



To all members of the Committee:

You are hereby summoned to attend the **FINANCE and HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE** meeting on

Wednesday 8th July 2026 at 6.30pm

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

Membership:

Cllrs Edwards, Hames, Himan (Deputy Chair), Hodson (Chair), Leather, Tait and Whittaker plus the Mayor, Cllr Newman-McKie (ex-officio).

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.

Members of the public are asked to respect the fact that this is a meeting to conduct council business and interruptions during council business are not permitted. If, in the opinion of the Chairman, the business of the meeting is disrupted in any way, the Chairman may ask the person/s causing the disruption to be quiet and if they refuse then ask them to leave. **Mobile phones must be switched off or silenced during the meeting.**

Anyone wishing to ask questions is requested to notify the Town Clerk by 12 noon on the day of 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: 2nd July 2026

Members are requested to turn off or silence their mobile phones for the duration of the meeting.

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 5pm on the day 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 consider the minutes of the Finance committee held on the 10th June 2026 as a true and correct record** (enclosed on coloured paper)
 - 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 the actions** (p3-4)
 - 8 To consider the Clerk's report and approve, by resolution, the payments as listed** (p5-6 and under separate cover)
 - 9 To note an increase in the costs of the council's fuel card service** (p6)
 - 10 To consider the annual charge to Northam Burrows Charity for staffing costs and administrative services** (p6-7)
 - 11 To consider continuing with a two-page insert in the LINK magazine each month** (p7)
 - 12 To receive and consider the Internal Audit report 2025-26** (p8 and attachments as listed)
 - 13 To note and receive the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025-26** (p8-9 and attachments as listed)
- To be held in confidential session (pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960)*
- 14 To receive an update on staffing matters** (p9 verbal)
 - 15 To receive and sign the payroll information sheet for submission, considering overtime claimed** (p9 confidential report enclosed)

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 5pm on the day 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 consider the minutes of the Finance committee held on the 13th May 2026 as a true and correct record (enclosed on coloured paper)

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 the actions

Action	Update
1	Arrange digger training for one member of staff Arrangements to be made. The officers are exploring opportunities for combining with other similar bodies to improve access and reduce costs. ONGOING
2	Reference the carpark adjacent to the Seagate Hotel - Advise the lease holder (Young & Co Brewery plc) of the Council's decision to extend the end date by three months, in line with paragraph 21.5. Ask the lease holder what sort of events and how many would be held on the car park, should permission be granted. The lease holder has been advised that amendments may need to be made to the lease: a. the patio being explicitly defined as wholly on NTC land and not within the curtilage of the Seagate Hotel, b. no automatic right of access / egress across NTC land is granted to the Seagate Hotel, as confirmed with TDC a number of years ago, c. Relevant planning permissions, if appropriate (advice is being sought). A solicitor has been contacted to review and draft the lease (6 years, starting at £7,000/year, subject to annual indexation, as defined). Should the revised lease be materially different to the current one, the lease may need to return to this committee or Full Council. The council has not granted permission for events on the car park. ONGOING

3	Reference the carpark adjacent to the Seagate Hotel - Seek confirmation of the permission given for the existing constructions on the land (the patio and associated works, and the gig shed).	This council's files have been researched and, finding no record of permission, the transferee has been contacted and requested further information. No formal conclusion has been received though indications are that: the patio will need permission only (a charge may be made for legal work), and the effect on the gig club shed on the overage clause is being considered. Should the overage clause be triggered or not, a legal charge may be made for formal permission. ONGOING
4	Vehicle tracking	The matter is being researched by the Parks & Buildings Manager and will be on a future agenda. ONGOING
5	Prepare an outline of the process by which the Council issues Northam Burrows Manor Passes on behalf of the Northam Burrows Charity.	The work has been delayed by the absence of staff due over April and May and is ongoing. ONGOING
6	Appoint key holding service	To start by end July 2026. COMPLETE
7	Amend staff handbook and present to staff	Date for staff briefing to staff has been confirmed as 14 th July. COMPLETE
8	Advise members of the staff cost for the day of the May Fair 2026	The staff cost for the day of the May Fair was circulated to members with the draft minutes, as follows: The event itself had a staff cost of £1,676.24. This represented 89.25 hours of staff time on the 2 nd May 2026. The cost may increase if any member of staff chooses to be paid the overtime in the future rather than taking it as TOIL. The reason for this is TOIL is awarded at a ratio of 1:1, overtime is a ratio of 1.5:1 (or 2:1 on a Sunday / bank holiday) for all staff but the Town Clerk and Parks & Buildings Manager. In common with all services provided by the Council, the staff cost is combined in one cost centre. COMPLETE

8 To consider the Clerk’s report and approve, by resolution, the payments as listed

On 30th June 2026 the Council’s balances were:

Petty Cash	£98.17	no interest	
Hinkley & Rugby Building Society	£300,000	interest rate is 1.65%	Holding account for general expenditure and £50,000 of the General Reserve
Cambridge & Counties Bank (31-day)	£98,501.85	interest rate is 2.72%	General Reserves
Nationwide (Business 95-day saver)	£98,145.04	interest rate is 3.20%	Earmarked Reserves (as per agreed budget: parks, defibrillators, LCWIP, war memorial cleaning, skate park and pavilion renovation reserve)
Cambridge Building Society	£10792.20	interest rate is 1.55%	Tennis Reserves
Coop Bank (current account)	£14331.66	no interest	General expenditure

Total cash in hand (SCRIBE) £521,868.92

The bank reconciliation to be signed by the Chair is enclosed under separate cover (2026.07.08 Item 8(i)).

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

Details				Income		Expenditure				Balance at start of FY
Date	Trans action	Description	Ref	Cash Withdrawal	Total in	VAT	Refreshments	Maintenance	Total out	£ 73.76
2.6.26	20	Watering cans	PC26-27.20		0.00	2.33		11.65	13.98	31.17
10.6.26	21	Cash withdrawal	-	70.00	70.00				0.00	101.17
15.6.26	22	Refreshments	PC26-27.21		0.00		1.50		1.50	99.67
16.6.26	23	Refreshments	PC26-27.22		0.00		1.50		1.50	98.17
Number of transactions	23			120.00	120.00	11.46	25.83	57.30	95.59	98.17

Tennis courts:

The gross volume of sales in June 2026 was £522.50. After fees, the Council has received £472.37. Since 1st April 2026, the Council has received £1,783.19 for tennis court memberships and bookings.

Payments:

Between 1st and 30th June 2026, the council made 129 payments, totalling £70,629.41 (ex VAT) (2026.07.08 Item 8(ii) enclosed). There were 46 payments of £100 or more totalling £64,657.53 (ex VAT) (2026.07.08 Item 8(iii) enclosed).

Recommendation: The payments are approved as listed.

Receipts: Between 1st and 30th June 2026, the council received 130 payments (some have the same id number - regular hall hire bookings), totalling £5,583.94 (ex VAT) (2026.07.08 Item8(iv) enclosed).

Item 9 To note an increase in the costs of the council’s fuel card service

The council’s fuel card provider has introduced a flat-rate £3 (ex VAT) fee each month less than £500 of fuel is purchased, with effect from the 21st July 2026.

In the past 37 months (the data available on the council’s account), over £500 has only been spent twice (highlighted in bold on the tables below).

Date	Invoice value	Date	Invoice value	Date	Invoice value
02/06/2026	£256.98	02/06/2025	£214.35	02/06/2024	£332.11
02/05/2026	£315.96	02/05/2025	£246.90	02/05/2024	£422.34
02/04/2026	£426.37	02/04/2025	£266.00	02/04/2024	£262.35
02/03/2026	£97.72	02/03/2025	£135.66	02/03/2024	£239.22
02/02/2026	£167.52	02/02/2025	£226.79	02/02/2024	£118.80
02/01/2026	£122.95	02/01/2025	£199.77	02/01/2024	£238.34
02/12/2025	£203.74	02/12/2024	£304.63	02/12/2023	£166.91
02/11/2025	£418.83	02/11/2024	£266.47	02/11/2023	£465.10
02/10/2025	£251.58	02/10/2024	£335.35	02/10/2023	£224.82
02/09/2025	£205.60	02/09/2024	£300.82	02/09/2023	£487.91
02/08/2025	£193.07	02/08/2024	£370.94	02/08/2023	£471.08
02/07/2025	£356.24	02/07/2024	£524.18	02/07/2023	£465.15
				02/06/2023	£541.33

Item 10 To consider the annual charge to Northam Burrows Charity for staffing costs and administrative services

The council currently charges the Northam Burrows Charity £7,000 (£8,400 inc VAT) per year for staff and admin services. In reviewing the Burrows Pass process, the Tow Clerk also took the opportunity to review the cost of providing staff and administrative support, detailed overleaf. The cost per hour is a function of the staff involved.

Activity	Hours taken	Cost / hour*	Cost to Council
Preparing for the Burrows Pass year, advertising, posters, getting tickets, ordering stationery, clearing out old pass applications etc.	18	£ 21	£ 378
Receiving and making phone calls	27	£ 21	£ 567
Taking applications and selling passes Chamber 9hrs x 2 staff Opening envelopes 50hrs Window sales 12hrs	80	£ 21	£ 1,680
Processing, recording and issuing passes	75	£ 21	£ 1,575
Registration changes 97 changes at 10min/change = 970 minutes (16 hours)	16	£ 21	£ 336
Burrows committee meetings (ALC's rule of thumb was 1 committee per month is 1.5 to 2 days day a week, so 6 meetings a year would be 9-12 days) $37/5*9=66.6$	66	£ 21	£ 1,386
Grant process	16	£ 21	£ 336
Cash book and accounts	37	£ 27	£ 999
Annual accounts in preparation for annual return	16	£ 27	£ 432
Total (ex VAT)		351	£ 7,689

* Notes:

- Estimated based on individual staff costs
- Hourly rate increases each year by c1.6% (SCP rise) and by Cost of Living **inc VAT £ 9,226.80**

The council therefore carried out £7,689 (ex VAT) worth of work on behalf of the Burrows Charity in 2026. The Charity purchases its own stationery and the council recharges the cost of postage.

Staff costs normally increase annually, with spinal column point (c1.6%) increases within set boundaries and the national cost of living rise (3.2% offered in 2026-27). The Council could consider increasing the charge to the Burrows Charity annually, in line with the salary increment awarded.

Recommendation: Increase the staffing and administrative charge in 2026 to £7,689 (£9,226.80 inc VAT) and apply a percentage increase each year in line with the salary increment awarded.

Item 11 To consider continuing with a two-page insert in the LINK magazine each month

The council doubled the size of its monthly insert in the LINK magazine to two pages. This committee agreed to review the position after one year. The cost to the council for the second page is £200 (ex VAT).

The Town Clerk prepares the insert with input from members and colleagues. The extra page has proved valuable for bringing matters to the attention of those that receive and read the LINK.

Recommendation: The committee continue to place a two-page piece in the LINK magazine each month.

12 To receive and consider the Internal Audit report 2025-26

Attachments:

2026.07.08 Item 12(i) 2025-26 Year End Internal Audit Letter

2026.07.08 Item 12(ii) 2025-26 Internal Audit - SUMMARY (YEAR END)

2026.07.08 Item 12(iii) 2025-26 Year End Internal Audit Observations DRAFT response

2026.07.08 Item 12(iv) 2025-26 SIGNED Annual Internal Audit Report

The Internal Auditor (IA) visited the council twice in 2025-26 (10th October 2025 and 18th June 2026), as outlined in the enclosed Year End Audit letter (2026.07.08 Item 13(i)).

The IA tested 107 items, 4 with negative outcomes (2026.07.08 Item 13(ii)). The IA made 5 observations. The Town Clerk has considered and drafted responses to those observations (2026.07.08 Item 13(iii)).

The IA prepared and signed the AGAR Annual Internal Audit report (2026.07.08 Item 13(iv)).

13 To note and receive the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025-26

Attachments:

2026.07.08 Item 13(i) AGAR SIGNED

2026.07.08 Item 13(ii) Effectiveness Check 2025-26

2026.07.08 Item 13(iii) AGAR Differences 2025-26

2026.07.08 Item 13(iv) Box 7-8 reconciliation 2025-26

2026.07.08 Item 13(v) Bank reconciliations 2025-26

2026.07.08 Item 13(vi) PWLB Audit Statement 31.3.26

2026.07.08 Item 13(vii) Asset Register 31.3.2026

At a special meeting of the Full Council on the 24th June 2026, the AGAR and supporting documents were received and approved for submission to the External Auditor. Under normal circumstances, the deadline is the 30th June each year. The Town Clerk requested an extension to the deadline, citing extenuating personal circumstances and on was granted to the 31st July 2026.

The AGAR to be submitted has been annotated and signed where appropriate. The IA's section will be submitted as a separate document. The Council considered how (and if) it has met the expectations of Assertions 1 to 10. The Town Clerk undertook, a review, the outcome of which is attached as (2026.07.08 Item 13(ii) Effectiveness Check 2025-26), this document is not submitted. From this it can be seen that the Town Clerk's consideration of where the council is not fully aligned with the Assertions reflects the IA's.

The AGAR must be accompanied by relevant documents, one of which is to explain year-on-year variances. Paragraph 2.38 of the SAPPP Practitioner's Guide 2025 states:

Authorities need to understand the changes in income and expenditure from year to year and their significance. The RFO needs to produce explanatory figures with a written narrative on the amount and cause of significant variances in annual levels of income, expenditure and balances shown in Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return that provides a sufficiently detailed and meaningful analysis and explanation of the reasons for the change.

To this end, the Town Clerk has drafted the attached 2026.07.08 Item 13(iii) AGAR Differences 2025-26, explaining the reason for any significant difference in the figures for 2024-25 and those for 2025-26.

There is a difference between boxes 7 (balances carried forward) and 8 (total value of short of cash and short-term investments) in the Accounting Statements of the AGAR. This is equivalent to the VAT to be reclaimed for Q4 of 2025-26 and is demonstrated by the attached 2026.07.08 Item 13(iv) Box 7-8 reconciliation 2025-26. The value of cash and short-term investments is demonstrated by submitted a bank reconciliation on 31st March 2026 (2026.07.08 Item 13(v) Bank Reconciliation 2025-26), supported by copies of the bank statements (not enclosed for reasons of data privacy but will be available to inspect at the meeting, if requested).

The council's borrowing statement for the year (2026.07.08 Item 13(vi) PWLB Audit Statement 31.3.26) and the council's asset register (2026.07.08 Item 13(vi) Asset Register 31.3.2026) must be enclosed.

The Town Clerk has asked for questions to be raised in advance and will respond at the meeting.

To be held in confidential session

Pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (subsection 2), members of the public and press shall be excluded from the meeting to enable the Council to consider the following confidential matters.

- 14** **To receive and sign the payroll information sheet for submission, considering overtime claimed** (confidential report enclosed)

Recommendation: The Committee confirm the payroll submission.

- 15** **To receive an update on staffing matters**

Verbal update from the clerk of the meeting.