

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

The Action table is presented below.

DRAFT

Item 7 update on actions

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	Contractor appointed to revise MUGA plans following feedback	On Agenda

			-investigate Planning, contact Environmental Health	-Design reduced in size due to planning constraints -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
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.

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.....

Chair’s
initials