



NORTHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Town Hall, Windmill Lane, Northam EX39 1BY

Acting Town Clerk: Guy Langton (CiLCA, PSLCC)

Telephone: 01237/474976

admin@northamtowncouncil.gov.uk

www.northamtowncouncil.gov.uk

Please scan QR code for the Council's website



NORTHAM TOWN **ANNUAL ELECTORS MEETING**

The ANNUAL MEETING OF ELECTORS for APPLIEDORE, NORTHAM, and WESTWARD HO! will be held on

**Thursday 20th March 2025 in the Council Chamber, Windmill Lane,
Northam at 6pm.**

The agenda for the meeting is set out below. All registered electors in the wards of Appledore, Northam and Westward Ho! are invited to attend.

Any elector registered in the wards of Appledore, Northam and Westward Ho! may ask a question of or raise any matters relating to the Parish.

All electors may vote on any resolutions proposed and the Council will take note of those decisions.

This is **the** opportunity to enable the community to make its voice heard.

Cllr Niki Tait, Mayor of the Town Council

Date of issue: 14th March 2025

AGENDA

- 1 To receive apologies for absence
- 2 To confirm the Minutes of the Annual Electors Meeting held on Wednesday 17th April 2024
- 3 To receive the Mayor's report.
- 4 To discuss matters raised by electors in the Parish

The Town Council is administering this meeting. Please direct any questions to the Town Hall, Windmill Lane, Northam, Bideford EX39 1BY Tel: 01237 474976 or by email to admin@northamtowncouncil.gov.uk

The meeting will be followed by the Annual Grants Presentations and light refreshments.



**Minutes of the Northam Town Annual Electors' Meeting
17th April 2024 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber, Windmill Lane, Northam.**

Present: Cllrs Hames (Mayor), Tait, Edwards, Ford, Leather, Himan, Brading, Lo-Vel, Newman-McKie, Whittaker, Hodson, Bruins and Bach.

In attendance: Guy Langton – Deputy Town Clerk
Tina Tucker – Administrative Officer
Dean Stewardson – Maintenance Operative
Ivan Heuze – Maintenance Operative
Members of the public

23-24/001 Apologies

Cllr Singh tendered his apologies.

23-24/002 To confirm the Minutes of the Annual Electors Meeting held on Wednesday 15th March 2023

It was resolved to confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 15th March 2023 as a correct record.

Proposed: Cllr Ford, Seconded: Cllr (majority in favour, 6 abstentions not present at the meeting)

23-24/003 To receive the following report:

Northam Town Council Mayor's Report

The report was read out by the Mayor. A copy is attached to these minutes.

23-24/004 To discuss matters raised by Parishioners

1. Was the EV charger at Churchfields car park was operational?
Cllr Hames responded saying it was.
2. Was the Town Council was engaging with the District Council to access Levelling-Up funding from central government, for example for the use of the old railway line to Westward Ho! & Appledore to create a cycle route?
Cllr Hames responded saying that Active Travel was part of the County Council's infrastructure plan. The fundamental problem being land owners not wanting to allow use of the land for a cycle route. The Town Council was supportive of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).
3. Parking on pavements in Northam, Appledore and Westward Ho! was getting worse, for example Bloody Corner (on the A386) was often parked-up with vehicles of local residents and those using the small-holding adjacent to the road. The path leading from Bloody Corner to Boat Hyde often had dog waste along it, with owners not picking up after their dogs.
Cllr Hames responded that the issue needed to be raised with the operators of the small holding. He noted that pavement parking and blocking the pavement was illegal and as such enforced by the Police, parking on double-yellow lines was enforced by the County Council.
4. The condition of Knapp House was raised. People were accessing the site and had damaged the HERAS fence that protected the site.
Cllr Hames responded saying that he, as a Ward Councillor had been involved, as had the District Council Environmental Health department and the Police. The land owners had been notified and had stated that a security system would be put in place. Should this not be done in a reasonable time, the District Council could use its enforcement powers.

5. The condition of many footpath surfaces was raised. They were very muddy and the surfaces not suitable for use.

Cllr Hames responded saying that the Town Council had drafted a condition report of the Parish's footpaths and requested funding to undertake the work from the County Council.

6. The potholes across the Parish were worsening. Could the Town Council urge the County Council to address the matter?

Cllr Hames responded saying that potholes could be reported to Highways by telephone on 0345 155 1004 or online at <https://www.devon.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem/>. Should a pothole not meet the criteria for the County Council to repair it could be repaired by the Town Council as part of the Road Warden scheme (if the defect was suitable for repair). The materials to undertake these repairs were provided free of charge by the County Council.

7. The speed that vehicles travelled through Northam Square was a concern for many members of the community. A pedestrian crossing had previously been requested.

Cllr Hames responded saying this would be brought up with the County Council.

8. The slipways in Appledore were slippery and cars were being parked on the access to the slipway on the Quay. Could the Town Council address these?

Cllr Hames responded saying that the surface of the slipways would be brought to the attention of the appropriate authority. The parking problems were to be reported to the County Council, as the area was double-yellow lined.

9. It was noted that the Town Council did not always respond to questions and queries raised by electors and others.

Cllr Hames responded saying that the Council intended to reply in the appropriate manner and would endeavour to do so in the future.

10. An elector noted that the Town's County Councillor was also the Chair of the County Council's Highways and Traffic Orders Committee (HATOC).

Cllr Hames thanked the elector for highlighting this.

There being no further questions, the meeting closed at 7:05pm and was followed by the Grant Presentations.

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

ANNUAL ELECTORS MEETING – Mayor’s Report

Welcome ladies and gentlemen, Aldermen and Councillors to this annual electors’ meeting the purpose of which is to give opportunity for the public to ask questions and issues regarding the parish and the activities and policies of Northam Town Council. This will be followed by presentation of grant cheques to the successful applicants.

If to start with I may just report that over the year since last April the Council has gone from strength to strength, taking on more responsibilities as well as undertaking its statutory duties. Our five maintenance staff have been out daily, clearing weeds from pavements, cutting grass on verges and in our open spaces, picking up litter and maintaining the play equipment and other Council property. They have worked increasingly in the context of the Council’s climate and biodiversity policies, given that we now have an electric flat-bed vehicle in the fleet and are replacing petrol-driven equipment such as strimmers with battery powered versions, all of which are powered mainly by the solar energy generated from the roof of Northam Hall.

Following the Council’s policy of increasing biodiversity in our open areas we have planted more trees, shrubs and flowers in the parks, started a hedgerow at Burrough Farm and employed a specialist to lay the roadside hedge in Anchor Park. We have also installed bird boxes in that park and obtained hedging for Appledore School which we helped the children to plant. Next autumn we plan to lay the hedge alongside the public footpath at Burrough Farm and continue hedge planting around the perimeter of the football pitch.

Every year we conduct a survey of the public footpaths in the parish and use funding from the County Council to improve the surfaces of selected paths. This year we plan to prioritise paths at Raleigh and between Lenwood Road and Raleigh Hill. Such maintenance helps to encourage active travel and so does our participation in the Local Cycle and Walking Infrastructure Plan, aiming at creating a cycle route from Appledore to Bideford. As a Council we have also recently pledged support for the Northern Devon Railway Alliance and its aspiration to restore a rail link from Bideford to Barnstaple, joining up with the line to Exeter.

Following a successful public consultation process we are hopefully on the last leg of producing our Neighbourhood Plan and I wish to express special thanks to Mr Nick Arnold and to our Deputy Clerk for their invaluable work on the document.

At the Council we are very aware of the need to engage further with young people. As Mayor I met with six formers at Bideford College and together with the Deputy Clerk and Councillor Hodson we had a useful discussion about climate change, following a presentation recording what our Council has done as part of its carbon reduction objectives. We are also looking at other ways in which the Council can engage with youth and have set up a Councillor working group for this purpose.

Thinking of younger children we continue to improve our parks, having re-surfaced around the play equipment at Lords Meadow and ordered new multi-play equipment to replace the outmoded installation in Anchor Park. Members of the Westward Ho! Park Committee have also worked tirelessly to continue to improve the Park and the tennis courts have been restored thanks to funding help from the Lawn Tennis Association and they are now available for booking. Plans are also being made to either refurbish or replace the Pavilion at the Park and to re-configure the adjacent garden, and the Council is part-funding a changing facility attached to the Pavilion. I should add that the Council has taken over another open space during the year, that is the site known as Blackies in Appledore which is next to St Mary’s Church.

Recognising our role as a Council in the community we continue to organise the May Fair and look forward to seeing you there on 4th May. We also invite you to fill in the form in The Link and on the Council's website and Facebook site and at the end of this room to nominate a Community Champion, that is, a person who you consider has gone out of their way to help in the community. The six people chosen by Councillors from the nominations will be presented with certificates at the Mayor's Inauguration ceremony in June.

Finally I'd like to say that as Mayor I have thoroughly enjoyed my term. My duties have included attending events organised by other parish and town councils, attending Northam Christmas ceremonies, presenting prizes for the Appledore Photo Competition, presenting certificates to two ladies who had reached their hundredth birthdays, meeting the Lithuanian Ambassador at Appledore Shipyard and hosting my charity event at Northam Hall, where we enjoyed dancing to the band Soul Intention and raised nearly £1400 for charities.

I thank my partner very much for her support and that of all the staff at Northam Town Council and look forward to another year in the life of the Council.