho! Community Association	£5,400.00
Appledore Primary School	£6,313.60
Total	£39,917.8

Congratulations to those allocated grants, thank you to the Graziers and Northam Burrows wardens of their input to the committee and to the committee members for their help

CLlr Niki Tait, Northam Burrows committee chair