*Prayers will be held at 6.25pm in the Council Chamber for anyone wishing to attend.*

**To all members of the Council:**

You are hereby summoned to attend the **NORTHAM TOWN COUNCIL MEETING** on

**Wednesday 19th February 2025**

**Preceded by**

**Annual General Meeting of the Northam Burrows Charity Trustees 6.30pm**

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

**Council Members:**

Appledore Ward: Cllr Edwards, Cllr Ford, Cllr Hames and Cllr Tait.

Northam/Orchard Hill ward: Cllr Himan, Cllr Leather, Cllr Lo-Vel, Cllr Newman-McKie and Cllr Whittaker (one vacancy).

Westward Ho! ward: Cllr Bach, Cllr Hodson, Cllr Roscoe and Cllr Singh.

**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: 12th February 2025

**AGENDA**

**Annual General Meeting of the Northam Burrows Charity Trustees**

**1 Chairman’s announcements**

**2 Apologies**

**3 To note and approve the minutes of the Extraordinary General Meeting held on 22nd January 2025** *(p3)*

**4 To consider grant making policy, recommended by the Northam Burrows Charity Management Committee at its December 2024 meeting** *(p4-6)*

**5 To note the Audit report** *(attached under separate cover)*

**6 To note the VAT status of the Council’s administration recharge to the Northam Burrows Charity and consider the way forward** *(p6)*

**Full Council**

**7 To receive and approve apologies for absence, in accordance with Local Government Act 1972 s85(1)**

**8 To agree the agenda as published**

**9 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*

**10 Mayor’s Announcements**

**11 To confirm as a correct record and sign the minutes of the Full Town Council Meeting held on 22nd January 2025** *(p7 to 13)*

**12 To receive and adopt the reports of minutes and resolutions contained therein from Committees and Sub-Committees** *(attached under separate cover)*

* Finance 4th December 2024 and 16th January 2025
* Human Resources 6th November 2024
* Planning and Development 8th January 2025
* Parks and Recreation 27th November 2024
* Environment and Maintenance 11th December 2024
* Review 14th November 2024

**13 Public Participation**

*We welcome Parishioners speaking or making representations, asking questions or giving evidence at the meeting of the Full Council in respect of any issue affecting the Northam Town Council area. A period of twenty minutes is allocated for this unless directed by the Chair of the meeting and a member of the public shall not speak for more than 4 minutes.*

*A question shall not receive a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question.*

*The chair of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.*

**14 To receive a report (if any) from Devon & Cornwall Constabulary**

**15 To receive a report (if any) from the Devon County Councillor**

**16 To receive reports (if any) from Torridge District Members**

**17 To consider the action point update** *(p14)*

**18 To receive the Clerk’s report** *(p15 to 18)*

**19 To consider a recommendation from the Environment & Maintenance Cttee** *(p18)*

**20 To consider a recommendation from the Finance Committee** *(p19)*

**21 To note that the Council’s tennis facility has been awarded Devon Lawn Tennis Association’s Park Venue of the Year for 2024** *(p**19)*

**22 To consider the draft Asset of Community Value nomination form for land at Knapp** *(p19 and to follow)*

**Item 3 To note and approve the minutes of the Extraordinary General Meeting held on 22nd January 2025**

**Extraordinary General Meeting of the Northam Burrows Charity Trustees held 22nd January 2025 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber, Windmill Lane, Northam.**

Present: Cllrs Bach, Edwards, Hames, Hodson, Leather, Newman-McKie, Roscoe and Tait (Mayor).

In attendance: Guy Langton (Town Clerk & RFO); Andrew Eastman (Honorary Alderman); Rev T Sutton; Jenny Carey Wood and Dr Eirene Williams (North Devon Coast National Landscape); nine members of the public.

**Item 1 To approve the accounts to be submitted to the Charity Commission 2023-24**

Cllr Leather noted the large bank balance in the Charity’s current account. The Town Clerk reported that from July 2025 the Charity would be advertising for grant requests in line with Object (2) of the Charity, which stated:

*“If and in so far as the income of the charity cannot be applied towards the object specified in sub-clause (1) above, the trustee may apply it for the general benefit of the inhabitants of the wards of Northam, Westward Ho! and Appledore in Devon in such charitable ways as the trustee thinks fit.”*

In this first year of granting, the Corporate Trustee had identified a fund of in excess of £39,000.

A reserve deposit account would also be opened and £50,000 deposited.

It was **resolved** to approve the accounts as presented (copied above).

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

**Action points:**

**Submit accounts to the Charity Commission.**

**Identify a suitable deposit account.**

**Item 4 To consider grant making policy, recommended by the Northam Burrows Charity Management Committee at its December 2024 meeting**

**Policy for dealing with and determining grant applications**

**Northam Burrows Charity (ref no. 1198021)**

**Objects of the charity**

*(1) The object of the charity is to manage and preserve for the benefit of the inhabitants of the Ancient Manor of Northam the rights of common held by the inhabitants in relation to the Common Land known as Northam Burrows in Devon such land being more particularly described in the Schedule.*

*(2) If and in so far as the income of the charity cannot be applied towards the object specified in sub-clause (1) above, the trustee may apply it for the general benefit of the inhabitants of the wards of Northam, Westward Ho! and Appledore in Devon in such charitable ways as the trustee thinks fit. (copied from the* [*Charity Commission webpage*](https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/en/charity-search/-/charity-details/5191340/governing-document) *for the Northam Burrows Charity ref. 1198021)*

**1. Definitions**

1.1 Funds raised through the normal sale of Northam Burrows Manor Passes and replacement passes following a change of registration, from Grazing fees, from the annual fee received from the Royal North Devon Golf Club and from the interest received on any investments not allocated to the Charities administrative costs, nor used in pursuance of Object (1) above, may be used in pursuance of Object (2) above.

1.2 A grant is awarded by the Northam Burrows Charity for particular defined purposes which will be of ‘general benefit of the inhabitants of the wards of Northam, Westward Ho! and Appledore in Devon’.

**2. Powers**

2.1 The Charity has, through charitable Objects (1) and (2) above, powers to award grants to local authorities, community organisations and charities.

**3. Background**

3.1 Any grants made available are funded directly from the Charities funds, as defined in paragraphs 1.1 and 1.2 above.

3.2 Whilst the Charity may receive other grants or income, these cannot be used to fund grant/donation applications.

**4. Policy**

4.1 Annually, following the completion of the financial year at the end of March, the Charity Management Committee shall meet to agree the grant fund available for distribution in pursuance of Object (2) above.

4.2 The grant application window shall be open from the 1st to 30th June annually, with the grants awarded determined by the end of July annually.

4.3 Any grant made by the Charity in pursuance of Object (2) above must benefit the inhabitants of the wards as described in the Objects of the Charity (above).

4.4 All proposed expenditure must be detailed in the Charity’s accounts for the year in question.

4.5 The organisation/group making a grant request should be a non-profit making voluntary organisation where membership is open (i.e. no discrimination of membership on grounds of race, sex or religion etc.).

4.6 The Charity will consider applications for funds in situations where:

1. There is no other way of obtaining the relevant funds;
2. The funds will enable the relevant organisation or group to access or ‘unlock’ funds or assistance from third parties;
3. Monies have been donated or raised but these are insufficient, and funds are needed to bridge the resulting gap.

4.7 The Charity will endeavour to provide assistance and support where appropriate to organisations and groups in the Parish wishing to access grants and other funds from third parties and local authorities.

**5. Applications**

5.1 All applications for grants or donations shall be made in writing on the Application Form (appendix 1 *to be drafted*) to the Charity Secretary at the Town Clerk’s Office, Northam Town Council.

5.2 All applications which meet the Charity’s criteria are to be considered at an appropriate meeting of the Charity Management Committee.

5.3 The grant/donation available is normally limited to a maximum of £500. The Northam Burrows Charity reserves the right to consider larger applications.

5.4 Only one grant/donation will be given by the Charity to any organisation or group, or for any particular purpose in any financial year (1st April to 31st March).

5.5 Grants/donations cannot be awarded after the relevant event or project has been completed.

**6. Conditions**

6.1 Trustees of the Charity who comprise the Charity Management Committee will assess applications with particular reference to the benefit to the inhabitants of Northam, Westward Ho! and Appledore residents.

6.2 Where a request for a grant/donation is agreed, the Northam Burrows Charity Management Committee shall determine the amount (up to the agreed annual amount), using the figure requested by the applicant as a guide only.

6.3 The grant or donations shall be used only for the stated purpose otherwise the monies shall be returned to the Northam Burrows Charity, except where the Charity’s prior written consent has been given for the funds to be used for another or a further purpose.

6.4 The Northam Burrows Charity may request that applicants provide written feedback to explain how the grant/donation has benefited their organisation/group. If feedback is required, this will be communicated in the decision letter.

6.5 The Charity reserves the right to request repayment of any grant/donation where an applicant does not comply with these conditions.

**7. Notes**

7.1 The Northam Burrows Charity’s decision is final and there is no right of appeal.

7.2 The Northam Burrows Charity reserves the right to decline any application without giving reasons for its decision.

7.3 The Northam Burrows Charity’s giving of a grant/donation does not imply any commitment to any continuing expenditure.

7.4 Nothing in this Policy prevents, in exceptional circumstances, the Northam Burrows Charity from providing a grant for donation to a group, organisation or project without application where the Charity considers that the giving of such a grant or donation will bring benefits to inhabitants of the wards of Northam, Westward Ho! and Appledore, as described in Object (2) above.

7.5 Where a member of the corporate trustee of the Northam Burrows Charity, is a member or employee of an organisation/group applying for funding, that person must declare an interest.

**Note:**

At the December 2024 meeting of the Northam Burrows Management Committee, it was resolved to open the Charity’s grant awards in the summer of 2025 with a fund of £39,917.80, with any unawarded funds being held over to the following year.

**Item 5 To note the Audit report** *(attached under separate cover)*

**Item 6 To note the VAT status of the Council’s administration recharge to the Northam Burrows Charity and consider the way forward**

The Council and Charity’s internal auditor has advised that whilst the Charity is not registered for VAT, because the Council is it must include VAT in the charge it makes for administration costs to the Charity each year. This came to light at the audit in January 2025.

At the June 2024 meeting of the Charity Management Committee, it was resolved that this charge would be £7,000. In 2024, this figure included VAT (retrospectively applied), so the Council won’t have received the full amount, the VAT portion forming part of its VAT return.

**Recommendation: The Council charge the Charity £7,000 plus VAT in 2025, so £8,400, to ensure it receives the full £7,000.**

**Item 7 To receive and approve apologies for absence, in accordance with Local Government Act 1972 s85(1)**

**Item 8 To agree the agenda as published**

**Item 9 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*

**Item 10 Mayor’s Announcements**

**Item 11 To confirm as a correct record and sign the minutes of the Full Town Council Meeting held on 22nd January 2025**

Presented overleaf, pages 8 to 14.

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**Northam Town Council – Minutes of the Full Council meeting held 22nd January 2025 at 6.45pm in the Council Chamber, Windmill Lane, Northam.**

Present: Cllrs Bach, Edwards, Hames, Hodson, Leather, Newman-McKie, Singh, Roscoe and Tait (Mayor).

In attendance: Guy Langton (Town Clerk & RFO); Andrew Eastman (Honorary Alderman); Rev T Sutton; Jenny Carey Wood and Dr Eirene Williams (North Devon Coast National Landscape); nine members of the public.

**2501/535 To receive a presentation from the North Devon Coast National Landscape team.**

Jenny Carey-Wood, the Manager of The North Devon Coast National Landscape (NDCNL) and team addressed the Council, accompanied by Dr Eirene Williams, the Chair of the NDCNL.

The NDCNL extends for over 70 miles from Ilfracombe in the east to Hartland in the west and covered 171 sqkm, 11% of the land was in National Trust hands. The NDCNL included the Northam Burrows. The NDCNL was one of 34 National Landscapes in England, with 66% of the population living within 30 minutes travel of one.

There is a duty of regard for National Landscapes in Planning Legislation, developments have to ‘seek to further’ the purpose of the National Landscapes. The NDCNL Team provide advice to Planning Authorities though are not a Statutory Consultee.

The NDCNL has a small grant fund to support organisations that plan to manage the landscape in line with the NDCNL’s aims. These grants would be available to community groups, including local authorities.

The NDCNL is subject to a 5-year management plan, the draft plan for 2025 on would be consulted on in April or May 2025.

**2501/536 Apologies**

Cllrs Ford, Himan, Lo-Vel and Whittaker tendered their apologies, the reasons for which were approved by the Council.

**2501/537 To agree the agenda as published.**

It was **resolved** to agree the agenda as published, though the item regarding the inclusion of NTC land as Local Green Space in the Northam Neighbourhood Plan would be taken after Public Participation.

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

**2501/538 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.

**2501/539 Mayor’s Announcements**

The Mayor announced that Cllr Hugh Brading had submitted his resignation to her in writing. The Town Clerk would inform the elections authority of the vacancy.

The Mayor announced that the press had reported that the plans to improve the buildings at North Devon hospital in Barnstaple had been delayed.

**2501/540 To confirm as a correct record and sign the minutes of:**

**a. Full Town Council Meeting held on 18th December 2024**

It was **resolved** to approve the minutes as a true and correct record of the meeting.

They were signed by the Chair.

Proposed: Cllr Bach, Seconded: Cllr Edwards (majority in favour, 3 abstained – not present at meeting)

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**b. Special Full Town Council Meeting held on 7th January 2025**

It was **resolved** to approve the minutes as a true and correct record of the meeting.

They were signed by the Chair.

Proposed: Cllr Edwards, Seconded: Cllr Hames (majority in favour, 1 against, 2 abstained – not present at meeting)

**2501/541 To receive and adopt the minutes and resolutions of Committees and Sub-Committees**

* Planning & Development 21st November and 12th December 2024

The minutes were received and adopted.

**2501/542 Public Participation**

Three members of the public addressed the Council, all noting their support for the identified Local Green Spaces to be included in the Northam Neighbourhood Plan. All three also requested that the Council nominate the land around Knapp House as an Asset of Community Value.

**2501/543 To consider the inclusion of NTC land as Local Green Space in the Northam Neighbourhood Plan**

It was **resolved** to agree that ‘Blackies’ (Torridge Rd, Appledore), Anchor Park (Richmond Road, Appledore), Westward Ho! Park (Avon Lane, Westward Ho!) and Burrough Farm (Churchill Way, Northam) would be included in the Northam Neighbourhood Plan.

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

It was **agreed** that the form to nominate the lands surrounding Knapp House as an Asset of Community Value to ratify at the next meeting of the Council.

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

**Action point: Draft the ACV nomination form.**

**2501/544 To receive a written report (if any) from Devon & Cornwall Constabulary**

The Town Clerk received a report, which is copied below.

*Crime Figures Report 1/12/24 – 31/12/24.*

*In that time frame there has been 26 crimes, which can be broken down as follows.*

*3 Vehicle Crime.*

*2 Theft.*

*12 Assaults*

*2 Fraud*

*3 Harassment*

*1 Burglary*

*3 Criminal Damage.*

*In the same time frame, 1/12/23 – 31/12/23 there were 39 crimes.*

*This is a link to our website and allows you to see the locations of crime and ASB in your area by month. Click on Crime Map and zoom in to see more detail.*

[*https://www.devon-cornwall.police.uk/area/your-area/devon-cornwall/north--west-devon/westward-ho-northam--appledore-hartland-rural/about-us/top-reported-crimes-in-this-area*](https://www.devon-cornwall.police.uk/area/your-area/devon-cornwall/north--west-devon/westward-ho-northam--appledore-hartland-rural/about-us/top-reported-crimes-in-this-area)

Cllr Hames noted concerns with ongoing issues at Knapp House and the vandalism at Churchfield Public Conveniences.

Cllr Roscoe noted that youth provision could have a positive impact on anti-social behaviour.

*Eight members of the public left the meeting at this point (7:25pm)*

**2501/545 To receive a written report (if any) from Devon County Councillor**

The Town Clerk had not received a report from Cllr McGeough in advance of the meeting.

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**2501/546 To receive reports (if any) from Torridge District Members**

Cllr Bach:

*Re: District Councillors Report for NTC Meeting - 22nd January 2025*

*Cllr Niki Tait our Mayor has requested that District Members submit written reports in advance of our next full council meeting as above.*

*My report is therefore as follows, which can be shared in advance of our meeting.*

*Other than this Governments Impending reorganisation of Local Government and Devolution I have nothing substantive to report, which may be a similar response from other TDC members.*

*Therefore, I can do no better, other than to attach below, the recent statement from the Leader of TDC Cllr Ken James, showing Torridge's position on this, which was supported by the majority of the members present at the Extraordinary Meeting held on the 9th January 2025.*

*Please accept this as my written report for our meeting next week and click on the link below to see the statement. Please click on the following link:-*

[*https://torridge.gov.uk/article/22095/JOINT-STATEMENT-Devon-District-Councils-Update-on-devolution-and-local-government-reform*](https://torridge.gov.uk/article/22095/JOINT-STATEMENT-Devon-District-Councils-Update-on-devolution-and-local-government-reform)

Cllr Hodson:

*The Roads Policing team demonstrates their commitment to road users in Devon &* *Cornwall.*

*Chief Constable James Vaughan QPM MSt (Cantab) joined officers from the Roads Policing Team this week to discuss initiatives put in place to reduce road injuries and deaths on the roads across the force area. These initiatives underpin a proactive approach by the police to prevent accidents caused by motorists who take risks on the roads.*

*One of the initiatives is an operation known as Op Limit, a national month-long initiative aimed at warning drivers about the consequences of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. The police work in partnership with communities and encourage people to report suspected drink or drug drivers to the police.*

*As part of December 2024 Op Limit campaign, Devon and Cornwall Police arrested 284 people on suspicion of drink or drug driving.*

*Of the 178 people arrested on suspicion of drink driving, 79% were male and most offenders were aged between 17 and 45.*

*On Christmas day, 11 people were arrested on suspicion of drink driving (7 males and 4 females) and 1 male was arrested after testing positive for cocaine at the roadside.*

*On New Years Eve and into the early hours of New Years Day, 7 people were arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence of drink or drugs.*

*For the full article please see the Devon & Cornwall Police website.*

*Cllr Hodson also reported that she had been involved in discussions with officers at Torridge District Council regarding S106 allocations and their availability and hoped to arrange a meeting between Northam TC members and officers and officers at TDC in due course.*

**Action point: Town Clerk to liaise with Cllr Hodson to arrange that meeting.**

Cllr Lo-Vel:

*An extraordinary full council meeting on 9th January at TDC, held to discuss the implication of the Government's while paper on Devolution. These are far reaching and complicated. Although the Council were not required to make a formal response at this stage a letter was agreed. Whether it will make any difference to what is proposed is yet to be seen. I find it very difficult to see where Torridge will fit into these far-reaching proposals and it is hard to see at the moment how these proposals will improve democracy, accountability or public engagement in decision making in our large, predominantly rural areas. The Council did ask that the elections scheduled for 2025 should go ahead.*

*At the Internal Scrutiny meeting positive reports were delivered regarding the Asset management plan from Harvey Gardener and the Economic Review and Estuary Review from Chris Fuller.*

*I tried to help a constituent with a query about housing and was dismayed to hear from Torridge that Devon Home Choice is currently taking about four weeks to respond to emails - I imagine even longer if people like the people I was trying to help do not have internet or an email address and required a postal response. I have heard from another constituent that it is not possible to log on to the site. I will be looking into this on my return from holiday.*

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**2501/547 To consider the action point update**

The action points were noted as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **10th April 2024**  **Request for a free car parking day at Churchfields for the 200th Anniversary of the RNLI Appledore station.**  (minute 2404/907) | The Town Clerk therefore asked if the Council could have a free day of parking at Churchfields in Appledore for the event. At the time of writing, Sean Kearney was consulting internally at TDC and a response was awaited.  ONGOING |
| **20th November 2024**  **Re-engage with Surfers Against Sewage Plastic Free Campaigns**  (minutes 2407/192 and 2411/416) | The Town Clerk, Community Engagement Officer, Cllrs Bach, Hames and Lo-Vel all attended the meetings arranged for the 27th November 2024. The Northam Burrows Rangers both apologised in advance. The meeting was positive, with both the Council and SAS agreeing to share information so the Plastic Free Communities could restart. Prior to the meeting, the Town Clerk spoke to Mr Cross, who had been very supportive in the past and had arranged to speak again and plan for 2025 in the new year.  ONGOING |
| **20th November 2024**  (minute 2411/413) | Drop kerbs  Action point: Town Clerk to contact the relevant Devon County Council officer.  ONGOING |
| **20th November 2024**  (minute 2411/418) | Town Clerk to prepare a report into the costs of the three options for future work at the pavilion. This work has been overtaken by urgent work required at Northam Hall.  ONGOING |
| **20th November 2024**  (minute 2411/419) | The protocol for the wearing of civic regalia has been drafted and published on the Council’s website.  COMPLETE |
| **18th December 2024**  (minute 2412/493) | Amended meeting dates were circulated to members  COMPLETE |
| **18th December 2024**  (minute 2412/494) | Prepare a lease for the rental of Blue Light Hall and pass the matter to the Finance committee. ONGOING |
| **18th December 2024**  (minute 2412/498) | Request an exemption from parking charges at Windmill Lane on weekdays for Northam TC members. Request made, response awaited. ONGOING |
| **18th December 2024**  (minute 2412/499) | Ask the member of the public planning a podcast project to draft a letter requesting bench sponsors contact them. ONGOING |

*Rev Sutton left at this point 19:45*

**2501/548 To receive the Clerk’s report**

**At 31st December 2024, the Council’s balances were:**

Nationwide (Business 95-day saver) £93,166.35 current interest rate is 3.9%

Cambridge & Counties Bank (31 day) £93,884.82 current interest rate is 3.55%

Cambridge Building Society £5,024.40 current interest rate is 2.4%

Petty Cash £94.29

Coop Bank (current account) £245,134.80

**Total cash in hand £437,304.66**

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**Payments**

The Council made 241 payments in November/December, totalling £97,091.37 (exVAT). A full list was presented to the Finance Committee in January 2025.

The Council’s accounting software requires VAT refunded is recorded as a negative payment rather than a receipt (the reasoning being that it is a return of payments made). In November 2024, the Council received a VAT refund of £4,474.26.

**Receipts:**

In November / December 2024, the Council received 101 payments, totalling £6,351.12, including interest paid into the Council’s deposit accounts (£1,386.69); payment from TDC for the hire of the Council’s Tower and staff (£312.50); and the annual fee to use Burrough Farm from Northam Lions FC (£120). Payments received in respect of Council services provided for the community was £4,204.37, detailed below, which included rent payable on the Council’s carpark adjacent to the Seagate Hotel in Appledore. There was a £40.44 refund for their cancelled Hall bookings.

**Tennis courts:**

The gross volume of sales since 1st January 2024 is £5,470. After fees, the Council has received £5,091.45. The LTA expect the Council to earmark approximately £3,600 per year for 15 years (index linked) to meet the costs of court maintenance and refurbishment. The Council is £1,491.45 over the target, in this extended year (1st January 2024 to 31st March 25). After the 31st March 2025, a payment will be made to the Council’s Cambridge Building Society account, where this earmark is held.#

**Northam Town Council Precept 2025-26**

An increase of 4.35% applied to the Council’s precept request, meant a notional Band D property would provide £4.63 more into the Council’s budget. The Town Council’s portion of the Council Tax would therefore rise to £110.99, for a notional Band D property. The effect on each band is shown in the table. The precept for 2025-26 was confirmed as **£644,337**.

This represented an increase of £76,505 over the precept of £567,832 applied in 2024-25. In the same period, the Town Council had seen an increase in the tax baseof 466.66, up from 5,338.76 in 2024-25 to 5,805.42 in 2025-26. The tax base increased significantly more than normal (between 150 and 180). The larger increase is due, in the most part, to the application of a 100% premium (additional levy) on those properties defined as second homes on the Council Tax register. It was noted that should second homes become main residences or holiday let businesses, the tax base increase would reduce (or even decrease) in the future, necessitating greater rises in the precept to maintain the Council’s budget.



It was **resolved** to continue to hold the grants presentation evening and the Annual Electors Meeting on the same date in 2025 (20th March 2025).

Proposed: Cllr Leather, Seconded: Cllr Hodson (majority in favour)

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**Action point: Refer the plans for future Annual Electors Meetings to the Review Committee.**

**2501/548 To note the completion of the registration of Land at Wren Close**

The completion of registration was noted. The title information had been published on the Council’s website.

**2501/549 To receive an update on the progress of the May Fair working Group**

The Working Group had agreed the running order for the May Fair 2025 as presented below. The estimated cost is £7,300, with an estimated income of £2,800. The net cost is estimated to be £4,500.



**Action point: Progress with plans for the May Fair 2025.**

**2501/550 To receive an update on the progress of works to complete the identified actions at Northam Hall**

The Parks & Buildings Manager had identified the actions that could be carried out by the Council’s staff and those that required external contractor involvement. The Finance Committee would be considering the estimated costs at future meetings.

It was **resolved** to exclude members of the press and public from the discussion of the next item in pursuance of Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, subsection (2).

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

**2501/551 To consider the basis of ongoing management of Windmill Lane allotment site**

The Town Clerk reported that in researching the minutes of the Town Council and of the District Council for the years 1978 and 1978, to establish when it had been agreed that this Council would administer the Windmill Lane (Northam) allotment site, at the request of an officer at the District Council he found a minute of that Council’s Environmental and Leisure Services Committee on 8th March 1978 that indicated the administration of the allotment site had been passed to this Council because of their title over the land (copied below)

*“the Secretary and Solicitor reported that no money had been included in the budget for allotments at Northam for 1978/79 as they were the responsibility of the Northam Town Council. The committee therefore gave consideration to future arrangements concerning the allotments and in respect of the costs already incurred by this council.*

*Resolved:*

*(a) That arrangements be made, subject to the agreement by the Northam Town Council;, for this Council to take over the administration of the Northam allotments and for the ownership to be transferred to this Council.*

*(b) That in the event of the Town Council not accepting these arrangements the administration no longer undertaken by this Council.*

*(c) That no action be taken concerning the costs already incurred.”*

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The Town Clerk reported that the District Council had applied for title of the land parcel in October 2005 and been successful in reviewing it to include the allotment garden in September 2024.

It was **resolved** to send a copy of the minute to the Head of Legal and Governance at the District Council for her view on the implications of the minute.

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

**Action point: draft the communication.**

It was **resolved** to readmit members of the press and public from the discussion of the next item in pursuance of Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, subsection (2).

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

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:55pm.

Signed………………………………………………..Dated……………………………………………….

**Item 12 To receive and adopt the reports of minutes and resolutions contained therein from Committees and Sub-Committees** *(attached under separate cover)*

* Finance 4th December 2024 and 16th January 2025
* Human Resources 6th November 2024
* Planning and Development 8th January 2025
* Parks and Recreation 27th November 2024
* Environment and Maintenance 11th December 2024
* Review 14th November 2024

**Item 13 Public Participation**

*We welcome Parishioners speaking or making representations, asking questions or giving evidence at the meeting of the Full Council in respect of any issue affecting the Northam Town Council area. A period of twenty minutes is allocated for this unless directed by the Chair of the meeting and a member of the public shall not speak for more than 4 minutes.*

*A question shall not receive a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question.*

*The chair of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.*

**Item 14 To receive a report (if any) from Devon & Cornwall Constabulary**

**Item 15 To receive a report (if any) from the Devon County Councillor**

**Item 16 To receive reports (if any) from the Torridge District Members**

**Item 17 Action points**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **10th April 2024**  **Request for a free car parking day at Churchfields for the 200th Anniversary of the RNLI Appledore station.**  (minute 2404/907) | The Town Clerk therefore asked if the Council could have a free day of parking at Churchfields in Appledore for the event. At the time of writing, Sean Kearney was consulting internally at TDC and a response was awaited.  ONGOING |
| **20th November 2024**  **Re-engage with Surfers Against Sewage Plastic Free Campaigns**  (minutes 2407/192 and 2411/416) | The Town Clerk, Community Engagement Officer, Cllrs Bach, Hames and Lo-Vel all attended the meetings arranged for the 27th November 2024. The Northam Burrows Rangers both apologised in advance. The meeting was positive, with both the Council and SAS agreeing to share information so the Plastic Free Communities could restart. Prior to the meeting, the Town Clerk spoke to Mr Cross, who had been very supportive in the past and had arranged to speak again and plan for 2025 in the new year.  ONGOING |
| **20th November 2024**  (minute 2411/413) | Drop kerbs  Action point: Town Clerk to contact the relevant Devon County Council officer.  ONGOING |
| **20th November 2024**  (minute 2411/418) | Town Clerk to prepare a report into the costs of the three options for future work at the pavilion. This work has been overtaken by urgent work required at Northam Hall.  ONGOING |
| **18th December 2024**  (minute 2412/494) | Prepare a lease for the rental of Blue Light Hall and pass the matter to the Finance committee. ONGOING |
| **18th December 2024**  (minute 2412/498) | Request an exemption from parking charges at Windmill Lane on weekdays for Northam TC members. Request made, response awaited. ONGOING |
| **18th December 2024**  (minute 2412/499) | Ask the member of the public planning a podcast project to draft a letter requesting bench sponsors contact them. ONGOING |
| **22nd January 2025**  (minute 2501/543) | Draft an ACV form for Knapp woodland and green space.  On the agenda  COMPLETE |
| **22nd January 2025**  (minute 2501/551) | An email was drafted asking the Head of Legal Services at TDC for their opinion of the 1978 minute indicating the land was owned by Northam Town Council and responded saying that a transfer of ownership form, signed by both parties, would be required to identify ownership.  ONGOING |

**Item 18 To receive the Clerk’s report**

**Clerk’s report – Finance Committee January 2025**

As advised at the December meeting of this committee, this report will contain the payments and receipts for the months of November and December 2024.

**At 28th January 2025 (the last available statement balance), the Council’s balances were:**

Nationwide (Business 95 day saver) £93,166.35 current interest rate is 3.9%

Cambridge & Counties Bank (31 day) £93,884.82 current interest rate is 3.55%

Cambridge Building Society £5,024.40 current interest rate is 2.4%

Petty Cash £94.29

Coop Bank (current account) £245,134.80

**Total cash in hand £437,304.66**

**Payments**

The Council made 1081 payments in January 2025, totalling £38,799.24 (exVAT). A full list of these was presented to the Finance Committee on 12th February 2025. There were 34 payments of £100 or more (exVAT). These include:

* £24,794.47 in payroll and associated costs
* £2,400 for an independent Planning expert’s check on the NNP
* £1,613.50 to book entertainers and facilities for the May Fair 2025
* £1,090.81 direct debit for monthly insurance payment
* £996.00 for Scribe accounts
* £771.78 on materials and tools to repair footpaths
* £752.84 to service the ride on mower
* £660.00 for an 240v pressure washer and consumables
* £603.78 for gas to heat Northam Hall in December
* £428.49 for room rental at the Town Hall
* £420.00 to clean the CPT and Community Centre toilet in December
* £416.67 as deposit for the Mayor’s civic dinner
* £400.00 to clean Noirtham Hall in December
* £312.10 monthly IT contract
* £300.00 for two 2nd hand stationery/filing cupboards (£150 each)
* £299.00 Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) at Northam Hall
* £199.00 FRA at the Pavilion
* £180.00 on manual handling training for all Maintenance staff
* £175.25 for electricity at Northam Hall
* £166.47 on fuel for vehicles and equipment
* £148.50 on repairing and updating the Mayor’s chain
* £126.32 on PPE
* £114.00 water bill at Northam Hall (monthly direct debit)

**Receipts:**

In January 2025, the Council received 47 payments, totalling £7,923.73. There was a £15.00 refund for an overcharged May Fair brochure advert.

**Tennis courts:**

The gross volume of sales since 1st January 2024 is £5,495. After fees, the Council has received £5,114.45. The LTA expect the Council to earmark approximately £3,600 per year for 15 years (index linked) to meet the costs of court maintenance and refurbishment. The Council is £1,514.45 over the target, in this extended year (1st January 2024 to 31st March 25). At the 31st March, a payment will be made to the Council’s Cambridge Building Society account, where this earmark is held.

**Petty Cash:** A screen shot of the petty cash cashbook is presented overleaf showing the items on which the Council has spent petty cash. The aim of the Town Clerk is to maintain a level of £100 or thereabouts in the account.



**Council IT contract:**

Following an increase by Microsoft, the Council’s monthly bill to the IT service provider will increase to £327.20 (exVAT). A £10 increase per month.

**A close-up of a document

Description automatically generatedCouncil precept request:**

A copy of the request submitted is presented to the right.

The District Council has acknowledged the receipt.

The accounts for 2023-24 have been filed by 31.01.2025 as required (see below).

A screenshot of a computer

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A screenshot of a computer

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A screenshot of a report

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**Item 19 To consider a recommendation from the Environment & Maintenance Committee**

At its meeting in February 2025, the Environment & Maintenance Committee reviewed the Council’s grass cutting contract with Devon County Council and recommended that it be entered into again for 2025-26.

The contract is attached under separate cover but the Town Clerk draw’s the Council’s attention to the following details:

the fee payable by DCC was £4,846 in 2024-25

A screenshot of a computer

Description automatically generatedthe council is required to make 4 cuts per year, as outlined below

**Item 20 To consider a recommendation from the Finance Committee**

At its February 2025 meeting, the Finance Committee considered the full replacement of the Council’s maintenance tools with electric equivalents, the purchase of an additional machine (a two-wheel tractor and attachments to enable it to mow, sweep and clear weeds and replacing the Council’s oldest Truck, a 2016 DFSK Loadhopper, which requires considerable repair (propshaft and gearbox).

**The Committee recommended that the Council:**

1. **Replace the whole set of maintenance equipment with electric models and purchase sufficient batteries and chargers, and**
2. **That the committee resolves to purchase a petrol powered ‘two-wheel tractor’ and three attachments – a weed ripper, a brush and collector set and a rotary mower, and**
3. **That the committee resolve to replace the DFSK with a new ORCA, equipped with a cage tipper body and a towbar.**
4. **That in all cases, the Council seek to reduce the cost by effective negotiation and offering the Council’s current equipment and truck in part-exchange.**
5. **That the spending (approximately £59,000) be allocated to the cost centres for replacing a Truck and larger Council machinery (combined total of £43,250 in 2025-26), with any shortfall being identified from the Council’s end of year carry-forward or earmarked reserves.**

**21 To note that the Council’s tennis facility has been awarded Devon Lawn Tennis Association’s Park Venue of the Year for 2024**

The Council’s tennis facility will now be put forward for in the same category nationally.

A press release has been drafted and submitted to the local press, with the same on the Council’s website and social media.

**22 To consider the draft Asset of Community Value nomination form for land at Knapp**

Following a decision made in principle to draft the Asset of Community Value nomination for the land at Knapp, Churchill Way, Northam made at the January meeting of this Council, the form has been drafted and will follow under separate cover.