



NORTHAM TOWN COUNCIL

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To all members of the Committee:

You are hereby summoned to attend a **MEETING OF REVIEW COMMITTEE** on Wednesday

23rd September 2026 at 6.30pm

at The Town Hall, Windmill Lane, Northam for the transaction of the business listed on the agenda overleaf. Membership: Cllr Bach, Cllr Hodson, Cllr Horrocks, Cllr Lo-Vel, Cllr Whittaker and Cllr Newman-McKie (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.

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: 17th September 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 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 Review Committee meeting held on the 22nd July 2026 (p3-6)**
- 6 **Public Participation**
We welcome Parishioners speaking or making representations, asking questions or giving evidence at the meeting of the Full Council in respect of any issue affecting the Northam Town Council area. A period of twenty minutes is allocated for this unless directed by the Chair of the meeting and a member of the public shall not speak for more than 4 minutes.
A question shall not receive a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chair of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.
- 7 **To consider the action point update (p7)**
- 8 **To consider the enclosed revised policies** (attached under separate cover):
Note, text highlighted yellow is new or has been added. Text crossed through is to be removed.
 - a) **Allotment Terms and Conditions V1.0** (2026.09.23 Item 8(a))
 - b) **IT Policy v0.1** (2026.09.23 Item 8(b))
 - c) **Publication Scheme v1.2** (2026.09.23 Item 8(c))
 - d) **New Councillors advert, councillor role descriptor and induction plan v0.1** (2026.09.23 Item 8(d))
- 9 **To consider recommending the enclosed Civility & Respect protocol to the Council for adoption** (attached under separate cover):
 - a) **Model Councillor Officer Protocol** (2026.09.23 Item 9(a))

22nd July 2026 at 6.30pm in the Town Hall, Windmill Lane, Northam.

Present: Cllrs Bach, Hodson, Horrocks, Lo-Vel, Newman-McKie and Whittaker.

In attendance: Guy Langton (Town Clerk & RFO).

The meeting was opened by the outgoing Chair, Cllr Newman-McKie who explained that she was unable to continue as Chair as she had been elected Mayor of the Council in May 2026.

2607/175 To elect a Chair for the committee

Cllr Hodson proposed Cllr Whittaker be elected Chair of this committee. This was seconded by Cllr Newman-McKie. There being no other nominations, a vote was taken and Cllr Whittaker was elected unanimously.

Cllr Whittaker thanked the committee and took the Chair.

2607/176 To elect a Deputy Chair for the committee

Cllr Newman-McKie proposed Cllr Hodson be elected Deputy Chair of this committee. This was seconded by Cllr Bach. There being no other nominations, a vote was taken and Cllr Hodson was elected unanimously.

2607/177 To receive and approve apologies for absence, in accordance with Local Government Act 1972 s85(1)

All members were present. There were two

2607/178 Chair's announcements

The Chair made no announcements.

2607/179 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.

2607/180 To agree the agenda as published.

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

Proposed Cllr Hodson, Seconded Cllr Lo-Vel (all in favour)

2607/181 To confirm as a correct record and sign the minutes of the Review Committee meeting held on the 5th March 2026

It was **resolved** that to approve the minutes of that meeting of the Review Committee as a correct record, they were signed by the Chair.

Proposed Cllr Hodson, Seconded Cllr Horrocks (majority in favour, 2 abstentions – not present at the meeting)

2607/182 Public Participation

There were no members of the public present.

2607/183 To consider the action point update

The action points were noted as presented overleaf.

Item	July 2026
1. Emergency planning	The Town Clerk has contacted the Emergency Planning project manager from Devon Communities who emphasised the nature of the role of the Town Council in preparing for emergencies. The contact details and locations included in the Emergency Plan had been reviewed and published on the Council's website at Emergency Plan - Northam Town Council. The Town Clerk is attending a seminar in October presented by the Devon Community Resilience Forum and will apply any changes advised after that. The first piece of work that would be completed was a Risk Assessment, which would be put to this committee for consideration. Emergency Services would be advised of the Council's identified refuge buildings. ONGOING
2. Vision Statement and action Plan	A group of members and staff had met on 7th July to review progress. A second date would be arranged to complete the task. ONGOING

2607/184 To consider the enclosed revised policies:

a) Anchor Park Agreement V1.0

It was **resolved** to recommend the document to Full Council for adoption with the below amendments to the copy provided to the committee:

2.2: The Town Council will maintain the Park as a public recreation ground for the benefit of the inhabitants of and visitors to Appledore, in the Parish of Northam and the neighbourhood without ~~distinction of sex or of political religious or other protected characteristics~~ **discrimination based on any protected characteristic.**

2.5: ~~The Town Council will impose on any person or organisation which uses the facilities in the Park those terms of hire rules and conditions (if any) as have previously been imposed by the Trustee subject to any additional terms.~~ **Any groups or organisations wanting to use the Park for events must obtain permission from the Town Council. The Town Council reserves the right to seek recompense for any damages caused by the activities of any groups or organisations that are permitted to use the Park. The Town Council fully expects organisations that seek to use the Park for their event(s) to provide their own insurance.**

Proposed: Cllr Hodson, seconded: Cllr Bach (all in favour)

b) Financial Regulations V1.3

It was **resolved** to recommend the document to Full Council for adoption with the below amendments to the copy provided to the committee:

5.15. Individual purchases within an agreed budget for that type of expenditure may be authorised by:

the Clerk (or officer **formally identified as** deputising for them) under delegated authority, for any items below £1,000 excluding VAT.

the Clerk (or officer **formally identified as** deputising for them), under delegated authority, for any items within budget and below £5,000 excluding VAT,

the Clerk (or officer **formally identified as** deputising for them), under delegated authority, for repair work or other urgent work below £5,000, which will be reported to the Finance and Human Resources committee

Proposed: Cllr Whittaker, Seconded: Cllr Lo-Vel (all in favour).

c) Procurement Policy V1.2

It was **resolved** to recommend the document to Full Council for adoption with the below amendments to the copy provided to the committee:

- Clarification of the example criteria contained within the exemplar evaluation table to include 'Local company / organisation'.

Proposed: Cllr Horrocks, Seconded: Cllr Hodson (all in favour).

d) Allotment Tenancy Agreement V1.0

It was **resolved** to recommend the document to Full Council for adoption with the below amendments to the copy provided to the committee:

- Remove the word 'joint' from the first tenant details and signature box.
- Add the name of the allotment site.

It also **agreed** to provide a site map on the noticeboard at Windmill Lane allotments.

Proposed: Cllr Horrocks, Seconded: Cllr Hodson (all in favour).

e) Allotment Terms and Conditions V1.0

It was **resolved** to recommend the document to Full Council for adoption with the below amendments to the copy provided to the committee:

In the preamble:

- We ~~expect~~ **encourage** you to have your own compost area (to compost any green waste) and a means of harvesting and storing water on your plot as a matter of good practice.
- ~~You~~ **All named tenants** may only have one allotment plot administered by Northam Town Council. It also **agreed** to provide a site map on the noticeboard at Windmill Lane allotments.
- Add: **All named tenants must be residents within the parish administered by Northam Town Council.**

Paragraphs:

9. Should plot holders need to use chemicals, ~~all pesticides~~, **they** must be in date and stored **off site**., ~~used and disposed of in strict accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.~~

~~11. Spraying pesticides may only be done as a last resort. It must be confined to still days and in the early morning to protect bees and cause the least possible damage to wildlife and natural biodiversity. Neighbouring plots, gardens and water storage must not be affected by the application of pesticides.~~

Section: Water Supply, **BBQs**, Bonfires, Carpets and Rubbish

23. **BBQs**, Bonfires and the use of personal incinerators is not allowed. Any plot holder contravening these conditions will be dealt with via the termination policy.

28. Ponds must be no deeper than 60cm at the deepest part. Ponds must have shallow sloping sides, **incorporating a hedgehog ladder**. ~~and~~ **You** must ensure that the edges of the pond remain clearly visible. Ponds must not be allowed to stagnate. We recommend ponds are surrounded by a low fence or barrier. It is your responsibility to carry out a risk assessment to avoid any risk to other site users **especially including** children.

30. The allotment site is open is aspect and access to and around plots should be unrestricted. **Permanent fences over 1m in height** should not be erected without permission from the Council. Any officer of the Council or any person appointed by the Council (that can include a member of the Site Committee) must be permitted to enter any allotment plot for inspection purposes or to investigate complaints.

42. If the cultivation standard at any time on a plot is below the 75% required by the T&Cs, this could trigger the termination process. **The Council will exercise a degree of lenience in your first year.**

Appeal process:

An appeal hearing will be called where you will have an opportunity to present your case. The hearing will comprise an Appeal Panel of **three councillors, including at least one** of the Chair ~~and/or~~ Vice-Chair of the appropriate committee ~~or (either or both may be substituted by~~ the Mayor ~~and/or~~ Deputy Mayor. The panel may have to visit your plot before the appeal hearing. The decision of this panel is final.

Proposed: Cllr Horrocks, Seconded: Cllr Hodson (all in favour).

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7:40pm.

Item 7 To consider the action point update

Item	September 2026
1. Emergency planning	The Town Clerk has contacted the Emergency Planning project manager from Devon Communities who emphasised the nature of the role of the Town Council in preparing for emergencies. The contact details and locations included in the Emergency Plan had been reviewed and published on the Council's website at Emergency Plan - Northam Town Council The Town Clerk has attending a seminar in October presented by the Devon Community Resilience Forum and has drafted the Emergency Plan and Risk Assessment for consideration and amendment (at a future meeting). Emergency Services have been advised of the Council's identified refuge buildings. ONGOING
2. Vision Statement and action Plan	To prepare a separate report for the completed actions; Remove/hide the columns for 2023/24; To prepare a separate report for the completed actions; ONGOING
3. Allotment Terms & Conditions	The Ts & Cs revised by this committee were sent to allotment holders and members for comment to be revised at the September meeting of this committee.

Item 8 To consider the enclosed revised policies / controlled documents:

Note, text highlighted yellow is new or has been added. Text crossed through is to be removed.

a) Allotment Terms and Conditions V1.0 (2026.09.23 Item 8(a))

As amended by this committee in July. Feedback from other members and from allotment holders has been included in this agenda pack at pages 8-9.

b) IT Policy v0.1 (2026.09.23 Item 8(b))

Based on the model IT policy published by the National Association of Local Councils. Replaces the previous, unadopted policy in full so is treated as a new document.

c) Publication Scheme v1.2 (2026.09.23 Item 8(c))

Revised to align to the most recent version of the model scheme published by the Information Commissioner's Office (**ico.**). The guidance issued by the **ico.** has been made available to members (Using the Definition Documents).

d) New Councillors advert, councillor role descriptor and induction plan v0.1

(2026.09.23 Item 8(d))

A new document intended to provide information of what it is to be a Town Councillor for those that may be interested in the role in the lead up to the election in 2027. The three parts would be published separately, as follows:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| i. 'Advert' p1-2 | iv. Councillor role descriptor p10-11 |
| ii. 'Extended web post advert' p3-7 | v. Councillor Induction Pack p12-17 |
| iii. Committee detail to link to Doc 2 p8-9 | |

Item 9 To consider recommending the enclosed Civility & Respect protocol to the Council for adoption:**a) Model Councillor Officer Protocol (2026.09.23 Item 9(a))**

This protocol has developed by the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), One Voice Wales (OVW), and County Associations.

Allotment terms and conditions – Feedback.

Feedback from Cllr Hames.

The text in green was my initial comment in response, on the understanding that this was not a final response and this committee could consider the points raised.

General point 6 . I suggest it should read 'should allow'? *It could, the intention is plot holders cannot stop their plots being inspected.*

Can hens, rabbits etc be kept? *It has long been the policy of the council to not allow livestock of any type to be kept on its allotments.*

I'm unhappy about allowing chemicals. It doesn't tie in with the aim of encouraging biodiversity, and there could be spray drift to other plots, especially on the sometimes windy Windmill Lane site. *This was considered in detail and was changed from the first version of the policy (as attached). It can of course be reconsidered at the next meeting.*

Cultivation

Not quite clear where the opportunity to grow pollinator friendly plants fits in. Need clearer statement and encouragement? Would they go in flower section (ie 25 per cent of plot area)? Could they be mixed in with vegetable and fruit crops? *It is not the intention of the statements to be prescriptive. Pollinator friendly plants can, and often are, grown amongst crops (for example, on my personal plot borage grows where it self-seeds, we alternate sunflowers and tall crops such as sweet corn, we leave alliums to flower if they bolt and only remove unwanted plants when they start to crowd the cropping plants). Common sense is to be applied, rather than measuring an exact area. Of course, many fruit and vegetable crops are pollinator friendly, that's how flowers become fruit.*

24.I suggest recognition of impacts of climate change e.g. drought. While maybe use of carpets as a moisture retainer shouldn't be allowed (I'm guilty here I'm afraid) I suggest plot holders are encouraged to mulch with appropriate material and possibly plant small fruit trees to provide shading. *Carpets are normally used as a weed suppressant rather than moisture control. The reason for restricting their use is that if they are to be used they must be woollen and hessian-backed not artificial fibres, and this is hard to check for. It is the advice of the National Allotment Society and others that the glue used in carpets can leach chemicals into the soil – hence not wanting them to be used. Fruit trees may be planted but they would provide little shade and require lots of water in their first few years until well-established. The site is very fine soil and on a slope that naturally drains but a paragraph encouraging mulching for water retention and weed control can be added if the committee wishes (probably in the cultivation section).*

27 Ref ponds I'm not clear what 'temporary' means. *They must not be made of a permanent material like concrete but with a flexible or rigid liner which could be removed. The next plot holder may not want the pond and should not have to hire a digger to remove one.*

33 Unclear about whose responsibility it is to maintain paths. *Para 34 in the attached (we lost a paragraph at some point) says “Neighbouring plot holders have a shared responsibility for keeping any path between their plots well maintained” I believe this is clear, plot holders are jointly responsible for maintaining paths that abut their plots.*

38 I can't see rats are a particular problem as they tend to go for meat and grain which aren't available on allotments. If necessary live traps can be used but not rat poison as it causes a slow death. As to squirrels and pigeons I can't see a great problem with the former and pigeons can be dissuaded by use of netting. Perhaps this advice could be included as humane approach to dealing with any problems. *Plot holders are asked to approach the council for advice, which should be humane control in the first instance. The intention of the paragraph is to remind people that the Council is in*

favour of nor responsible for removing creatures they may regard as pests rather than advise on the erection of fruit cages (pigeons can push through loose netting).
(out of interest – in addition to rats (which I have seen), squirrels and pigeons the site also has mice, voles, shrews, stoats, weasels, domestic cats, the occasional fox, finches, tits, thrushes and other smaller birds, and corvids of various types ... not to mention innumerable invertebrates. I have even seen a chicken (a silkie) but it wasn't there long.)

39 I suggest it is made clear that wasps are generally beneficial in maintaining an ecological balance as predators and they are also 'accidental pollinators' by carrying pollen caught on their legs. We should use non-toxic way of dealing with occasional wasp nest e.g. by directing a high jet of water at the nest to break it up (using hose on our generator?). **As above – advice is to be sought from the council and we would not suggest chemical use. However, the Council is not in favour of nor responsible for removing any 'pests' (for want of a better term).**

Additionally, 3 allotment holders fed back:

Respondent 1.

"All looks fine to me".

Respondent 2.

"The new terms and conditions are detailed and look good. Please could you outline all council responsibilities?

For example, the hedgerow forming the boundary is challenging to maintain. Is the council responsible for the boundary hedgerows?

Should the tenant vacating a plot be responsible for leaving the plot tidy? I inherited carpet on mine, and lots of rubbish, most of which I've removed over time.

For the no dig technique, I weight plastic covers down with wooden palettes, and some bricks, all of which were inherited from the previous tenant. Is this acceptable?"

Respondent 3.

"I have read the updated terms and conditions and they seem fine.

My only concern is the dead trees on the boundary of the allotment which appear to be in a very poor state. Considering their positioning above the main road to Appledore I am amazed that they have not been removed. I understand from other allotment holders the issue has been ongoing for sometime. I presume that if they should fall on to any of sheds on the allotment owners would be compensated for any damage caused".