

NORTHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Town Hall, Windmill Lane, Northam EX39 1BY

Acting Town Clerk: Guy Langton (CiLCA, PSLCC)

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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 23rd April 2025 at 6:30pm

Preceded by a presentation from Alex Kittow, CEO of Libraries Unlimited. Prayers will be said at 6:25pm

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

Council Members:

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Appledore Ward:	Cllr Edwards, Cllr Hames and Cllr Tait (one vacancy, to be filled by election on
	17 th April 2025).
Northam/Orchard Hill ward:	Cllr Himan, Cllr Leather, Cllr Lo-Vel, Cllr Newman-McKie and Cllr Whittaker (one
	vacancy, to be filled by election on 17th April 2025).
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: 15th April 2025

AGENDA

Presentation from Alex Kittow, CEO of Libraries Unlimited.

- 1 To receive and approve apologies for absence, in accordance with Local Government Act 1972 s85(1)
- 2 To agree the agenda as published
- **3 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.*
- 4 Mayor's Announcements
- 5 To confirm as a correct record and sign the minutes of the Full Town Council Meeting held on 19th March 2025 (attached under separate cover)
- 6 To receive and adopt the reports of minutes and resolutions contained therein from Committees and Sub-Committees (attached under separate cover)
 - Finance12th March 2025Planning and Development13th March 2025
 - Planning and Development 13th March 2025
 Parks and Recreation 29th January 2025
 - Environment and Maintenance 6th February 2025
- 7 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.

- 8 To receive a report (if any) from Devon & Cornwall Constabulary
- 9 To receive a report (if any) from the Devon County Councillor
- 10 To receive reports (if any) from Torridge District Members
- **11** To receive an update regarding Local Government Reorganisation (*p*3-6)
- **12** To consider the action point update (*p*6-7)
- **13 To receive the Clerk's report** (*p7-8*)
- 14 To note the results of the elections in the Northam Orchard Hill and Appledore Wards of the Town Council and consider any appointments to the Planning & Development committee (*p*8)
- **15** To consider options for the Council's committee structure and calendar (*p*8-9)
- 16 To consider investigating the costs and other matters associated with installing CCTV cameras in the following locations: Appledore (Churchfields Car Park), Westward Ho! (park and tennis courts), and Westward Ho! (Nelson Road and Golf Klinks Road) (p9-10)
- 17 To receive an update on the nomination of Knapp House grounds as an Asset of Community Value (*p10*)
- **18** To consider submitting the Northam Neighbourhood Plan to Torridge District Council for examination (*p*10-11)
- **19 To consider renewing the Council's retainer with its appointed legal advisors (Tozers LLP, Exeter), due January 2025** (*p11 and confidential report attached*)
- 20 To consider the Council's Insurance arrangements for 2025-26 (p11-12)

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ltem 11	Bank' regarding Local Government Reg must be a registered member to acces are eligible to register on DALC's webs Clerk encourages). Within that site, th	sociation of Local Council's 'Knowledge organisation and Devolution (note – you ss this resource. All Councillors and staff site and for their bulletins, which the Town e underlined items in the text below and t document. The site is being updated as					

Following the launch of the Devolution White Paper on 16th December 2024, DALC has been working hard to engage with our members on this topic, and to provide support and updates where we can.

We will endeavour to keep our members up to date on what we know about devolution as matters in Devon progress. Local government reorganisation (LGR) is being required by government in order to achieve the kind of Devolution deal they want to see. Updates will be circulated in our e-bulletin, and on our website.

At the moment, we have no information about what reorganisation might look like in Devon. The Leaders of Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council and Torbay Council are working together to explore the <u>creation of a Mayoral Strategic Authority</u>.

The Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority (CCA) – the governance needed for devolved decision-making powers and funding to flow from Whitehall to local decision-makers in Devon and Torbay – is now official.

Following meetings with our member councils in January, steps that DALC are already taking include:

- Working with NALC and other county associations to share knowledge and best practice
- We have asked NALC to lobby for funding package for local councils to assist with asset transfers
- We are investigating the legal position around asset transfer
- We have asked NALC for examples of best practice in terms of devolution
- We have requested that NALC deliver a briefing for all DALC councils
- We have worked with Devon County Council to arrange for regular briefings for our members
- We will continue to engage with district councils wherever possible
- We will continue to keep you updated

We have asked encouraged member councils to carry out asset mapping in their communities.

Resources

DALC resources

- Devolution and the White Paper smaller council meeting notes 30.01.25
- Chat summary smaller councils meeting 30.1.25
- DALC Briefing Slide Smaller Councils
- Devolution and the White Paper Larger Council Forum notes 23.01.25

DALC Chair's Blog

- 12th March devonalc.org.uk/news/chairs-blog-12-03-25/
- 19th February devonalc.org.uk/news/chairs-blog-19-02-25/
- 29th January devonalc.org.uk/news/chairs-blog-29-01-25/
- 15th January devonalc.org.uk/news/chairs-blog-15-01-25/
- Open letter <u>devonalc.org.uk/news/open-letter-dalc-chair-2/</u>

Devon and Torbay CCA

- Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority
- DALC CCA Briefing April 25

Devon County Council

• March 2025 – <u>devonalc.org.uk/news/dcc-lgr-briefing-march-2025/</u>

- Interim Plan from agenda: Agenda for Council on Thursday, 20th March, 2025, 2.00 pm Democracy in Devon
- Devon County Council commits to 'residents first' focus: <u>County commits to 'residents</u> first' focus as it considers reorganisation options – <u>News</u>

Mid Devon

• Message to Towns and Parishes on LGR from Mid Devon

Teignbridge

• <u>Letter to Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution – Teignbridge</u> <u>District Council News</u>

South Hams and West Devon

- Interim Plan submission 21032025
- Covering letter with the plan

Exeter

<u>Councillors back Exeter's submission for local government reorganisation – Exeter City</u>
 <u>Council News</u>

Plymouth

• Plymouth proposal Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) | PLYMOUTH.GOV.UK

NALC

- NALC LGR Resources Local government reorganisation
- NALC Devolution resources <u>Devolution</u>
- NALC slides on the Devolution White Paper including timeline
- NALC presentation to the National Assembly, 30 January 2025 on the English Devolution White Paper
- NALC welcomes government clarification on parish and town council in local government reorganisation proposals

Local Government Association

• The Local Government Association Hub – Devolution

General

- University of Exeter Report on parish and town councils in Cornwall following devolution
- Devon Housing Commission Report
- The Local Government Boundary Commission for England

Item 12 Action points

10 th April 2024	The Town Clerk therefore asked if the Council could have a free day of
Request for a free car parking	parking at Churchfields in Appledore for the event. At the time of
day at Churchfields for the 200 th	writing, Sean Kearney was consulting internally at TDC and a response
Anniversary of the RNLI	was awaited.
Appledore station.	ONGOING
(minute 2404/907)	
20 th November 2024	The Town Clerk, Community Engagement Officer, Cllrs Bach, Hames
Re-engage with Surfers Against	and Lo-Vel all attended the meetings arranged for the 27 th November
Sewage Plastic Free Campaigns	2024. The Northam Burrows Rangers both apologised in advance. The
(minutes 2407/192 and 2411/416)	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
20 th November 2024	Drop kerbs. Quotations received and relevant Devon County Council
(minute 2411/413)	officer contacted.
	The matter is being overseen by the Environment & Maintenance
	committee.
20 th November 2024	Town Clerk to prepare a report into the costs of the three options for
(minute 2411/418)	future work at the pavilion. This work has been overtaken by urgent work required at Northam Hall.
	ONGOING
18 th December 2024	Prepare a lease for the rental of Blue Light Hall and pass the matter to
(minute 2412/494)	the Finance committee.
(ONGOING
18 th December 2024	Request an exemption from parking charges at Windmill Lane on
(minute 2412/498)	weekdays for Northam TC members. Request made, response awaited,
	now escalated to the Head of Service.
	ONGOING
18 th December 2024	Ask the member of the public planning a podcast project to draft a letter
(minute 2412/499)	requesting bench sponsors contact them. ONGOING
22 nd January 2025	An email was drafted asking the Head of Legal Services at TDC for their
(minute 2501/551)	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.
	The Town Clerk has heard from the Land Registry that the allotment part
	was removed from the land title a year after it was registered by TDC, in 2006. There being no recorded reason or evidence stating why, the
	allotment part was re-included in 2024.
	ONGOING

Item 13 To receive the Clerk's report

At 31st March 2025 (or according to the last available statement balance), the Council's balances were:

Nationwide (Business 95-day saver)	£94,065.15	interest rate is 3.9%
Cambridge & Counties Bank (31-day)	£94,710.99	interest rate is 3.49%
Cambridge Building Society	£5,027.04	interest rate is 2.2%
Petty Cash	£13.45	
Coop Bank (current account)	£133,593.43	no interest
Hinkley & Rugby Building Society	£5000.00	interest rate is 2.2%
Total cash in hand	£332,410.06	

Note: at 14.04.2025 the Council's main current account had an available balance of £80,425.05, monthly spend is in the region of £45,000. The Council receives its precept in two instalments from the collecting authority, on the last Mondays in April and September annually.

Payments: The Council made 119 payments in March 2025, totalling £46,016.08 (exVAT). A full list of these was presented to the Finance committee. There were 33 payments of £100 or more (exVAT). These include:

- £23,838.70 in payroll and associated costs
- £11,845.00 for the complete replacement of the Maintenance Equipment with electrically powered variants.
- £969.30 monthly charge for the Council's general insurance
- £950.00 to value the Council buildings
- £800.83 for play area inspection training (IR)
- £796.31 for 2 May Poles (covered by a grant from the County Councillor)
- £621.167 for gas to heat Northam Hall
- £455.00 to clean the CP Toilet
- £450.00 to remove asbestos from Northam Hall
- £428.49 monthly room rental at the Town Hall
- £400.00 to clean Northam Hall in December
- £356.60 in copier fees and charges
- £310.90 to service alarms and CCTV
- £284.70 monthly IT contract
- £250.00 to remove a dangerous tree at Wren Close
- £237.00 1st Aid Training (Maintenance Team)
- £185.02 late invoice for work to festive lighting at Westward Ho!
- £1,000.02 for franking for Northam Burrows Charity (6 direct debits of £166.67)
- £151.00 Asbestos Awareness training
- £150.00 Repair to display cabinet (Men's Shed)
- £140.00 for SLCC training for IR
- £140.00 for SLCC training for TT
- £114.00 water bill (Northam Hall)
- £113.04 Truck and mower fuel
- £110.26 for plasterboard at Northam Hall
- £102.01 for high security padlocks for containers

Receipts: In March 2025, the Council received 79 payments, totalling £9,673.84, including £590.78 in bank interest.

Tennis courts: The gross volume of sales 1st January 2024 to 31st March 2025 is £5,855. After fees, the Council has received £5,452.32. 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 approximately £1,850 over the target, in this extended year (1st January 2024 to 31st March 25). In due course, a payment of £425.28 will be made to the Council's Cambridge Building Society account, where this earmark is held.

The Council has sold 89 annual membership passes, a small number of which have already been renewed. The revenue from the sale of membership was £3,115 (before fees) 1st January 2024 to 31st March 2025.

Petty Cash: A screen shot of the cash cashbook is presented overleaf showing the items which the Council spent petty cash. aim of the Town is to maintain a of £100 or thereabouts in the account, £90 has withdrawn on the April 2025 to maintain that level.

							h	y Cas	TC Pet	Northam	Name:	2024-25	sh	Petty Ca	
	Balance at start of FY	Expenditure			Income				Details						
	£ 136.47	Total out	Office expenses	Maintenanc e	Milk etc	Events	VAT	Total in	Carry forward	Petty Cash Withdrawal	Scribe No	Ref	Description	Transactio n	Date
	100.15	0.00						50.00		50.00		PCR24-25.10	Cash top up	126	5.3.25
on	97.37	2.78			2.78			0.00				PC24-25.113	Milk	127	4.3.25
has	96.42	0.95			0.95			0.00				PC24-25.114	Milk	128	6.3.25
The	95.07	1.35			1.35			0.00				PC24-25.115	Milk	129	11.3.25
	93.88	1.19			1.19			0.00				PC24-25.116	Sugar	130	12.3.25
Cle	92.49	1.39			1.39			0.00				PC24-25.117	Milk	131	18.3.25
leve	87.75	4.74			4.74			0.00				PC24-25.118	Milk, sugar, coffee	132	19.3.25
	50.85	36.90			36.90			0.00				PC24-25.119	Orange and Apple Juice (Grants / AEM)	133	20.3.25
	15.85	35.00			29.17		5.83	0.00				PC24-25.120	Cylinder & Mortice		24.3.25
bee	14.65	1.20			1.20			0.00				PC24-25.121	Milk	135	24.3.25
1 st	13.45	1.20			1.20			0.00				PC24-25.122	Milk	136	31.3.25
	-123.02	833.02	132.55	106.07	249.04	310.97	34.39	710.00		710.00	TOTALS			136	Number of ransaction s
			-	-	-	-	-	-		-	s (12 month)	getted figure:	bud		
			- 132.55	- 106.07	-249.04	-310.97	-	710.00		710.00	ice (to date)	variar			
	13.45	£ 136.47	Variance												

Item 14 To note the results of the elections in the *Northam Orchard Hill* and *Appledore* Wards of the Town Council and consider any appointments to the Planning & Development committee.

The District Council, having received the requisite number of requests for an election to be held, has informed this Council that elections to fill the vacancies in the Northam Orchard Hill an Appledore wards were to be held on the 17th April 2025.

The result of the election will be published on the District Council's website by the end of the 18th April 2025 (Good Friday). New members will take their seats as soon as the results are declared and be invited to this meeting of the Council.

The Town Clerk notes that there is only one committee meeting prior to the Annual Meeting of the Council on the 7th May 2025, where committee membership is agreed for the coming civic year. That one meeting is Planning & Development, on which there are three vacant seats. Should any member wish to be appointed to that committee (meeting 24th April at 6.30pm), nominations can be accepted at this meeting.

Item 15 To consider options for the Council's committee structure and calendar

The Council has operated its current committee structure for one civic year. The number and timing of meetings has had an effect on additional hours attended by staff and the ability of members to attend those meetings.

A meeting requires staff t prepare the agenda and reports to be available 3 clear days (normally being 6 calendar days) in advance, so each meeting has significant associated work in the week prior to that meeting.

The Town Clerk has considered the meeting calendar and committee structure and suggests considering the following revisions:

- 1. Reduced the frequency of Full Council meetings to every two months. This would need to be combined with an information sharing activity such as a *members' briefing* in the months no meeting is held.
- 2. Combine the Finance and HR committees. These committees were separated in 2024 to oversee the HR review the Council commissioned in 2024. That review having been completed, it would be beneficial to recombine these two committees. The benefit would be that HR matters could be considered on a monthly basis without increasing the meeting frequency.
- 3. Consider the impact of evening meetings the Council had previously operated a system where some meetings alternative evening and morning. All were moved to the evening in recognition of the members that had daytime employment or other commitments and in the hope more members of the public would be able to attend. Options include:
 - a. Alternating some or all of the committee and Council meetings between morning/afternoon and evening meetings.
 - b. Bringing the evening meeting time forward, for example to 4.30 or 5pm, so there was a shorter gap between the afternoon and evening for Council staff.
- 4. The Annual Electors Meeting must take place, according to the law between 1 March and 1 June each year. It has not been included on this calendar, nor has a Grant presentation evening. Note there are no free evenings in Northam Hall.
- 5. The Mayor's Introduction would need to be held in the Town Hall, there are no free evenings in Northam Hall.

A draft calendar is attached, only the Burrows Charity Management committee has a time slot. Recommendation: The Council consider options for its meeting calendar, to be presented to the Annual Meeting of the Council on the 7th May 2025.

Item 16 To consider investigating the costs and other matters associated with installing CCTV cameras in the following locations: Appledore (Churchfields Car Park), Westward Ho! (park and tennis courts), and Westward Ho! (Nelson Road and Golf Links Road).

Following the request from members to consider how to best ensure the security of this Council's and other Council's assets and thus consider the installation of CCTV cameras in the above locations in the Parish, this matter is included for discussion.

In considering the matter, the Council is advised to note the requirements of UK GDPR, as detailed on the <u>Information Commissioner's website</u> and the requirement to draft policy and procedure for the use of this type of equipment.

Should it be resolved to take any or all of the locations forward, the following matters must form part of any considerations:

- i. Which organisation will draft the policies, risk assessments and other required documentation relating to the installation of CCTV cameras?
- ii. Which organisation will be responsible for monitoring the CCTV installed?
- iii. What are the estimated costs for the CCTV units, software and related equipment? Are the cameras and other hardware to be purchased or leased?
- iv. What are the estimated costs of monitoring of the recordings?
- v. Should this Council fund the cameras, would that be cross funding another local government body or would this Council be purchasing assets (cameras) the ownership of which is to be passed to another organisation?
- vi. Which organisation will take GDPR and H&S responsibility for the CCTV cameras, which organisation would insure them?
- vii. Which organisation would review the footage and would it be checked 'live' or in retrospect?

Recommendation: The Council consider if it should pursue the matter further, including undertaking a detailed review of the financial and operational viability and efficacy of proceeding

Item 17 To receive an update on the nomination of Knapp House grounds as an Asset of Community Value

Torridge District Council has rejected the Council's application to define the lands at Knapp House as an Asset of Community Value. The reason for this may be found on that Council's website at the ACV Register at www.torridge.gov.uk/acv.

Briefly, the reason for refusal was because the land is ancillary to Knapp House (Holiday Camp & Caravan Site) - the previous use of a site persists until the owner / legal occupant undertakes works to change the use of the site.

Both holiday camps and caravan parks meet a statutory definition of "Residence" as defined in the Localism Act 2011 and the Assets of Community Value Regulations 2012. <u>Schedule 1, Section 2(b) of the Assets of Community Value (England) Regulations 2012 (ACV Regulations)</u> states that:

"(b)a building is a residence if—

(ii)it is let or partly let for use as a holiday dwelling;

(iii)it, or part of it, is a hotel or is otherwise principally used for letting or licensing accommodation to paying occupants;"

The regulations state that land ancillary to a Residence cannot be listed as an Asset of Community Value and of course the previous use of a site persists until the owner / legal occupant undertakes works to change the use of the site.

There is no right of appeal against or request to review of a decision to approve or reject an application for a property to be defined as an Asset of Community Value other than from the landowner.

Item 18 To consider submitting the Northam Neighbourhood Plan to Torridge District Council for examination (p?)

This matter has been referred from the Planning and Development Committee.

The Northam Neighbourhood Plan working group represented the final draft Northam Neighbourhood Plan, and associated supporting documents and evidence, to the last meeting of the Planning and Development committee. That committee recommended that the Northam Neighbourhood Plan and

it's supporting documentation and evidence be submitted to Torridge District Council for independent examination and from there on to referendum.

The draft neighbourhood plan proposal must be submitted to the local planning authority. The neighbourhood plan submission must include the following:

- a map which identifies the area to which the plan relates,
- a consultation statement,
- the neighbourhood plan proposal, and
- a statement on how the plan fulfils the basic conditions

On receiving the submitted plan proposal and supporting documents, the local authority is responsible for checking that the submitted neighbourhood plan has followed the proper legal process, such as the neighbourhood area being designated and the legal requirements for consultation and publicity having been followed. The District Council is then responsible for publicising the plan, arranging for the independent examination and arranging for the referendum to take place. The publicity gives people an opportunity to make representations that will be passed to the independent examiner.

The Northam Neighbourhood Plan, its appendices and other supporting documents may be downloaded from the Council's website at

https://www.northamtowncouncil.gov.uk/Neighbourhood_Plan_37993.aspx. The Council will also have a dedicated external website (www.northamneighbourhoodplan.co.uk) where the Plan may be viewed, which should be live by the Easter weekend 2025.

Recommendation: To approve submitting the Northam Neighbourhood Plan and associated supporting documents to Torridge District Council for independent examination.

Item 19To consider renewing the Council's retainer with its appointed legal advisors
(Tozers LLP, Exeter), due January 2025 (confidential report attached)

The Town Clerk notes that the office has only received this renewal request this month, accompanied by apologies from the liaison manager.

Item 20 To consider the Council's Insurance arrangements for 2025-26 (confidential report to follow)

The Council's general insurance was renewed in May 2024 for a three-year term. The revised fee is \pounds 12,475.47 for 28th May 2025 to 27th May 2026, an increase from \pounds 11,415.55 in 2024-25 This includes an increase in the value of the Council's tools and equipment, reflecting the units purchased this spring. The new valuations for the Council's buildings have not, at the time of writing, been received. The annual fee may therefore increase, should the valuations be significantly different to those submitted in 2024-25.

The Council's motor insurance is due for renewal on the 13th May 2025. Insurance providers in the Local Council sector provide services on a regional basis. The Town Clerk has sought alternative quotes and has been advised that the fleet insurer, ERS, has more favourable terms with the Council's current broker. The renewal premium was not available at the time of writing (the insurer has a 28-day renewal advice period) but was estimated to be £625 per truck plus £375 for the ride-on mower (plus IPT), £2,497.50. An accurate price will be available for the meeting.

The Council's engineering maintenance and sudden, unexpected damage insurance is due for renewal on the 28th May 2025. The Clerk notes that insurance providers in the Local Council sector provide services on a regional basis, though further quotations are being sought. The quote for the Council's current insurer is £520.07, an increase from £487.29.

The total premium payable is therefore estimated to be $\pounds15,493.04$ (comprising $\pounds12,475.47 + \pounds520.07 + \pounds2,497.50$ (estimated)).

Recommendation: The Council continue with its current insurers.