Northam Town Council – Minutes of the Full Council meeting held 2nd September 2026 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber, Windmill Lane, Northam.

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

In attendance: Guy Langton (Town Clerk & RFO), Rev Andrew Vidamour.

2609/247 Apologies
All members were present.

2609/248 To agree the agenda as published.
It was **resolved** to proceed with the agenda, moving the final two items to after the time allocated for Public Participation to allow sufficient time to consider them in detail.
Proposed Cllr Edwards, Seconded Cllr Tait (majority in favour, 3 against)

Rev Vidamour left at this point (6:35pm)

2609/249 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.

2609/250 Mayor's Announcements
The Mayor announced that the extended opening hours at Northam Library had been published. These 'open access' hours, in addition to the 21 staffed hours were possible by a grant from the Northam Burrows Charity.

The Mayor encouraged all members to advise their networks of the Town Council's annual grant round, which was open from the 1st September to the 31st October.

Cllr Hodson entered at this point (6:37pm)

2609/251 To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting of the Council held 29th July 2026
Cllr Edwards asked if the proposal he had made at the previous meeting to contact the County Council and bus service operator and seek a meeting with those bodies had been included. The conformation of the minutes was therefore deferred to the next meeting.

2609/252 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.

- Environment & Maintenance 17th June 2026
- Finance & Human Resources 8th July 2026
- Planning & Development 2nd and 23rd July 2026

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

Cllrs Leather and Singh entered at this point (6:40pm)

2609/253 Public Participation
There were no members of the public present.

*It was **resolved** to exclude members of the press and public, pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. Proposed: Cllr Tait, seconded Cllr Hodson (all in favour)*

2609/254 To consider revisiting the Council's position regarding the 'Leisure Centre', Northam
After considerable discussion, in which the Council noted the establishment of a community group that was seeking to acquire and renovate the building, it was

resolved to not revisit or change the council's position regarding the 'Leisure Centre', Northam Square.
Proposed: Cllr Edwards, Seconded: Cllr Bell (majority in favour, three against)

2609/255 **To consider whether to seek title over land in Westward Ho! ward**
It was **resolved** to not seek title over the land at Milluemium Way, title number DN428801, noting that the council's staff were not able to maintain land it did not own without the owner's permission.
Proposed: Cllr Hames, Seconded: Cllr Tait (majority in favour, 2 against and 1 abstention).

*It was **resolved** to readmit members of the press and public, pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. Proposed: Cllr Whittaker, seconded Cllr Edwards (all in favour)*

2609/256 **To receive a report from Devon & Cornwall Police**
No members of the Neighbourhood Policing team were available to attend the meeting.

2609/257 **To receive a report from the Devon County Councillor**
Cllr McGeough did not attend the meeting.

2609/258 **To receive reports from Torridge District Members**
Cllr O'Rourke was not available to attend the meeting. There were no reports made by other Torridge members.

2609/259 **To receive a report (if any) from the Police-Councillor Advocate**
Cllr Sawyer reported that he was arranging a meeting with the Neighbourhood Team Inspector and hoped to liaise with the Police Neighbourhood Team to present reports to these meetings each month.

2609/260 **To receive an update regarding Local Government Reorganisation**
The Mayor reported that Devon's LGR proposal had been brought up at Prime Minister's Questions, with the PM agreeing to listen to the arguments.

Devon County Council has issued a pre-action protocol letter to the government to challenge the planned local government reorganisation (LGR) via a judicial review.

In the decision made in July 2026, Whitehall announced plans to divide Devon into four unitary authorities, expanding Plymouth, Exeter, and Torbay. The remainder of the county would be in a single unitary authority. The County Council objected, arguing the model prioritises urban expansion, ignores rural and coastal needs, and could cost local taxpayers up to £80m in implementation. The council has also filed Freedom of Information requests regarding how ministers reached their decision.

Devon County Council's cabinet would formally decide whether to proceed with the judicial review at its September meeting.

2609/261 **To consider the action point update ...** The action points were received as below.

2508/283 Meeting with Northam Lions FC	Management agreement is on the agenda for consideration.	COMPLETE

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. One volunteer had come forward and the Town Clerk was in the process of arranging the training. Cllr Hodson volunteered to promote the initiative to local and community groups and organisations, asking if other members would also do so. **Action Point: contact local and community organisations (e.g. schools' Friends groups) to promote the project and seek further volunteers.** ONGOING
2601/551 Pension arrangements for Council Staff	Initial staff feedback sought 14th July 2026. All staff at the meeting stated they would be willing to make the increased contribution required by the LGPS over the NEST scheme, which could vary between 0.8% and 2.5% more. A report will be prepared for the Full Council meeting later in September 2026. Members requested that the October Finance & HR committee receive the report in the first instance. ONGOING
0606/067 Write to Devon County Council and bus service provider to express the Council's concern over the different levels of service provided to Appledore and Westward Ho!	No further correspondence from the County Council regarding the cost of extending the bus services serving Appledore. No further correspondence regarding the cost of providing a temporary Night Bus to Appledore. It was noted that the provided Night Bus service to Westward Ho! was not what the Council agreed to fund at its meeting in april 2026 (minute 2604/775) and that this should be included in any arranged meeting with the County Council and bus service provider. ONGOING
2607/125 Write to PCC and Inspector to express the Council's concerns and clarify the funding of street wardens.	OPCC and Neighbourhood Policing team Inspector contacted, who responded that Westward Ho! was not considered a Hot Spot for 2026. The Town Clerk would share the email threads with Cllr Sawyer as Police Councillor advocate. ONGOING
2607/131 Funding a defibrillator – Westbourne Terrace	The grant awards have been approved. The Defibrillator and Case have been purchased and, at the time of writing, awaited installation (TDC informed). The Defibrillator had been installed. COMPLETE

2607/208 Possible taxi rank locations in Northam Parish	Inform the Chair of the TDC licencing Committee that no suitable locations could be identified. COMPLETE
2607/209 Take out membership of the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA)	Membership for 2026-27 paid. COMPLETE
2607/211 Split rooms G14&G15 back into two	Structural work contractor instructed. Electrical contractor instructed. RAMS and associated documents required by the building's owner to be completed. Date for works to be confirmed. ONGOING

Comfort break (7:50pm to 8:00pm)

2609/262 To receive the Clerk's report

On 31st July 2026 the Council's balances were:

Account	Balance	Interest	Notes
Petty Cash	£74.59	zero	Financial Regulations expect the balance to be maintained at approximately £100
Hinkley & Rugby Building Society	£250,000	1.65%	Holding account for general expenditure and £50,000 of the General Reserve
Mayor's Charitable Fundraising	£2,805.00	1.06%	Mayor's civic dinner and other fundraising
May Fair	£5,250.35	1.06%	Funds for deposits and other spending leading up to the next May Fair
Cambridge & Counties Bank (31-day)	£98,729.07	2.72%	General Reserves
Nationwide (Business 95-day saver)	£98,411.78	3.20%	Earmarked Reserves (as per agreed budget: parks, defibrillators, LCWIP, war memorial cleaning, skate park and pavilion renovation reserve)
Cambridge Building Society	£10,792.20	1.55%	Tennis Reserves
Coop Bank (current account)	£17,048.78	zero	General expenditure

Total cash in hand (SCRIBE) £483,111.77

Petty Cash: The council spent £16.98 of petty cash in July 2026, withdrawing £70 to maintain the balance stated in the financials regulation (£100).

Tennis courts: The gross volume of sales in July 2026 was £1,284.23 after fees.

Year to date (1st April to 31st July)	Received	Change
2026	£3,067.42 (-22.26%)	-22.26%
2025	£3,945.65 (+12.46%)	+12.46%
2024	£3,508.58 (1st year)	0% 1st year

Payments: Between 1st and 31st July 2026, the council made 137 payments, totalling £52,635.66 (ex VAT). There were 35 payments of £100 or more totalling £50,487.14 (ex VAT) (appended to these minutes).

Receipts: Between 1st and 31st July 2026, the council had 130 receipts, including 34 for the hire of Northam Hall, totalling £13,558.86 (ex VAT).

2609/263 To receive an update on the Northam Neighbourhood Plan referendum

Cllr Hames reported that the referendum, held on the 20th August 2026 resulted in a YES vote and the Northam Neighbourhood Plan would proceed to be made by Torridge district Council in due course. There was a 22.3% turnout, with 2188 voting YES, 165 voted NO, with 3 spoilt ballots.

Cllr Whittaker left the meeting at this point (8:05pm)

In publicising the referendum, the council incurred an estimated £2,755.89 of expenses (see appended table). With an electorate of 10,570, the Council could spend £2,985.63 (£2,362 plus 0.059p/elector). These expenses cannot be reclaimed but must be declared.

Action point: Declare the expenses.

Cllr Whittaker returned to the meeting at this point (8:10pm)

2609/264 To consider and adopt the below listed controlled documents recommended by committees and working groups

Procurement Policy (v1.3)
It was **resolved** to adopt this policy, with the addition of specific reference to the Council's Carbon Plan at paragraph 8.5.
Proposed: Cllr Hames, Seconded: Cllr Newman-McKie (majority in favour, 1 abstention)
Action point: Amend the Procurement Policy to include specific reference to the Council's Carbon Plan at paragraph 8.5.

Financial Regulations 2026 (v1.3)
It was **resolved** to adopt the revised Financial Regulations.
Proposed: Cllr Bach, Seconded: Cllr Leather (majority in favour, 1 abstention)

Anchor Park Agreement (v1.1)
It was **resolved** to adopt the agreement.
Proposed: Cllr Bell, Seconded: Cllr Leather (majority in favour, 1 against)

Management Agreement with Northam Lions (v2.1)
It was **resolved** to adopt this agreement, with the amendment of paragraph 9 to replace 'guide dogs for the blind' with 'assistance dogs' and correct other typographical errors.
Proposed: Cllr Leather, Seconded: Cllr Bell (majority in favour, 1 against, 2 abstentions)
Action points:
Amend the Management Agreement at paragraph 9 to replace 'guide dogs for the blind' with 'assistance dogs' and correct other typographical errors.
Sign the revised agreement and share with Northam Lions FC for signature.

2609/265 **To receive an update on the revised Tenancy Agreement and Terms & Conditions for Council operated allotment sites**

Cllr Hames noted a number of points he wished to be explored in these terms and conditions before the final document is considered, which he would share with the Town Clerk prior to the document's return to the Review Committee later in September 2026.

The Town Clerk reported that three allotment holders had commented on the terms and conditions, the detail of which would be presented to the Review Committee later in September.

It was **resolved** to adopt the Tenancy agreement but to review the Terms & Conditions again at the appropriate committee.

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

Action point: Cllr Hames to share his feedback with the Town Clerk prior to the September 2026 meeting of the Review Committee.

2609/266 **To consider delivery of community events in the light of the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025**

Following lengthy discussion, during which it was **resolved** to continue the meeting beyond 2½ hours (proposed: Cllr Whittaker, Seconded: Cllr Newman-McKie), it was **resolved** to defer consideration of the matter to a future meeting, noting that whilst the Act came into force in March 2027, the Council needed to consider for which community events it was the Event Organiser as defined in the Act.

Proposed: Cllr Newman-McKie, Seconded: Cllr Sawyer (all in favour)

2609/267 **To consider the working with the Bideford, Littleham & Westward Ho! Cricket Club to renovate part of the pavilion in Westward Ho! Park**

It was **resolved** to defer consideration of this to the next meeting of the council.

Proposed: Cllr Tait, Seconded: Cllr Bell (majority in favour, 3 against)

There being no further business, the meeting close at 9:20pm

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

Voucher No	Date	Net	VAT	Total	Cost Centre	Cost Code	Description	Minute Ref
436	20.07.2026	£17,723.28	£0.00	£17,723.28	Staff Costs	Salaries, HMRC and NEST	Salaries	2607/160
468	22.07.2026	£10,443.88	£0.00	£10,443.88	Members	Allowances & NI	Salaries	2607/135 & 2607/160
472	23.07.2026	£7,523.43	£0.00	£7,523.43	Staff Costs	Salaries, HMRC and NEST	HMRC PAYE	2508/252
426	15.07.2026	£2,806.50	£0.00	£2,806.50	Staff Costs	Salaries, HMRC and NEST	Pensions	
436	20.07.2026	£1,476.72	£0.00	£1,476.72	Members	Allowances & NI	Salaries	2607/160
478	24.07.2026	£1,387.76	£0.00	£1,387.76	Staff Costs	Salaries, HMRC and NEST	Salaries	
466	22.07.2026	£1,259.59	£251.92	£1,511.51	Council Machinery & Equipment	Truck Maintenance	Truck Maintenance	
406	08.07.2026	£1,129.46	£0.00	£1,129.46	Insurances	General	insurances	2605/037
444	20.07.2026	£512.87	£102.57	£615.44	Planning & Development	Public Events	NNP	
431	16.07.2026	£502.00	£0.00	£502.00	Administration	Subs and Memberships	Subscriptions	
395	03.07.2026	£455.00	£91.00	£546.00	CPT	Cleaning	Cleaning CPT	
380	01.07.2026	£450.66	£0.00	£450.66	Administration	Room Rental	Room rental	
397	06.07.2026	£450.00	£90.00	£540.00	Environment & Maintenance	Defibrillators	Defibrillators	2607/131
500	31.07.2026	£400.00	£0.00	£400.00	Northam Hall	Cleaning	Cleaning Northam Hall	
394	03.07.2026	£314.00	£62.80	£376.80	ICT	Cloudy IT	IT contract	
440	20.07.2026	£296.50	£59.30	£355.80	Administration	Town Hall - Alarm	Alarm maintenance	
467	22.07.2026	£267.25	£53.45	£320.70	Staff Costs	Payroll Processing Fees	Payroll	
501	31.07.2026	£263.25	£52.65	£315.90	Planning & Development	Public Events	NNP	
443	20.07.2026	£252.66	£0.00	£252.66	Planning & Development	Public Events	NNP	
434	16.07.2026	£252.00	£0.00	£252.00	Planning & Development	Public Events	Graphic Design	
422	14.07.2026	£216.32	£43.27	£259.59	Council Machinery & Equipment	Fuel - Mowers	Fuel	
433	16.07.2026	£200.00	£40.00	£240.00	Planning & Development	Public Events	The Link	
402	07.07.2026	£200.00	£0.00	£200.00	Grants	Ad Hoc & Emergency	Grant	2607/133
441	20.07.2026	£195.00	£0.00	£195.00	Members	Civic Reception	Mayor's Charity event	
502	31.07.2026	£171.92	£0.00	£171.92	Planning & Development	Public Events	NNP	
385	03.07.2026	£155.01	£31.00	£186.01	Administration	Photocopier Lease	Photocopier lease	
504	31.07.2026	£148.51	£29.70	£178.21	Administration	Photocopier Fees	Copier Charges	
393	03.07.2026	£147.98	£29.60	£177.58	Council Machinery & Equipment	PPE & Workwear	PPE & Workwear	
420	10.07.2026	£146.27	£29.26	£175.53	Administration	Photocopier Fees	Copier Charges	
413	09.07.2026	£140.40	£28.08	£168.48	Council Machinery & Equipment	Tools & Equipment	Equipment	

Chair's initials

399	07.07.2026	£139.12	£27.82	£166.94	Council Machinery & Equipment	Truck Maintenance	Battery
432	16.07.2026	£126.00	£0.00	£126.00	Planning & Development	NNP	Graphic Design
487	29.07.2026	£115.83	£23.17	£139.00	Administration	Office Equipment	Equipment
475	24.07.2026	£110.00	£22.00	£132.00	Council Machinery & Equipment	Tools & Equipment	Machinery Maintenance
424	14.07.2026	£108.00	£21.60	£129.60	Environment & Maintenance	Litter/Recycling & Dog Waste Bins	Litter Picking
		£50,487.17	**£1,089.19**	**£51,576.36**			

NNP Referendum 20.8.26

Details					Expenditure					Opening balance
Date	No.	Description	Supplier	Scribe Ref	VAT	Design	Admin	Publicity	Total out	£ 2,985.63
13.7.26	1	Poster design	G-Five Design	434	0.00	252.00			252.00	£2,733.63
13.7.26	2	newsletter advert	The LINK magazine	433	40.00			200.00	240.00	£2,493.63
17.7.26	3	8 roadside banners (2mx1m)	Vistaprint	444	68.25			341.27	409.52	£2,084.11
		4 trailer banners			19.86			99.30	119.16	£1,964.95
		2 bowser banners			5.00			24.98	29.98	£1,934.97
		fixings for the banners			1.00			4.99	5.99	£1,928.98
		fixings for the banners			5.99			29.95	35.94	£1,893.04
		delivery			2.48			12.37	14.85	£1,878.19
17.7.26	4	25 A4 booklets - online	Instant print	443	0.00			252.66	252.66	£1,625.53
20.7.26		150 A4 outdoor posters	Matrix Print		52.65			141.29	193.94	£1,431.59
		25 A3 outdoor posters						70.51	70.51	£1,361.08
		2 A2 outdoor posters						33.95	33.95	£1,327.13
		Delivery						17.50	17.50	£1,309.63
27.7.26	6	150 A4 posters	Matrix Print		0.00			41.60	41.60	£1,268.03
		1000 A5 leaflets 2-sided			0.00			130.32	130.32	£1,137.71
Various	7	Admin hours - Town Clerk (£32.94 cost/hr) 3 meetings @ 1hr each 6.5 hrs designing banners and liaising with printers re posters, banners and leaflets etc 1 hr liaising with bus shelter operator	Northam Town Council (32.94 x 10.5)	N/A	0.00		345.87		345.87	£791.84
Various	8	Maintenance hours (£25.00 cost/hr) 8 hours erecting banners	Northam Town Council (25.00 x 8)		0.00		.	200.00	200.00	£591.84
11.8.26	9	25 A4 booklets - online	Instant print		0.00		.	216.10	216.10	£375.74
	10	Bus shelter posters (£36.50/poster (ex VAT)) ESTIMATED	Fernbank		0.00		.	146.00	146.00	£229.74
Number of transactions	9				195.23	252.00	345.87	1,962.79	2,755.89	£229.74
					-	-	-	-	2,985.63	✓

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