



NORTHAM TOWN COUNCIL

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To all members of the Council:

You are hereby summoned to attend the **PARKS and RECREATION COMMITTEE** meeting on

Wednesday 16th September 2026 at 6:30pm

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

Membership:

Cllr Peter Hames (Chair)

Cllr Niki Tait (Deputy Chair)

Cllrs Jeremy Bell, Louis Bach, Barry Edwards, Claire Hodson, Jane Whittaker Plus the Mayor, Cllr Sam 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.

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: 10th September 2026

Chair's initials

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 confirm as a correct record and sign the minutes of the PARKS and RECREATION COMMITTEE held on 15th July 2026 (p3-p10)**
- 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.

Representatives from the Friends of the Westward Ho! Park (FOTWHOP) and the Westward Ho! Volunteer Gardeners have been invited to attend and speak in relation to Item 8.
- 7 **To receive an update on actions (p11,12)**
- 8 **To receive a report from the Chair of FOTWHOP (p13, verbal)**
- 9 **To update members on the MUGA Project at Westward Ho! (p13)**
- 10 **Lords Meadow – Biodiversity Enhancement Project (p13 -16)**
- 11 **Appledore Skate Park – Proposed Community Mural (p16,17)**
- 12 **Lords Meadow Play Area – Replacement of Timber Play Equipment (p17- 20)**
- 13 **Budget proposals for 2027/28 and 2028/29: Play Area Capital Improvement Programme (p20,21)**
- 14 **Anchor Park – Replacement Picnic Table (p22- 24)**

Chair's initials

Northam Town Council – Minutes of the Parks and Recreation committee meeting held Wednesday 15th July 2026 at 6.30pm in the Town Hall, Windmill Lane, Northam.

Present: Cllrs Jeremy Bell, Louis Bach, Barry Edwards and Niki Tait and The Mayor, Cllr Sam Newman-McKie.

Arriving during the meeting: Cllr Claire Hodson (from 19:01hrs) and Cllr Jane Whittaker (from 19:08 hrs).

In attendance: Ian Rawle – Parks & Buildings Manager.

Christine Hutchins – Friends of Westward Ho! Park (FOTWHOP).

Barbara Potts – Volunteer Gardener (Westward Ho! Park).

2607/161 To receive and approve apologies for absence, in accordance with Local Government Act 1972 s85(1)

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Hames (Chair) due to illness.

Apologies were received from Cllr Hodson and Cllr Whittaker, who were attending a meeting of Torridge District Council and would be joining the meeting later.

2607/162 Chair's Announcements

In the absence of the Chair, Cllr Tait (Vice Chair) took the Chair for the meeting.

Cllr Hodson had advised that she would be arriving later due to her attendance at a meeting of Torridge District Council. She therefore requested that Agenda Item 9 be considered towards the end of the meeting.

This was **proposed** by Cllr Bell, seconded by Cllr Edwards, (all in favour).

The Parks & Buildings Manager provided the following updates:

- Members were advised that the area is currently experiencing a prolonged period of dry weather. The maintenance team is working hard to maintain the Council's parks and floral displays, and watering regimes have been increased wherever possible to help protect planting and maintain display standards.
- Members were informed that a homeless individual is currently staying within Westward Ho! Park. The matter has been reported to the relevant authorities and support organisations to ensure appropriate welfare assistance and support can be offered.

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- An update was received regarding the Pavilion Project. Philip Hinton is currently preparing concept designs using Autodesk Revit (Building Information Modelling software) to produce detailed 3D visualisations. The designs will include both a potential new-build option and a refurbishment option, providing Members with a clearer understanding of each proposal. It is anticipated that these designs will be available to present to Members in the near future.

Cllr Edwards requested a further update on the work of the Pavilion Working Group, noting that there had been limited recent activity and seeking clarification on the project's progress and next steps.

2607/163 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.

2607/164 To agree the agenda as published
It was **resolved** to agree the agenda as published.
Proposed Cllr Bach, Seconded Cllr Edwards (all in favour)

2607/165 To confirm as a correct record and sign the minutes of the Parks and Recreation Committee held on 20th May 2026
It was **resolved** that to approve the minutes as a true and correct record, which were signed by the Chair.
Proposed Cllr Bach, Seconded Cllr Bell (one abstention due to not being present at the previous meeting; majority in favour)

2607/166 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 two members of the public present: Barbara Potts and Christine Hutchins. Christine and Barbara would be invited to contribute at the relevant time.

2607/167 To receive an update on actions
The Action table is presented below.

Item 7 update on actions

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Action		November 2025	January 2026	March 2026	May 2026	June/July 2026
1	To seek legal advice regarding installation of a step at Blackies (Ref: 2507/194 Construction of Steps and improvement of 'desire line' surface at Blackies Footpath)	Added to actions	If access and steps are created for public use, they must meet safety standards and be regularly inspected to avoid liability. Public liability insurance should be considered. Permission is needed from the landowner, and if the access meets a road or pavement, Highways approval is required. Planning permission may also be needed. Further checks with insurers, legal advisors, and the landowner are recommended.	In progress.	In discussion with DCC Public Rights of Way Officer	On Agenda
2	Permanent PumpTrack	Added to actions	Burrough Farm preferred site, Lord's Meadow less suitable. Obtain expert advice and cost estimate. If feasible, seek Full Council approval and go to tender. Explore funding opportunities (Sports Lottery, Section 106, others).	In progress.	Researching funding and contractor cost (by in and place using contractors and NTC staff)	On Agenda
6	MUGA WWH!		-Meet with Contractor to discuss plans -investigate Planning, contact Environmental Health	Contractor appointed to revise MUGA plans following feedback -Design reduced in size due to planning constraints	To update P & R in July 2026.	On Agenda

Chair's initials

				-Additional noise mitigation included (anti-vibration posts and revised fencing) -Changes remain within approved budget		
7	Pavilion WWH!		-Survey completed -Plans being developed for options (new build or renovation) -Demolition costs currently being obtained	No Change	-Survey completed -Plans being developed for options (new build or renovation) – Philip Hinton currently preparing draft plans -Demolition costs currently being obtained	On Agenda.
8	Planned works for all Parish Play Parks and Annual Inspection Report		Inspections carried out	On Agenda	On Agenda	Works started.
9	Hedge laying Lords Meadow		Contact Steve McCulloch for quotation and advice.	In talks with Steve McCulloch.	Awaiting quotation.	Awaiting Site visit from Steve McCulloch.

2607/168 To receive a report from the chair of FOTWHOP (Verbal)

The Chair reported that the Annual General Meeting had been held and that the committee membership remained largely unchanged, with existing committee members continuing in their roles. Consideration was being given to financial arrangements, including placing funds into savings accounts where appropriate.

The gardening team continued to make a significant contribution, recording approximately 270 volunteer hours up to April, with a further 89 hours in May and 113.25 hours in June. It was noted that the warmer weather may affect volunteer hours during July.

The 200 Club draw continued to operate successfully. There were 105 numbers in the June draw. The Chair noted that participants either reinvested their winnings or donated them back to the organisation, which was greatly appreciated.

Members were reminded that increased participation would support the draw and improve participants' chances of winning.

2607/169 Construction of Step at Blackies Footpath (Ref: 2507/194)

Members considered a report regarding the potential installation of a step at Blackies Footpath following Minute 2507/194.

The Parks & Buildings Manager advised that further investigations had identified a number of practical and legal considerations, including the ongoing maintenance and liability that would arise should the Town Council install a step for public use.

Members were also informed that, despite enquiries, the ownership of the land had not been established, preventing the Council from obtaining the necessary landowner's permission.

In addition, free verbal legal advice had confirmed that the use of a disclaimer or "use at your own risk" sign would not remove the Council's legal responsibilities if it undertook the works.

It was **Resolved:** That, having considered the potential liabilities, the inability to identify the landowner, and the likely cost of obtaining formal legal advice, the Council does not pursue the installation of a step at Blackies Footpath and leaves the existing informal access unchanged

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

2607/170 Modular Pump Track Proposal

Members considered a report regarding the potential provision of a modular pump track as an alternative to a permanent installation. The Parks & Buildings Manager outlined the advantages of a modular pump track, including its lower cost, flexibility, ability to be relocated, and the potential for future expansion. Members were advised that the estimated cost of a modular pump track would range between £49,300 and £63,500, depending on the size and configuration selected. Potential locations identified included Burrows Farm, Lords Meadow and Anchor Park.

During the discussion, Members considered the estimated costs, potential locations and possible funding opportunities. It was agreed that further information was required before an informed decision could be made, particularly regarding the total project costs, available grant funding and the overall financial implications for the Council.

It was **Resolved:** That consideration of the proposal be deferred pending further investigation into the full project costs and potential funding opportunities, with a further report to be presented to the Committee.

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

Action Point: *Parks & Buildings Manager to investigate the full project costs, identify potential grant funding and other external funding opportunities, and report back to a future meeting.*

2607/171 Request from Torrington Tennis Club for Court Hire

Members considered the report regarding Court Hire.

Following discussion, Members agreed that the current booking arrangements should remain unchanged for the remainder of the current season. It was **agreed** that the use of the facility should be monitored throughout the summer period and reviewed ahead of the next season.

It was **Resolved:** That bookings continue under the existing arrangements with no reduction in charges, and that the use of the facility be reviewed following the summer season, with a report brought back to the Committee for consideration prior to the next season.

Proposed: Cllr Bach, Seconded Cllr Edwards (one abstention due to not being present at the previous meeting; majority in favour)

Action Point: *Parks & Buildings Manager to monitor the use of the facility during the summer period and present a review to the Committee ahead of the next season*

2607/172 Harbour to Hedge Project – Anchor Park Update

Members received an update regarding discussions with representatives from the Harbour to Hedge community group and Appledore School concerning a potential partnership project at Anchor Park.

The Parks & Buildings Manager advised that the aims of Harbour to Hedge align with the Council's environmental objectives, including biodiversity enhancement, habitat creation and community engagement.

Members were informed that the Parks & Buildings Manager had attended a meeting with the North Devon Biosphere on 21 July 2026 to discuss potential funding opportunities and support for environmental projects.

It was **noted** that further discussions would take place with Harbour to Hedge and Appledore School to explore how a partnership could operate in practice, with any future proposals being brought back to the Committee for consideration.

This was **noted** by the Council

Action Point: Parks & Buildings Manager to continue discussions with the relevant organisations and keep Members informed of the progression of the project, reporting any future proposals back to the Committee for consideration.

2607/173 Pavillion Project

Members received an update on the Pavilion Project. The Parks & Buildings Manager advised that Philip Hinton is currently preparing concept designs using Autodesk Revit (Building Information Modelling software) to produce detailed 3D visualisations.

The designs will include both a potential new-build option and a refurbishment option, providing Members with a clearer understanding of each proposal. It was anticipated that the concept designs would be available for presentation to Members in the near future.

This was **noted** by the Council.

2607/174 To update members from the MUGA Working Group.

Members received an update from the MUGA Working Group regarding progress on the proposed Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA). The update included the current status of the Lawful Development Certificate application, the project budget and funding position, the draft specification and Invitation to Quote documentation, and the proposed procurement approach.

Members noted the positive response received during the public consultation and the ongoing work of the MUGA Working Group in progressing the project.

During the discussion, Members requested that the proposed MUGA design plans, together with an updated project budget and funding position, be circulated to all Councillors for information.

This was **noted** by the Councillors.

Action point: Parks & Buildings Manager to circulate the proposed MUGA design plans, together with an updated project budget and funding position, to all Councillors

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7:41 pm.

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

Item 7 update on actions

Action		Nov 2025	Jan 2026	Mar 2026	May 2026	June/July 2026	September 2026
1	Permanent PumpTrack	Added to actions	Burrough Farm preferred site, Lord's Meadow less suitable. Obtain expert advice and cost estimate. If feasible, seek Full Council approval and go to tender. Explore funding opportunities (Sports Lottery, Section 106, others).	In progress.	Researching funding and contractor cost (by in and place using contractors and NTC staff)	On Agenda	Investigations are ongoing into project costs and available funding opportunities. A further report will be presented to Members once this work has been completed.
2	MUGA WWH!		-Meet with Contractor to discuss plans -investigate Planning, contact Environmental Health	Contractor appointed to revise MUGA plans following feedback -Design reduced in size due to planning constraints -Additional noise mitigation included (anti-vibration posts and revised fencing) -Changes remain within approved budget	To update P & R in July 2026.	On Agenda	On Agenda. Design plans, budget and funding information have been circulated to all Councillors. The project is now out to tender, with quotations due by 12 noon on 18th September 2026.
3	Pavilion WWH!		-Survey completed -Plans being developed for options (new build or renovation) -Demolition costs currently being obtained	No Change	-Survey completed -Plans being developed for options (new build or renovation) – Philip Hinton currently	Awaiting 3 plans – (Demo, New Build, Refurbishment)	Plans received, working group meeting to be arranged.

					preparing draft plans -Demolition costs currently being obtained		
4	Planned works for all Parish Play Parks and Annual Inspection Report		Inspections carried out	On Agenda	On Agenda	Works started.	On Agenda.
5	Hedge laying Lords Meadow		Contact Steve McCulloch for quotation and advice.	In talks with Steve McCulloch.	Awaiting quotation.	Awaiting Site visit from Steve McCulloch.	Site visit will take place this month.

Item 8 To receive a report from the chair of FOTWHOP (Verbal)

Item 9 To update members from the MUGA Working Group.

MUGA Working Group Update – Procurement Progress

The Parks & Buildings Manager advises Members that, following approval of the Quotation Evaluation Matrix by the MUGA Working Group, the Invitation to Quote (ITT) documentation has now been issued to suitably qualified contractors for the design, supply and installation of the proposed Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) at Westward Ho!.

The quotation period opened on **28 August 2026**, with a submission deadline of **12:00 noon on 18th September 2026**.

Contractors have been invited to undertake site visits prior to submitting quotations, and any requests for clarification must be submitted no later than seven days before the closing date.

Once the quotation period has closed, all compliant submissions will be evaluated using the Council's approved evaluation matrix. The MUGA Working Group will then meet to assess the quotations and make a recommendation to Full Council for the appointment of the preferred contractor.

The Parks & Buildings Manager will also continue to progress the additional actions agreed by the Working Group, including obtaining costs for the preferred coloured surfacing option and, where practicable within the project programme, arranging for the proposed contract documentation to be reviewed by the Council's Solicitor prior to contract award, subject to the Solicitor's availability and turnaround times.

Recommendation:

Members are recommended to:

1. That Members note the update from the MUGA Working Group.

Item 10 Lords Meadow – Biodiversity Enhancement Project

Lords Meadow currently features a number of successful wildflower plots (identified as Existing Wildflower Areas on the attached site plan). These areas have significantly improved local biodiversity, enhanced the visual appearance of the recreation ground and received positive feedback from residents and visitors.

To build on this success, it is proposed to establish six additional wildflower plots within the adjacent grassed areas, as shown by the red dashed outlines on the attached plan.

Should Members consider it appropriate, a consultation with local residents can be undertaken before the works commence. This would provide residents with an opportunity to comment on the proposals and help inform the final layout prior to implementation.

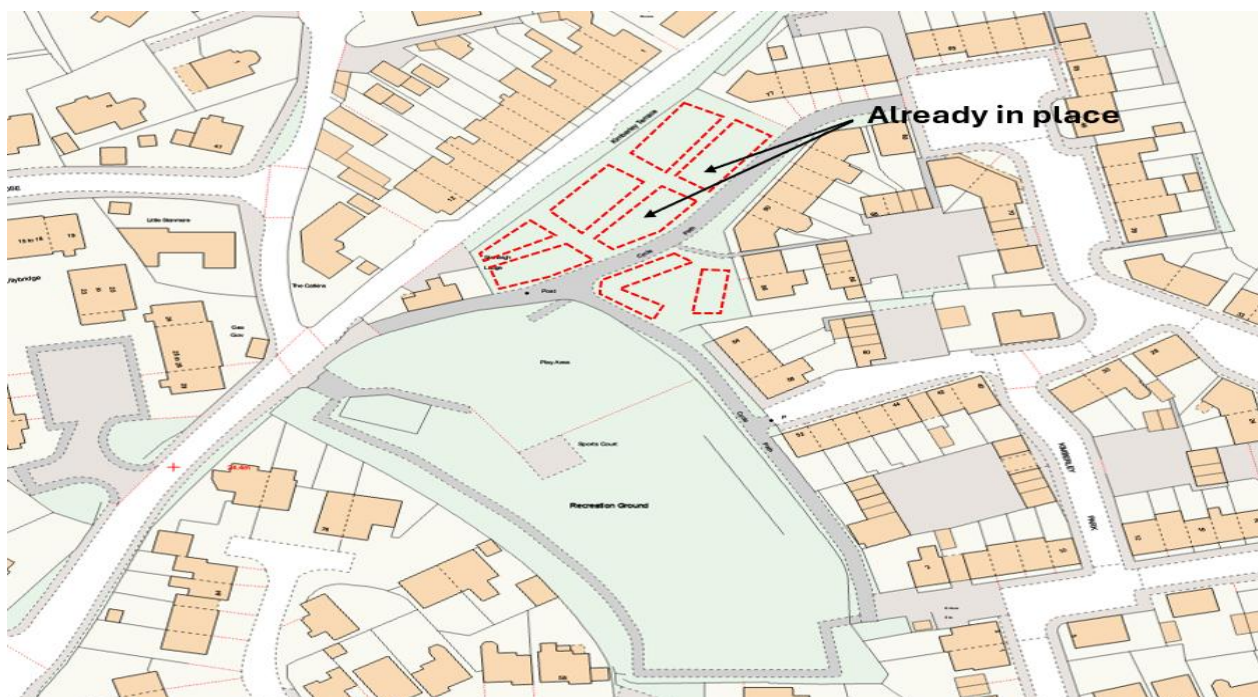
In addition, it is proposed to undertake traditional Devon hedge laying along the boundary adjoining Diddywell Road, as identified on the attached plan. The works will be carried out by the Council's Maintenance Team during the appropriate season to rejuvenate the existing hedge, encourage healthy regrowth and improve its value for wildlife.

As part of the hedge laying works, vegetation and undergrowth beneath the hedge will be cut back to allow the work to be completed safely and effectively. Consequently, the area may appear untidy immediately after the works have been completed. However, this is a normal part of the process, and the hedge and surrounding vegetation will regenerate during the spring growing season, resulting in a healthier and more attractive boundary.

The proposed layout has been designed to complement the existing recreation ground whilst ensuring the area remains accessible and easy to maintain.



Proposed Devon-style hedging location (Diddywell Road)



Proposed Wildflower Areas

Key Design Features

- Creation of six new wildflower plots in suitable locations.
- Traditional Devon hedge laying to improve the health and longevity of the existing boundary hedge.
- Retention of existing pedestrian routes throughout the site.
- Dedicated grass maintenance strips between each plot to allow mowing and maintenance without disturbing the wildflower areas.
- Improved habitat connectivity, creating a larger and more diverse environment for pollinators, birds and other wildlife.

This approach balances biodiversity enhancement with the continued recreational use of Lords Meadow.

Financial Implications

The estimated cost of the project will not exceed £750, comprising:

Item	Cost
Turf cutter hire (to remove existing turf and prepare seed beds)	£400
Native perennial wildflower seed mix	£350
Total	£750

The hedge laying works will be undertaken in-house by the Council's Maintenance Team and therefore incur no additional contractor costs.

All expenditure will be met from Cost Code 134 – Lords Meadow, with no additional budget required.

Recommendation:

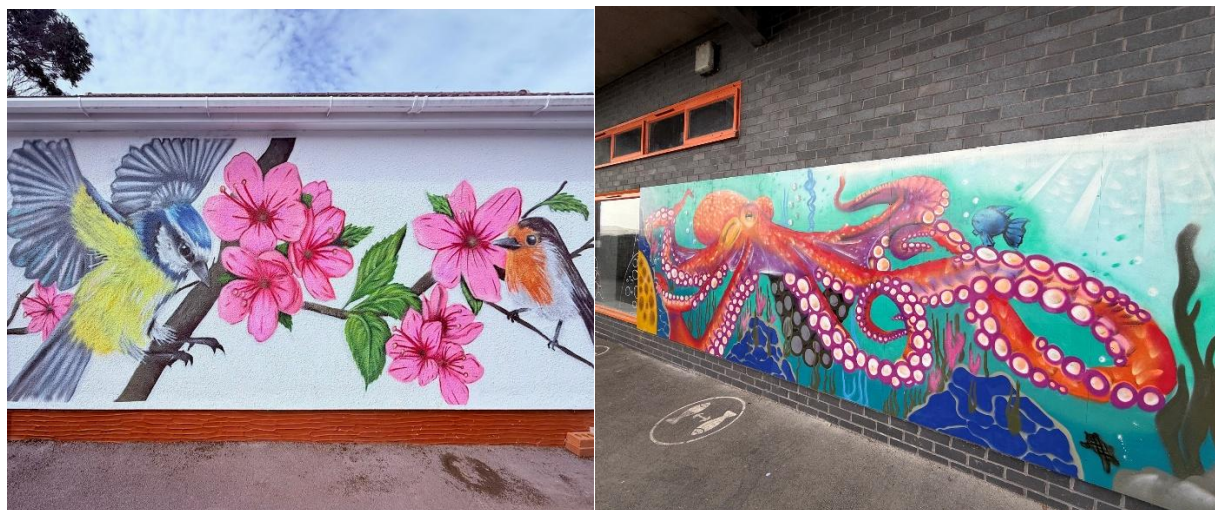
Members are recommended to:

- 1. Approve the creation of six additional wildflower plots, as shown on the attached site plan.**
- 2. Decide whether a consultation with local residents should be undertaken prior to the implementation of the proposed wildflower areas.**
- 3. Approve the undertaking of traditional Devon hedge laying along the Diddywell Road boundary by the Council's Maintenance Team.**
- 4. Approve expenditure of up to £750, funded from Cost Code 134 – Lords Meadow, for turf cutter hire and the purchase of a native perennial wildflower seed mix**

Item 11 Appledore Skate Park – Proposed Community Mural

The Council has been approached by local artist Jaz Mackenzie with a proposal to create a mural on the Appledore Skate Park.

Jaz is a North Devon-based street artist who specialises in large-scale graffiti and street art, particularly wildlife, coastal themes and murals inspired by the local environment.



**Examples of Jaz Mackenzie works*

The proposed artwork would feature a mythical kraken emerging from rough seas, battling pirate ships, together with additional artwork inspired by Appledore, its maritime heritage and the surrounding coastline.

The quotation received for the artwork is £650.

Should Members approve the proposal, it is recommended that the mural is completed only after the planned skate park maintenance works have been undertaken. These works include the replacement of worn marine plywood surfaces together with any structural repairs identified during the maintenance programme.

Undertaking the artwork after these repairs will ensure the mural is applied to newly refurbished surfaces, maximising its lifespan and avoiding damage during maintenance works. The total cost of the mural is £650, which will be funded from Cost Code 133 – Churchfields Skate Park.

Recommendation:

1. Approve the project in principle, subject to the completion of the planned skate park maintenance and refurbishment works.
2. Require the artist to submit a final design for approval by the Parks & Recreation Committee before any works commence.
3. Approve expenditure of £650, subject to confirmation of the appropriate budget or cost code.

Item 12 Lords Meadow Play Area – Replacement of Timber Play Equipment

The annual independent play area inspection identified a number of defects with the monkey bars at Lords Meadow Play Area. Whilst the overall risk rating is currently assessed as Moderate (12), the inspection highlighted several structural concerns, including:

- Internal rot within the timber posts and crossbar connections.
- Significant splits within the timber crossbar.
- Loose structural components resulting in movement within the equipment.
- Further areas of timber deterioration requiring ongoing monitoring.
- Missing handles and damaged components.

 12 - Moderate Risk	
Item: Monkey Bars Manufacturer: Norleg Surface Type: Bonded Rubber Mulch Item Quantity: 1 Equipment Compliance: No Surface Area Compliance: Yes Life Expectancy: 1 - 3 Years Total Findings: 7	
Finding 1 The stepping pads form hard objects within the falling space of the equipment, in contravention of the requirements of BS EN 1176 Part 1 - Monitor - No action given the risk assessment	Finding 2 There is/are bolt cap covers missing or damaged on the item - Replace missing or damaged bolt cap covers
Finding 3 The stepping pod has been damaged - Monitor for any further deterioration and replace as required	Finding 4 There is internal rot present within the post to crossbar mount cavity. The inspector could not determine the extent of the rot. As a result, the adjacent handgrip is loose and rotates and may cause an unexpected movement for the user - We would recommend either that a Resi PD test is carried out to determine the degree of internal rot and confirm ongoing structural integrity or that the crossbar is replaced. Secure loose handgrip to prevent unexpected rotation.
Finding 5 There are significant splits running through the timber crossbar - Monitor for any further deterioration or loss of structural integrity and replace as required	Finding 6 A post top is loose and may be removed exposing the mount - Repair as required to re-secure
Finding 7 The handles are missing and there is internal rot present around the handle cavity and post mount - We would recommend that either a resi PD test is carried out to determine the full extent of the internal rot present and confirm ongoing structural integrity or the crossbar is replaced. Replace missing handles.	

6 - Low Risk (Finding 4)

Item: Other - Embankment Slide
Manufacturer: Not Identified

Risk Level: L - Low Risk
Surface: Bonded Rubber Mulch



Finding: There is some evidence of rot in the timber

Action: Remove any rough areas. Monitor for any further deterioration and replace as required

6 - Low Risk (Finding 1)

Item: Activity Equipment - Stilts
Manufacturer: Norleg

Risk Level: L - Low Risk
Surface: Bonded Rubber Mulch



Finding: Parts of the timber are rough or splintered

Action: Remove all rough or sharp edges

Following receipt of the inspection report, the Maintenance Team has undertaken the necessary repairs to stabilise the equipment. The repairs have been successful, and it is anticipated that the monkey bars will remain in service for a further 3–4 months, subject to the findings of the weekly operational inspections and monthly recorded inspections. However, due to the age and ongoing deterioration of the timber components, replacement of the equipment remains the recommended long-term solution.

Given the age and condition of the equipment, it is considered that further repairs would not provide a safe, long-term or cost-effective solution.

It is therefore recommended that the existing monkey bars are removed and replaced with a new item of play equipment.

In addition, further inspections have identified that the timber stilts and the timber decking to the embankment slide are also showing signs of significant rot and deterioration. These items are manufactured by the same supplier and are of a similar age and construction to the monkey bars. Whilst they remain safe to use at present, they are approaching the end of their serviceable life and are likely to require replacement in the near future.

It is therefore proposed that the replacement of the monkey bars, timber stilts and the embankment slide decking form part of a wider Lords Meadow Play Area Renewal Project, with the works programmed for 2027, subject to budget approval.

The replacement works would be undertaken by a suitably qualified specialist contractor, ensuring that all new equipment is installed in accordance with BS EN 1176 and accompanied by the appropriate post-installation safety certification.

As the play area is regularly used by St Margaret's and Appledore School, it is proposed that the school be invited to participate in selecting the replacement equipment from a shortlist of suitable options. This will provide local children with an opportunity to contribute to the improvement of their play area and help ensure the new equipment meets the needs of its primary users.

Once approved, the Parks & Buildings Manager will obtain quotations from specialist play equipment contractors and present suitable replacement options, together with associated costs, to Members for consideration.

Financial Implications

The cost of removing the existing equipment and supplying and installing the replacement play equipment will be subject to quotations from specialist play equipment contractors. Funding requirements will be considered as part of the 2027/28 budget, with the project programmed for delivery in 2027.

Recommendation:

Members are recommended to:

- 1. Note the findings of the independent play inspection and the subsequent deterioration identified by the Parks & Buildings Manager.**
- 2. Approve, in principle, the replacement of the monkey bars, timber stilts and embankment slide decking as part of a Lords Meadow Play Area Renewal Project.**
- 3. Agree that the project be included in the Council's budget for delivery in 2027, subject to budget approval.**
- 4. Authorise the Parks & Buildings Manager to obtain quotations from specialist play equipment contractors for the supply and installation of the replacement equipment.**
- 5. Agree to invite St Margaret's and Appledore School to participate in selecting the replacement play equipment from a shortlist of suitable options.**
- 6. Receive a further report detailing the proposed replacement equipment, project costs and funding requirements prior to awarding the contract, in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations.**

Item 13 Budget proposals for 2027/28 and 2028/29: Play Area Capital Improvement Programme

To ensure the Council's play areas continue to provide safe, compliant and high-quality facilities for residents and visitors, it is proposed to develop a programme of capital improvement works for inclusion within the Council's 2027/29 budget.

The proposed programme has been developed following annual independent play inspections, routine maintenance inspections and identified lifecycle replacement requirements. The projects listed below represent the principal works currently anticipated across the Council's play areas and associated facilities.

The proposed projects include:

Lords Meadow Play Area

- Replacement of the monkey bars.
- Replacement of the timber stilts and balance beam.
- Replacement of the timber decking to the embankment slide.
- Extension of the Basketball court.
- Other items as identified in the annual ROSPA report in early 2027.

Ridgeway Park

- Replacement of the play area entrance gates.
- Replacement of the existing roundabout.

Westward Ho! Play Area

- Replacement of the play area entrance gates.
- Resurface or patch repair heavily worn wet pour safety surfacing.

Anchor Park Play Area

- Replacement of the play area entrance gate.
- Replacement of one two-seat swing bay, including new chains and seats.
- Additional item of play equipment to enhance the play offer.

Appletree Gardens

- Consideration of removing or replacing the existing seesaw.
- Consideration of redesignating the play area as an informal green space due to its low level of use.
- Note: S106 will become available to undertake this work in due course – construction is underway and the funds will be available on the completion of the second dwelling (of 3).

Appledore Skate Park

- Significant refurbishment, including replacement of worn timber riding surfaces and timber framework as part of the planned maintenance programme.

The above list is not intended to be exhaustive. Members are invited to identify any additional projects they consider should be included within the future capital programme.

Financial Implications

As detailed specifications and quotations have not yet been obtained for each project, it is not possible to determine accurate budget requirements at this stage.

To enable informed decision-making, each project will be brought forward as an individual agenda item at future Parks & Recreation Committee meetings. Reports will include project specifications, quotations, recommended budgets and proposed funding arrangements, allowing Members to consider each scheme on its own merits before inclusion within the Council's capital programme and budget-setting process.

This phased approach will ensure projects are properly planned, costed and prioritised.

Recommendation:

Members are recommended to:

- 1. Note the proposed 2027 to 2029 Play Area Capital Improvement Programme.**
- 2. Agree, in principle, that the projects identified within this report should be developed for future implementation, indicative budgets to be presented to a future meeting.**
- 3. Agree that each project be presented as a separate agenda item at future Parks & Recreation Committee meetings, together with detailed specifications, quotations and recommended budgets for consideration.**
- 4. Invite Members to identify any additional play area improvements or capital projects they wish to be considered as part of the 2027/29 programme**

Item 14 Anchor Park – Replacement Picnic Table

The existing picnic table at Anchor Park has reached the end of its serviceable life and requires replacement.

It is proposed that the Council adopts Earth Anchors recycled plastic picnic tables as the standard specification for future picnic table replacements across all Council parks and open spaces.

Earth Anchors picnic tables represent excellent value for money and offer a number of long-term benefits, including:

- A design life of over 25 years.
- Manufactured from 100% recycled plastic.
- Resistant to rot, splintering and weathering.
- Virtually maintenance-free.
- Suitable for year-round outdoor use.
- A sustainable and environmentally responsible product.

By adopting a standard specification, the Council will ensure consistency across its parks, simplify future procurement and reduce long-term maintenance costs.

Members are invited to select the preferred style (options 1 to 4 below) of picnic table to be used throughout the parish. The options include a standard picnic table or an inclusive (wheelchair-accessible) picnic table. Whilst designed to accommodate wheelchair users, the inclusive design is also suitable for people with pushchairs, mobility scooters and those requiring easier access.

Round Mobility Table – Black



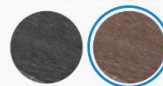
Round Wheelchair Accessible Table

SKU1205-BRN1

£838.80

Bulk Prices Available

Colour Options:



Mobility Spaces

Double Mobility Space

Single Mobility Space

All Brown Round Picnic Table With Single Mobility Space

£838.80

Option 1 Round style Wheelchair Table



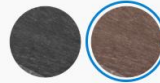
Option 2 Octagonal Wheelchair Table

Octagonal Wheelchair Accessible Table

SKU1207-BRN1

£838.80
Bulk Prices Available

Colour Options:



Mobility Spaces

Double Mobility Space **Single Mobility Space**

All Brown Octagonal Mobility Picnic Table With Single Space

£838.80



Option 3 Traditional Picnic Table

Surrey 2M Picnic Table

SKU1211-BRN

£764.40
Bulk Prices Available

Colour Options:



All Brown Picnic Table

£764.40

Optional Extras



Option 4 Monolith Space-Saving Picnic Set

Monolith Picnic Set

SKU1254-BRN

£1,240.80

Colour Options:



Brown Monolith Picnic Table With Matching Benches

£1,240.80

Ground Fixings



The replacement picnic table at Anchor Park will be the first installation using the Council's chosen standard design.

The cost of the replacement picnic table is within the approved budget and will be funded from Cost Code 134 – Anchor Park (or the relevant park cost code for future replacements). No additional budget is required.

Recommendation

Members are recommended to:

- 1. Agree that Earth Anchors recycled plastic picnic tables be adopted as the Council's standard specification for future picnic table replacements across all parks and open spaces.**
- 2. Select the preferred standard design (standard or inclusive/wheelchair-accessible) to be used for future installations.**