



NORTHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Town Hall, Windmill Lane, Northam EX39 1BY

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To all members of the Council:

You are hereby summoned to attend the **ENVIRONMENT and MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE** meeting on

Thursday 6th February 2025 at 6:30pm

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

Membership:

Louis Bach (Chair), Hugh Brading, Barry Edwards, Peter Hames (Deputy Chair) and Wendy Lo-Vel, plus the Mayor, Cllr Niki Tait (ex-officio). Two vacancies.

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: 31st January 2025

AGENDA

- 1 To receive and approve apologies for absence, in accordance with Local Government Act 1972 s85(1)** *All apologies must be notified to the Town Council offices by one hour prior to the start of the meeting.*
- 2 Chair's announcements**
- 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 To agree the agenda as published.**
- 5 To confirm as a correct record and sign the minutes of the Environment and Maintenance Committee held on 11th December 2024** (p3-9)
- 6 Public Participation**
Members of the public are permitted to make representations, answer questions and give evidence in respect of any item of business included in the agenda. Each member of the public is entitled to speak once only in respect of business itemised on the agenda and shall not speak for more than 4 minutes. The period of time which is designated for public participation in accordance with standing orders shall not exceed 20 minutes.
- 7 To receive an update on actions** (p10-11)
- 8 To consider the Devon County Council grass cutting agreement** (attached)
- 9 To note the plans for Churchill Way bank** (p12)
- 10 To consider plans for improving the street scene at Golf Links Rod, between Avon Lane and Beach Road** (verbal)
- 11 To consider offering a Christmas tree recycling scheme to residents of the Northam Town Council area in 2025** (p12-13)
- 12 To receive the response from TDC regarding the siting of air quality survey equipment** (p13)

Northam Town Council – Minutes of the Environment and Maintenance committee meeting held 11th December 2024 at 6.30pm in the Town Hall, Windmill Lane, Northam.

Present: Cllrs Bach (Chair), Brading, Edwards, Hames, Lo-Vel and the Mayor, Cllr Tait.

In attendance: Guy Langton – Town Clerk & RFO.
Ian Rawle – Parks & Buildings Manager.

2412/458 To receive and approve apologies for absence, in accordance with Local Government Act 1972 s85(1)

All members were present.

2412/459 Chair's Announcements

The Chair had no announcements.

The Town Clerk reported that Storm Darragh had damaged some of the Council's property, with a notice board being blown down at Hanson Park, tiles loosened at the pavilion in Westward Ho! and the festive/festoon and motif lighting had suffered the ill effects in Westward Ho! and Appledore.

Action point: Reinstate the noticeboard at Hanson Park.

2412/460 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.

2412/461 To agree the agenda as published

It was **resolved** to agree the agenda as published.

Proposed: Cllr Brading, Seconded: Cllr Tait (all in favour).

2412/462 To confirm as a correct record and sign the minutes of the Environment & Maintenance Committee held on 2nd October 2024

It was **resolved** to confirm the minutes of the meeting as a correct record.

Proposed Cllr Hames, Seconded Cllr Tait (majority in favour, 1 abstention – not present at the meeting)

2412/463 Public Participation

Members of the public are permitted to make representations, answer questions and give evidence in respect of any item of business included in the agenda. Each member of the public is entitled to speak once only in respect of business itemised on the agenda and shall not speak for more than 4 minutes. The period of time which is designated for public participation in accordance with standing orders shall not exceed 20 minutes.

There were no members of the public present.

2412/464 To receive an update on action points

The Action points were considered and noted as presented overleaf

	Action	September 2024	October 2024	December 2024
1	Dog bin requests, TDC considering Griggs Close, all others refused This bin has been added to TDC list for consideration next year.	Contacted, requesting a general waste bin rather than a litter bin as dog waste may also be placed in these. Action: Contact TDC	ONGOING	The Town Clerk notes that this position is not likely to change and no bin will be installed. Cllr Hames would follow this up at TDC, the matter was considered COMPLETE for this committee.
2	Weed control review annual on August agenda.	On the agenda ONGOING	Form a working group comprising Cllrs Bach, Brading and Hames, the Town Clerk and (in due course) the Parks & Buildings Manager To consider the Council's approach to plant growth on pavement and kerb edges and its control. First meeting to be arranged, hoped to be the afternoon of the 3 rd October 2024. ONGOING	On the agenda COMPLETE
3	Battery powered equipment replacement, under regular review. Purchase of a second battery has been added to the 2024-25 budget.	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING The Town Clerk notes that when procuring new equipment, battery-powered models are routinely considered and opted for unless there is no alternative to a combustion engine version. The matter was considered COMPLETE until a purchase or procurement exercise was undertaken.
4	Planting for hanging baskets and planters, members were advised of neighbouring council's arrangements for their floral displays, it was agreed to continue with Merry Harriers this year.	Include consideration of 'Reduce hanging baskets/mulch planters' On the agenda Action point: consider more suitable locations in the autumn, after the season is ended.	It was agreed to seek permission from Bideford TC to store the planters at their Town Rangers' depot at the cost of £9 per planter per month. ONGOING	The planters have been transferred to a yard at Caddsdawn, Bideford, where they would be prepared for over-wintering and replanted prior to being replaced in late spring/early summer 2025 at locations to be agreed (on the agenda). COMPLETE

Chair's initials

5	Request from a Councillor to investigate the possibility of installing footway/pavement lights along a stretch of Golf Links Road.	ONGOING	The Town Clerk has contacted the County Lighting Engineer for the area to discuss installing suitable lights along the pavement. ONGOING	The Devon Council officer has confirmed that the lighting is sufficiently bright (it met minimum standards) and no further action would be taken. COMPLETE
6	Follow up the P3 grant funding allocation	Purchase Order received and invoice sent. Funds not yet received. ONGOING	Funds not yet received. ONGOING	Funds received. COMPLETE
7	Write to the Company Secretary regarding the handrail at Fosketh Hill, footpath 24.		Letter written ONGOING Rail to be ordered ONGOING	Rail not yet received. Action point: Town Clerk to follow up with the Company Secretary at Kipling Terrace and the fabricators. ONGOING
8	Consideration of a bottle filling point at Westward Ho! Park on a future Parks & Recreation agenda.		To be included on the P&R agenda for November 2024 ONGOING	Funds included in the budget for 2025-26 and will be considered in due course. COMPLETE
9	Festive and festoon lighting		The matter was passed to Full Council for consideration. ONGOING	Two full sets have been ordered for Westward Ho! Seafront and installed. The second set and the units from the seafront will be stored to allow for swift replacement should units fail again. COMPLETE
10	Footpath work			The agreed and reported footpath work is being reviewed and are scheduled for week commencing 16 th Dec 24. ONGOING The signs have been purchased and installed on Footpath 10a. COMPLETE

Chair's initials

11	Drop kerbs in Westward Ho! (brought forward from TP&AM)	It is not possible to install a drop kerb at Venton Dr (a private road). Other sites could be investigated at a cost of approx. £300 per location. There is no discount for multiple applications and the £300 is not refundable if the location is not approved. At the previous committee it was not agreed to take the matter forward.	DCC has confirmed that no licence fee would be required. The locations will be re-identified and a contractor instructed. Action point: arrange site visits, contact DCC and instruct contractors. ONGOING
12	Include the funds the council's two other old noticeboards in the 2025-26 budget		Funds included in draft budget for two boards (at Hanson Park and in Appledore) and a further board at the Town Hall. COMPLETE
13	Schools to be contacted to design their own 'don't idle' signs for the Council to have made and installed.		The schools have been contacted. Only one was interested but not all had replied. ONGOING
14	Prepare a report on the purchase and installation of MVSIDs for the Parish		NOT STARTED
15	Contact the Westward Ho! Business association regarding the Business Noticeboard in Westward Ho!		The Business Association has produced a map. It was not the Town Clerk's understanding that the Town Council was to fund its printing and installation image attached to papers). COMPLETE
16	Planting hedge whips at Burrough Farm		The hedge whips have been received and temporarily planted. The work is scheduled. ONGOING
17	Replant build-out at Kingsley Park		Planting COMPLETE
18	Design a suitable graphic for the Council's EV to wrap on bodywork		ONGOING

Chair's initials

- 2412/465 To consider a request to provide a member of the public with litter picking and general maintenance equipment**
It was agreed that in principle, the funding would be forthcoming but to defer the matter, the member of the public not being present.
Action point: Contact the resident to invite him to the next meeting.
- 2412/466 To consider how Town Council may address the traffic conditions in The Square, Northam**
The committee considered what the Council may do to address the many issues raised, those being congestion, antisocial parking, air quality and vehicle speeds. These were considered to have got worse since there had been more development in Westward Ho!
Cllr Hames reported that Torridge DC had a plan for environment and air quality monitoring.
The Town Clerk noted that the committee could consider commissioning a traffic numbers survey.
Cllr Bach noted that once the new road ‘Boulevard Way’ was open and connecting Golf Links Road and Atlantic Way, the numbers using The Square could reduce.
Action points:
Contact Mr Gilbert at Torridge DC regarding air quality surveys.
Research costs for a traffic survey.
- 2412/467 To consider how the Town Council may assist residents in Appledore complete a refurbishment of the bus shelter opposite the Seagate Hotel**
It was **resolved** to contact the volunteers advising them that should this Council provide one Chapter 8 qualified member of staff to oversee the project, it could be carried out under the responsibility of this Council, thus providing the required insurances.
Proposed: Cllr Edwards, Seconded: Cllr Brading (majority in favour).
Action point: Contact the volunteers.
- 2412/468 To note the locations of the Council’s Christmas Trees this year and consider the requirements for 2025**
It was noted that this Council had ordered five 18-20ft Christmas Trees for display across the community. These have previously been located at:
- Northam Hall, to be seen from Fore St and Atlantic Way
 - Northam Square, St Margaret’s forecourt
 - Appledore, in the Council’s car park at the War Memorial end.
 - Westward Ho!, in Westward Ho! Park on the corner of Avon Lane and Golf Links Road
 - Westward Ho!, on the green.
- It was further noted that, the WWHo! Business association had placed a similarly sized tree in the Guillemot’s Garden adjacent to the green in Westward Ho! The Town Clerk therefore consulted with ward members and agreed that the Council would not place a tree on the Green in Westward Ho! in 2024. Instead, the fifth tree was placed on Bone Hill.
It was noted that the draft budget included sufficient funds to provide five trees again in 2025.
Action point: Town Clerk to contact the Business Association.

2412/469 To receive a report from the weed control working group and consider the recommendations

The committee received the report, noting its contents and recommendations. Cllr Hames was concerned that an updated policy on land management and biodiversity be fully in place before the committee could consider the types of machines required, if any were. Cllr Hames also noted that the Council had agreed a net-zero carbon target of 2030 as a key element of its declaration of a climate emergency and that petrol powered machines would actively harm the Council's resolved aims in this regard.

The report noted that machines were available that could address the Council's requirements in approaching several tasks, a two-wheeled tractor with suitable attachment could remove weeds on hard surfaces with a rotating head, sweep large areas, mow small and medium areas and burn away unwanted plant growth, among other uses. The cost of each suitable attachment varied but was not insignificant.

The Council had received a demonstration of various machines from one provider on the 10th December 2024. Electric and combustion-powered weed removal machines and a propane weed burning tool were demonstrated. Cllr Bach reported that he did not think that the electric weed removal machine had sufficient power to remove the kerb-side growth in the demonstration, being weaker than the petrol machine demonstrated along a similar length.

The organisation that provided the demonstration also operated a hire division, which had a limited range of tools available. Cllr Lo-Vel favoured the option of renting a combustion-powered tool to undertake the work in the first instance (the cost being approx. £650/week plus delivery and collection) and then the Council acquire an electrically powered tool to maintain the areas where weeds had been removed. The company did not hire out the electric machinery.

Cllr Brading considered the two-wheeled tractor to be a more versatile machine, noting that the council's mowers were well used during the mowing season and were known to be out of action for periods of time awaiting repair. He also considered a battery powered machine may not have the working time of a combustion engine equivalent and was heavier to use.

The committee considered the recommendations contained within the report:

1. The committee purchase a Rotating Roller Wash Brush for Pressure Washers for maintaining the Tennis Courts, skate park and other similar areas, including play surfaces as appropriate.
2. The committee purchase a mechanical weed removing device, either a dedicated machine or a 2-wheeled tractor (plus attachment tools)
3. The committee review and confirm the Council's Life on the Verge plans.
4. The committee recommends that the circulated Biodiversity policy is reviewed and presented to the Review Committee for consideration.

It was **resolved** to purchase a rotating roller brush and 240v pressure washer to assist with maintaining the tennis courts and areas of wet-pour surface at a cost of approximately £500.

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

Action point: Purchase the machinery.

It was **resolved** to recommend the inclusion of the purchase of a two-wheeled tractor (Kerstin UBS Hydro II 13 (£12,000) and two attachments: a flail mower (£2,200) and a rotating weed removal tool (£3,500)) at a cost of approximately £17,700. The funds were to be identified in the budget for 2025-26, coming from the £10,000 earmark to replace the mowers, £5,000 to replace one of the Council's trucks and the remaining £2,700 from the general projects fund. Proposed: Cllr Brading, Seconded: Cllr Bach (majority in favour, two against). **Action point: include in the draft budget to be considered at a special Full Council meeting in January 2025.**

It was **resolved** to confirm the Council's Life on the Verge plans and schedule the work to commence at an appropriate time. Proposed: Cllr Brading, Seconded: Cllr Bach (all in favour). **Action point: Schedule the work, advising the Neighbourhood Highways Officer.**

It was **resolved** to recommend the draft Biodiversity Policy to the Review Committee for consideration. Proposed: Cllr Hames, Seconded: Cllr Lo-Vel (majority in favour, 1 abstention). **Action point: Schedule the work, advising the Neighbourhood Highways Officer.**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:25pm.

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

7 To receive an update on actions

	Action	December 2024	February 2025
1	Write to the Company Secretary regarding the handrail at Fosketh Hill, footpath 24.	Rail not yet received. Action point: Town Clerk to follow up with the Company Secretary at Kipling Terrace and the fabricators. ONGOING	The installation was scheduled for 31 st January 2025. COMPLETE
2	Drop kerbs in Westward Ho! (brought forward from TP&AM)	DCC has confirmed that no licence fee would be required. The locations will be re-identified and a contractor instructed. ONGOING	No further action has been taken. ONGOING
3	Footpath work	The agreed and reported footpath work is being reviewed and are scheduled for week commencing 16 th Dec 24. ONGOING The signs have been purchased and installed on Footpath 10a. COMPLETE	Footpath work is continuing, working through the works agreed in 2024. COMPLETE
4	Schools to be contacted to design their own 'don't idle' signs for the Council to have made and installed.	The schools have been contacted. Only one was interested but not all had replied. ONGOING	Seeking a discussion with the interested school. ONGOING
5	Prepare a report on the purchase and installation of MVSIDs for the Parish	NOT STARTED	NOT STARTED
6	Planting hedge whips at Burrough Farm	The hedge whips have been received and temporarily planted. The work is scheduled. ONGOING	Work COMPLETE.
7	Design a suitable graphic for the Council's EV to wrap on bodywork	ONGOING	On the agenda COMPLETE

8	Request from member of the public for litter picking equipment		Member of the public invited to the February 2025 meeting. ONGOING
9	Traffic issues at the Square, Northam		Mr Gilbert's response is on the agenda. Costs of traffic surveys not yet researched. ONGOING
10	Offer Council help for the bus shelter opposite the Seagate Hotel, Appledore		Council assistance offered, the volunteers advised the Town Clerk that they had agreed works with TDC, to start May 2025. COMPLETE
11	Locations of Council provided Christmas trees in 2025 – liaise with the Westward Ho! Business association over the sites in Westward Ho!		To be considered later in the year. ONGOING
12	Include suitable machinery in the budget for 2025-26 and arrange for its purchase.		Following advice from the Council's vehicle maintenance provider that one of the Council's trucks required considerable repair, the matter has been passed to the Finance committee for further review. COMPLETE
13	Schedule the works for Life on the Verge		Works scheduled in 2025. ONGOING
14	Refer the draft Biodiversity Policy to the Review committee		The matter would be included on the next committee agenda. COMPLETE

Item 8 To consider the Devon County Council grass cutting agreement

The Council has received the DCC grass cutting agreement for 2025-26.

Recommendation: That the Council signs and returns the agreement.

Item 9 To note the plans for Churchill Way bank

The Parks & Buildings Manager has submitted the below plans to DCC Highways the Ecologist. The Ecologist is supportive of the plans, noting the bramble has become out of control, though its ecological benefits are considerable. The bramble patch to the southern end of the bank, towards the retaining wall, would be left (but trimmed back to aid pedestrian passage).

Highways have asked NTC's officers to prepare a more detailed plan with exact locations and distances to maintain the visibility splay opposite the entrance to North Street, which the officers plan to complete in early February 2025.



Item 10 To consider plans for improving the street scene at Golf Links Rod, between Avon Lane and Beach Road

A verbal report.

Consideration to be given to the siting of a boat planter and other suitable planters on Golf Links Road.

Item 11 To consider offering a Christmas tree recycling scheme to residents of the Northam Town Council area in 2025

The Council has previously offered a Christmas Tree recycling services for residents to dispose of their 'real' Christmas trees at the end of the festive season. Residents that have garden waste collections are able to leave their trees to be collected by the District Council but this can be in late January each year.

The Officers consider this to be a service that NTC should offer again, being able to chip the trees and use the chippings. The trees could be left by residents at specific locations, for example, Northam Hall and the Council's parks.

Recommendation: The Council advertise the service in December 2025, with specific locations for collecting trees.

Item 12 To receive the response from TDC regarding the siting of air quality survey equipment

The below was received from the TDC Public Health and Community Safety Manager

Yes, we are responsible for air quality monitoring in the district. We have a number of fixed sites around the district, as described in the appendices of the air quality status reports, produced annually and available on this page: <https://torridge.gov.uk/article/20227/Air-Quality>

Every monitor we place has a resource implication in terms of officer time collecting and replacing the monitors and lab costs for analysis. This is not huge, but our resource is planned around the current monitoring sites. For this reason, and because we don't have any concerns about other areas exceeding the thresholds, we will not be substantially increasing the number of monitoring sites.

That said, we do have plans to install a further three monitors around schools in the district in 2025. We will not be considering further monitoring sites until 2026.
