

**Northam Town Council – Minutes of the Full Council meeting held 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2026 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber, Windmill Lane, Northam.**

Present: Cllrs Bell, Bach, Hames, Hodson, Horrocks, Leather, Lo-Vel, Newman-McKie (Mayor) Sawyer, Tait and Whittaker (Deputy Mayor).

In attendance: Guy Langton (Town Clerk & RFO), Rev John Kidd. One member of the public.

*Rev Kidd left before the start of the meeting (6:30pm)*

**2606/054 Apologies**

Cllrs Edwards, Himan, and Singh submitted their apologies, the reasons for which were approved. Cllr McGeough (Devon County Council) and Cllr K O'Rourke (Torridge District Council) also apologised.

**2606/055 To agree the agenda as published.**

It was **resolved** to proceed with the agenda, as published.  
Proposed Cllr Whittaker, Seconded Cllr Lo-Vel (all in favour)

**2606/056 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.

**2606/057 Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor explained that the agenda for Full Council would include a time for a comfort break. This had been included to provide people with the opportunity to move after having sat for a period of time. It also provided a convenient time for others attending the meeting to leave or enter with minimal disturbance.

The Mayor announced that a round-table meeting would be arranged at a convenient time in the mid/late afternoon to review the Council's Vision Statement and Action Plan. All staff and members would be invited once the Town Clerk had found suitable dates.

**2606/058 To confirm and sign the minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council held 6<sup>th</sup> May 2026**

It was **resolved** to approve the minutes, which were signed by the Mayor.  
Proposed: Cllr Leather, Seconded: Cllr Hames (majority in favour, one abstention – not present at the meeting)

**2606/059 To receive and adopt the reports of minutes and resolutions contained therein from Committees and Sub-Committees**

The below listed minutes were received and adopted.

- Finance & Human Resources 11th March 2026
- Parks & Recreation 21st January 2026
- Planning & Development 19th March and 9th April 2026

**2606/060 Public Participation**

The member of the public addressed the council on the matter of community halls and publicly owned buildings across the three communities. Does the area have the buildings it needs for the services and facilities it offers and which organisations own the buildings? With Local Government Reorganisation happening over the next few years, does this Town Council have plans for what it may need to deliver?

**2606/061 To receive a report from Devon & Cornwall Police**

No members of the Neighbourhood Policing team were available to attend the meeting.

Chair's initials

**2606/062 To receive a report from the Devon County Councillor**

Cllr McGeough tendered his apologies, no written report was provided.  
 Cllr Hames reminded the council that the consultations on parking restrictions that were to be considered by HATOC would be closing on the 12<sup>th</sup> June 2026.

**2606/063 To receive reports from Torrridge District Members**

Cllr O'Rourke tendered her apologies, no written report was provided.  
 Cllrs Lo-Vel and Whittaker submitted written reports, appended to these minutes.  
 Cllr Hodson responded to a question from Cllr Tait regarding signage at the Skern instructing people to not cross the mudflats at low tide.  
 Cllr Hames noted that Torrridge District Council had offered support to the Bideford Rail Futures aims.

*Comfort break (6:47pm to 6:52pm)*

**2606/064 To receive an update regarding Local Government Reorganisation**

The proposals for Devon's reorganisation have been published and the consultation has completed. The timeline and updates are available from the Government at [Local government reorganisation: Policy and programme updates - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/local-government-reorganisation).  
 This Council did not submit a response to the consultation, allowing each member to respond to the consultation individually.  
 It had been confirmed that central Government would be publishing its favoured model for the future local government in Devon on the 16<sup>th</sup> July 2026.

**2606/065 To consider the action point update**

The action points were received as below.

2508/283 Meeting with Northam Lions FC	Cllrs Bach, Edwards and Lo-Vel, with the Town Clerk, met with representatives of Northam Lions FC. A way forward was identified and a revised agreement has been drafted. Northam Lions have since requested sole access to the land. This would require a change of dedication with Fields in Trust, which had been estimated to cost up to £2,500. Sole access was also expected to cost more than the preferential access fee of £250 per year, though professional advice would be sought. The draft agreement would be considered by this Council on the 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2026. <b>ONGOING</b>
2512/520 Libraries Unlimited Consultation	At its meeting on the 20 <sup>th</sup> May, DCC approved a funding package that will, among other things, see no reduction to the library hours across Devon. For more information, see <a href="#">£2 million cash boost secures future of Devon libraries - News</a> . <b>COMPLETE</b>
2512/525 Speedwatch	Advise the Police of the intention to recommence the SpeedWatch initiative in the Parish and of the volunteer coordinator. A total of four volunteers needed, the coordinator plus three. Adverts have been placed on the Council's website and re-shared fortnightly on social media. Assistance with promotion would be sought. <b>ONGOING</b>
2601/551 Pension arrangements for Council Staff	Prepare a report and consultation proposition for staff regarding the Local Government Pension Scheme. Initial staff feedback to be sought when the revised staff handbook (in preparation, working with the Council's HR provider) is presented to staff. Staff would be consulted at the same time as the new Staff Handbook would be presented to them, later in the summer. <b>ONGOING</b>

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2603/717 Concerns over the operation of the Police Advocate scheme	Town Clerk has written to the Police and Crime Commissioner raising this council's concerns over the cancellation of the Police Councillor Advocate quarterly meetings. A full response would be sought.  ONGOING
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**2606/066 To receive the Clerk's report**

On 30<sup>th</sup> April 2026 the Council's balances were:

Petty Cash	£50.81	no interest	notes
Hinkley & Rugby Building Society	£966,284	interest rate is 1.75%	Holding account for general expenditure and £50,000 of the General Reserve
Cambridge & Counties Bank (31-day)	£98,056.27	interest rate is 3.25%	General Reserves
Nationwide (Business 95-day saver)	£97,622.26	interest rate is 3.35%	Earmarked Reserves (as per agreed budget: parks, defibrillators, LCWIP, war memorial cleaning, skate park and pavilion renovation reserve)
Cambridge Building Society	£9,281.88	interest rate is 1.75%	Tennis Reserves
Coop Bank (current account)	£349,933.47	no interest	General expenditure

**Total cash in hand (SCRIBE) £651.228.69**

The Council moved £250,000 of its first precept receipt to its Hinkley and Rugby Building Society interest bearing account.

**Petty Cash:** The Council spent £22.95 petty cash in April 2026. The financial regulations seek to maintain a balance of £100 in Petty Cash. £50 was withdrawn and added to Petty Cash in early May 2026.

**Tennis courts:** The gross volume of sales in April 2026 was £700. After fees, the Council has received £667.19. Fifteen of the receipts were for annual passes, which provide holders with free tennis court bookings for the calendar year after purchase. Since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026, the Council has received £667.19 for tennis court memberships and bookings.

**Payments & Receipts:** Between 1<sup>st</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> April 2026, the council made 93 payments, totalling £38,849.96 (ex VAT) (p8-11), including 29 of £100 or more totalling £37,664.03 (exVAT), appended to these minutes. In the same period, the council received 157 payments, totalling £338,568.21 (ex VAT), including the first instalment of the precept, £334,352.

**2606/067 To receive an update on the request made by a member of the public at the Annual Electors Meeting**

At the Annual Electors Meeting, held on the 13th May 2026, a member of the public (representing the Seagate Hotel) requested the Council address the issues caused to that, and other businesses in Appledore, by the removal of the after 11pm bus.

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The Town Clerk has contacted the County Councillor and DCP Licencing Officer for further information DCP have been heavily involved in providing night buses across Devon and Cornwall and the County Council commission bus services from the provider. I would like to take this opportunity to remind members that the night bus service only operates on 16 Saturdays through the summer season, and New Year's Eve – it is not a more regular service covering 12 months of the year.

The Licencing Officer provided the below information, which has been shared with Cllr McGeough. Our County Councillor has raised the issue with the transport team at DCC and will approach the service provider.

The latest bus that stops at Appledore is the 21A at 2225 Hours on a Saturday. Currently the DPS for The Seagate has not contacted me. Timings that premise close in Appledore on Saturdays are as follows.

Seagate	23:30	Beaver	23:00
Champ	00:30	Royal George	23:30
Royal Hotel	01:00	Jack Sprats	00:30

Cllr Tait explained the apparent disparity between the number of buses timetable to serve Appledore and the number for Westward Ho!

It was **resolved** to write to the County Council and service provider to express the Council's concern that Appledore has fewer timetabled bus services than Westward Ho!

Proposed: Cllr Hames, Seconded: Cllr Bell (all in favour)

**Action point: Write to the County Council and bus service provider.**

2606/068

**To consider providing the lock codes to the Council's defibrillator cabinets**

It was **resolved** to provide the lock codes on the cabinets, or unlock the cabinets, as appropriate.

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

**Action point: Affix the lock codes to the Council's defibrillator cabinets or unlock the cabinets, as appropriate.**

2607/269

**Torrige District Council Planning Applications:**

i) [1/0296/2026/LBC](#)

**Proposal:** Reinstatement of a historic window and the installation of iron railings

**Location:** 5 Odun Road, Appledore

The Council **recommended** the proposal be granted permission.

Proposed: Cllr Bach, Seconded: Cllr Hames (majority in favour, 1 abstention)

ii) [1/0309/2026/FUL](#)

**Proposal:** Proposed internal alterations and single storey rear extension, to include demolition of the existing conservatory and the conversion of the existing garage

**Location:** 9 Millenium Way, Westward Ho!

The Council **recommended** the proposal be granted permission.

Proposed: Cllr Leather, Seconded: Cllr Horrocks (majority in favour, 1 abstention)

iii) [1/0327/2026/LBC](#)

**Proposal:** Retrospective internal alterations

**Location:** 8 Pitt Hill, Appledore

The Council **recommended** the proposal be granted permission.

Proposed: Cllr Bach, Seconded: Cllr Lo-Vel (majority in favour, 1 abstention)

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iv) [1/0331/2026/FUH](#)

**Proposal:** Extension to front porch

**Location:** 6 Skern Way, Northam

The Council **recommended** the proposal be granted permission.

Proposed: Cllr Horrocks, Seconded: Cllr Bach (majority in favour, 1 abstention)

**2606/069 To note the vacancies on committees and approve any requests to fill those vacancies**

Cllr Tait resigned from the Review committee.

It was **resolved** to appoint members to committee vacancies as follows:

Review committee: Hodson, Cllrs Lo-Vel, and Whittaker, leaving one vacancy;

Planning & Development committee: Cllr Sawyer, leaving two vacancies

Proposed: Cllr Sawyer, Seconded: Hames (all in favour)

**Action point: Affix the lock codes to the Council’s defibrillator cabinets.**

There being no further business, the meeting close at 7:50pm

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Dated \_\_\_\_\_

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## Linking Bideford with the Basque Country

### Report of a visit to Pasaia, 14-17 May 2026



Last week, seven of us from Bideford, including town and district councillors, visited the maritime festival at Pasaia, in northern Spain. This followed the establishment of links with the shipbuilding Factory-Museum Albaola with the initial aim of bringing a historic Spanish ship to Bideford after an introduction from Laura Correa, Managing Director of Navantia Appledore.

Albaola restores and builds replicas of historic vessels using traditional techniques with the aim of re-discovering and promoting Basque history and culture. It has strong links with Canada, having nearly completed a replica of a 16th century Basque whaling ship which was found wrecked off the coast of Labrador. The museum welcomes 45,000 visitors a year who can watch shipbuilding and associated trades being carried out (for example, a blacksmiths forge making anchors and a carpentry workshop making pulleys) as well as viewing exhibits and information panels on Basque maritime history. Our group were given a personal guided tour of the museum by the Director and Founder, Xavier Agote and the Development Manager, Gorka Arizkorreta. We then met with the Mayor, Teo Alberro, and Laura Re, Cultural Lead of Pasaia Town, who organise the Maritime Festival in partnership with Albaola.

#### Key takeaways

- The project has achieved impressive results since its foundation with volunteers 30 years ago. They have restored or rebuilt several different vessels including the whaler, the San Juan, and are currently renovating San Sebastian's last tuna fishing boat, the Ozentziyo. The next vessel to be built will be a trading schooner.
- Funding is through a partnership of public, private and voluntary contributions. The rediscovery and projection of traditional skills and culture form an important strand in the regeneration of the town of Pasaia, situated on two sides of a long creek east of San Sebastian.
- It's not just about shipbuilding, but all the associated activities which make the area special - the pottery exported to Canada to build the roofs of buildings for processing whale oil - the origin of the name 'Red Bay'; cider production and the impact on vernacular architecture of the need to produce thousands of litres of cider for long sea voyages; forestry techniques to produce the right sort of wood for shipbuilding; music, etc.
- An aim of the centre is to relearn and recreate lost skills and to take them forward in practical applications. It is a mix of paid staff and volunteers which ensures community involvement.
- International links are important as a means of raising the profile of Basque culture and its place in history.

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- There is a strong emphasis on future generations. 12k of the 45k annual visitors are children. One particularly impressive project involved schoolchildren building a small flat-bottomed boat they could actually put to sea in. This video shows the range of skills they learnt.
- The festival brought crowds of people into Pasaia. There was an impressive range of boats large and small from different countries, including the Fowey-built Greyhound, a variety of exhibition stands, boat trips across the creek, mobile food outlets and activities for children.

**Next steps**

Albaola see a partnership between Pasaia and Bideford developing as a six- or seven-year project. From our side, we would want the project to culminate with a visit from the San Juan or similar large sailing ship along with other ships to compliment an event. Both sides need to expand the number of partners involved.

Educational links could be a very productive way forward, engaging young people in culture and heritage skills (workshops, exchanges, maybe an international summer camp?)

They would like to visit Bideford next year, possibly in the context of additional activities we could organise around the Water Festival. These might include:

- Visits from one of Albaola's smaller ships and/or other heritage vessels
- The launch of the Jane Hannah McDonald III
- Gig races
- Talks highlighting parallels between Bideford and Pasaia
- Food and drink
- Youth activities – in Pasaia there was mast-climbing for children
- Fancy dress
- Model making – ships from tin cans
- Examples and displays showing how we work in schools and with young people.

Teresa Tinsley 22 May 2026, on behalf of: **Cllr Wendy Lo Vel**

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After TDC's AGM it was decided to leave Cllr Elliott on the C and R Committee as the Cons representative and to stand down myself. As the youngest Conservative Cllr it made sense to give him the opportunity to contribute to what is considered to be the most important Committee on the Council. However, there is always a silver lining in that I am now able to substitute on almost all of the other Committees.

So, this morning I subbed on O and S External a Committee which I haven't attended for many years and where there were two main Presentations. The first was on Water Safety which was really interesting and involved in the main the RNLI Lead Life Guard Supervisor for N Devon and Somerset along with Mike Day our Northam Burrows Manager and Lead Ranger. Chris Wilson TDC's Coastal Engineer also made a contribution. Lifeguards are on Westward Ho! Croyde and Woolacombe beaches from mid May until the end of September. Locally they dealt with 115 incidents last year which included 19 major first aids and 36 minor ones. They also searched for and found 12 individuals. They are seasonal employees who are funded locally by TDC with 45 in all employed across Northern Devon. However, the greatest risks apparently are presented by lakes and rivers where at best only Public Rescue Equipment can be found.

For 23 years now Westward Ho! has been awarded the Blue Flag which is something to be very proud of because the water quality has to be excellent in order to achieve the award.

The other item was Railway Future Ltd, this was to be discussed as a consequence of a paper presented by the chair of this Committee and asked the question 'should TDC note that reinstating a Rail link to Bideford is unrealistic' Should TDC also take various steps to improve connectivity generally, support greater opportunities for walkers and cyclists and prioritise public transport between Bideford with our other towns, Villages and the wider rural hinterland.

After some discussion with some very varied views expressed it was agreed to remove the comment about the reinstatement of a rail link as being unrealistic but ask Full Council to actively consider the remaining points.

Attending the Crematorium Committee was another of my recent commitments. It was good to note that the Solar Panel Project has been completed with 45 percent of the facilities electricity now supplied by this means. Also to note that a Capital Funding Bid is being considered for the replacement of the Cremators as this may well be required by 2028 and which would also improve better access and handling generally.

**Cllr Whittaker**

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Voucher	Date	Net	VAT	Gross	Description	Cost Centre	Cost Code	Minute Ref
2	01.04.2026	£448.76	£0.00	£448.76	Room rental	Administration	Room Rental	
7	07.04.2026	£314.00	£62.80	£376.80	IT contract	ICT	Cloudy IT	
8	07.04.2026	£455.00	£91.00	£546.00	Cleaning CPT	CPT	Cleaning	
10	07.04.2026	£130.00	£26.00	£156.00	Alarm maintenance	Northam Hall	Alarm & CCTV	
11	07.04.2026	£533.00	£106.60	£639.60	Vehicle Service	Council Machinery & Equipment	Truck Maintenance	
15	07.04.2026	£355.00	£0.00	£355.00	May Fair 2026	Community	May Fair Costs	
16	07.04.2026	£733.33	£146.67	£880.00	May Fair 2026	Community	May Fair Costs	
17	07.04.2026	£155.01	£31.00	£186.01	Photocopier lease	Administration	Photocopier Lease	
21	09.04.2026	£1,089.56	£217.91	£1,307.47	Insurance	Insurances	General	
24	09.04.2026	£279.93	£55.99	£335.92	Highway Signage	Council Machinery & Equipment	Highway Signage & Barriers	
27	10.04.2026	£303.12	£15.16	£318.28	Gas Account	Northam Hall	Gas	
29	10.04.2026	£335.00	£67.00	£402.00	Civic.ly Subscription	ICT	Civic.ly Asset Management Software	
30	10.04.2026	£500.00	£100.00	£600.00	MVSIDs	Environment & Maintenance	MVSIDs	
35	14.04.2026	£193.54	£38.71	£232.25	Fuel	Council Machinery & Equipment	Fuel - WF18 PTX	
35	14.04.2026	£161.77	£32.35	£194.12	Fuel	Council Machinery & Equipment	Fuel - Mowers	
36	15.04.2026	£106.63	£21.33	£127.96	Tables	Northam Hall	Maintenance	
46	20.04.2026	£124.66	£6.23	£130.89	Electricity Account	Northam Hall	Electric	
47	20.04.2026	£19,200.00	£0.00	£19,200.00	Salaries	Staff Costs	Salaries, HMRC and NEST	2604/761
51	22.04.2026	£171.00	£0.00	£171.00	Garden Waste Collection	Environment & Maintenance	Litter/Recycling & Dog Waste Bins	
55	23.04.2026	£7,242.08	£0.00	£7,242.08	HMRC PAYE	Staff Costs	Salaries, HMRC and NEST	2508/252
76	28.04.2026	£112.35	£22.47	£134.82	Payroll	Staff Costs	Payroll Processing Fees	
77	28.04.2026	£156.32	£31.26	£187.58	Stationery	Administration	Stationery	
78	28.04.2026	£178.50	£35.70	£214.20	Payroll	Staff Costs	Payroll Processing Fees	
79	28.04.2026	£192.20	£38.44	£230.64	Refreshments	Community	May Fair Costs	
80	28.04.2026	£200.00	£40.00	£240.00	The Link	Community	Newsletters & Communication	
81	28.04.2026	£400.00	£0.00	£400.00	Cleaning Northam Hall	Northam Hall	Cleaning	
82	28.04.2026	£515.00	£103.00	£618.00	May Fair 2026	Community	May Fair Costs	
83	28.04.2026	£3,078.27	£615.66	£3,693.93	Mayor's Chains	Members	Upgrade to Mayoral Chain	
<b>29</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>£37,664.03</b>	<b>£1,905.28</b>	<b>£39,569.31</b>				

Chair's initials

