

Annual General Meeting of the Northam Burrows Charity Trustees held 19th February 2025 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber, Windmill Lane, Northam.

Present: Cllrs Bach, Edwards, Hames, Himan, Hodson, Leather, Lo-Vel and Tait (Mayor).

In attendance: Guy Langton (Town Clerk & RFO); Cllr D McGeough (County Councillor); three members of the public.

Item 1 Chair's announcements

The Deputy Chair (Cllr Niki Tait) made no announcements.

Item 2 Apologies

Cllrs Newman-McKie, Roscoe, Singh and Whittaker tendered their apologies, the reasons for which were approved by the Charity Trustees.

Cllr Hodson proposed that the Council did not approve Cllr Ford's reasons for absence, Cllr Himan seconded the motion. The majority voted against the proposal, the motion was therefore not passed (3 votes for, 3 votes against, 2 abstentions, the Deputy Chair used her casting vote against, resulting in 3 votes for, 4 votes against, 2 abstentions).

Item 3 To note and approve the minutes of the Extraordinary General Meeting held on 22nd January 2025

The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record. They would be signed later by the Deputy Chair.

Proposed: Cllr Leather, Seconded: Cllr Edwards (all in favour).

Item 4 To consider grant making policy, recommended by the Northam Burrows Charity Management Committee at its December 2024 meeting

It was **resolved** to adopt the policy as presented and noted that the first granting window would be in the summer of 2025.

Proposed: Cllr Bach, Seconded: Cllr Leather (majority in favour, 1 abstention)

Item 5 To note the Audit report

The auditor's report for 2023-24 and its contents were noted.

Item 6 To note the VAT status of the Council's administration recharge to the Northam Burrows Charity and consider the way forward

It was **resolved** to pay the Council £7,000 plus VAT annually, commencing 2025.

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

There being no further business the meeting closed at 6:50pm.

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

Northam Town Council – Minutes of the Full Council meeting held 19th February 2025 at 6.50pm in the Council Chamber, Windmill Lane, Northam.

Present: Cllrs Bach, Edwards, Hames, Himan, Hodson, Leather, Lo-Vel and Tait (Mayor).

In attendance: Guy Langton (Town Clerk & RFO); Cllr D McGeough (County Councillor); three members of the public.

2502/600 Apologies

Cllrs Ford, Newman-McKie, Roscoe, Singh and Whittaker tendered their apologies, the reasons for which were approved by the Council.

Cllr Hodson proposed that the Council did not approve Cllr Ford's reasons for absence, Cllr Himan seconded the motion. The majority voted against the proposal, the motion was therefore not passed (3 votes for, 4 votes against, 1 abstention).

There was one vacancy.

2502/601 To agree the agenda as published.

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

Proposed Cllr Edwards, Seconded Cllr Hames (all in favour)

2502/602 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.

2502/603 Mayor's Announcements

The Town Clerk announced that he had been informed by Torridge District Council that sufficient signatures had been received requesting that an election be held to fill the vacancy in the Northam ward. Further details would be presented to the Council as they emerged.

2502/604 To confirm as a correct record and sign the minutes of the Full Town Council Meeting held on 22nd January 2025

It was **resolved** to amend minute 2401/543 to indicate that the agreement to nominate the lands at Knapp House was agreed in principle. With that amendment, the minutes were approved.

They would be signed by the Chair at a later date.

Proposed: Cllr Leather, Seconded: Cllr Hames (majority in favour, 2 abstained – not present at meeting)

2502/605 To receive and adopt the minutes and resolutions of Committees and Sub-Committees

- Finance 4th December 2024 and 16th January 2025
- Human Resources 6th November 2024
- Planning and Development 8th January 2025
- Parks and Recreation 27th November 2024
- Environment and Maintenance 11th December 2024
- Review 14th November 2024

The minutes were received and adopted.

2502/606 Public Participation

One member of the public addressed the Council, reporting that the community had heard that City Councils from outside Devon were purchasing homes *en bloc* with the aim of reducing their housing waiting lists. Further she noted concerns that anyone relocating to the area from a city may struggle to adapt to the local environment and culture.

Cllrs Bach and Leather responded saying that such concerns had been voiced but that any affordable houses would only be made available to meet local need. The Local Authority had no control over who or what organisation bought open-market housing.

2502/607 To receive a written report (if any) from Devon & Cornwall Constabulary

No report had been received.

2502/608 To receive a written report (if any) from Devon County Councillor

Cllr McGeough opened by apologising or having missed the Council's previous two meetings due to ill health. He then provided a verbal report to the Council. He reported that the County Council would not be bringing a new primary school forward on the development to the south of Bay View Road until school place numbers were high enough, there was extra capacity in the schools serving the Parish. The County Council held the land and any funds secured to provide a school would also be retained.

He noted that there were many roadworks in the Parish. The works on Golf Links Road had taken longer than expected. The next meeting of the Council's HATOC committee would consider the no waiting plans at Westward Ho! In Appledore, the pedestrian crossing at the school had been completed but the line painting had not been to the required standard and the contractor would return to repaint the lines. National Grid had yet to connect the lights on the crossing.

2502/609 To receive reports (if any) from Torridge District Members

Cllr Leather reported that at that Council's last Community and Resources (C&R) committee he had proposed that Bone Hill car park be brought into alignment with other car parks in the area and be free to use from Saturday afternoon to Monday morning. This proposal had been approved by the committee and would be taken forward. Further, the new car park payment machines would be able to take card, cash and app-based payments.

Cllr Lo-Vel noted that as many parking machines as possible would be powered by solar PV panels and that previously the procurement process did not take account of environmental impact, which would now be included on Project Initiation Forms.

Cllr McGeough left the meeting at this point (19:30)

2502/610 To consider the action point update

The action points were noted as follows:

10th April 2024 Request for a free car parking day at Churchfields for the 200th Anniversary of the RNLI Appledore station. (minute 2404/907)	The Town Clerk therefore asked if the Council could have a free day of parking at Churchfields in Appledore for the event. At the time of writing, Sean Kearney was consulting internally at TDC and a response was awaited. ONGOING
20th November 2024 Re-engage with Surfers Against Sewage Plastic Free Campaigns (minutes 2407/192 and 2411/416)	The Town Clerk, Community Engagement Officer, Cllrs Bach, Hames and Lo-Vel all attended the meetings arranged for the 27 th November 2024. The Northam Burrows Rangers both apologised in advance. The meeting was positive, with both the Council and SAS agreeing to share information so the Plastic Free Communities could restart. Prior to the meeting, the Town Clerk spoke to Mr Cross, who had been very supportive in the past and had arranged to speak again and plan for 2025 in the new year. ONGOING
20th November 2024 (minute 2411/413)	Drop kerbs: Action point: Town Clerk to contact the relevant Devon County Council officer. ONGOING
20th November 2024 (minute 2411/418)	Town Clerk to prepare a report into the costs of the three options for future work at the pavilion. This work has been overtaken by urgent work required at Northam Hall. ONGOING

18th December 2024 (minute 2412/494)	Prepare a lease for the rental of Blue Light Hall and pass the matter to the Finance committee. ONGOING
18th December 2024 (minute 2412/498)	Request an exemption from parking charges at Windmill Lane on weekdays for Northam TC members. Request made, response awaited. ONGOING
18th December 2024 (minute 2412/499)	Ask the member of the public planning a podcast project to draft a letter requesting bench sponsors contact them. ONGOING
22nd January 2025 (minute 2501/543)	Draft an ACV form for Knapp woodland and green space. On the agenda. COMPLETE
22nd January 2025 (minute 2501/551)	An email was drafted asking the Head of Legal Services at TDC for their opinion of the 1978 minute indicating the land was owned by Northam Town Council and responded saying that a transfer of ownership form, signed by both parties, would be required to identify ownership. ONGOING

2502/611

Clerk's report – Finance Committee January 2025

On 28th January 2025 (the last available statement balance), the Council's balances were:

Nationwide (Business 95 day saver)	£93,166.35	current interest rate is 3.9%
Cambridge & Counties Bank (31 day)	£93,884.82	current interest rate is 3.55%
Cambridge Building Society	£5,024.40	current interest rate is 2.4%
Petty Cash	£94.29	
Coop Bank (current account)	£245,134.80	
Total cash in hand	£437,304.66	

Payments

The Council made 1081 payments in January 2025, totalling £38,799.24 (exVAT). A full list of these was presented to the Finance Committee on 12th February 2025. There were 34 payments of £100 or more (exVAT). These were reported to the Finance Committee in January 2025 and may be found in those minutes.

Receipts:

In January 2025, the Council received 47 payments, totalling £7,923.73. There was a £15.00 refund for an overcharged May Fair brochure advert.

Tennis courts:

The gross volume of sales since 1st January 2024 is £5,495. After fees, the Council has received £5,114.45. The LTA expect the Council to earmark approximately £3,600 per year for 15 years (index linked) to meet the costs of court maintenance and refurbishment. The Council is £1,514.45 over the target, in this extended year (1st January 2024 to 31st March 25). At the 31st March, a payment will be made to the Council's Cambridge Building Society account, where this earmark is held.

Petty Cash:

On 31st January 2025, the Council held £76.90 in petty cash.

Council IT contract:

Following an increase by Microsoft, the Council's monthly bill to the IT service provider will increase to £327.20 (exVAT). A £10 increase per month.

Council precept request:

The Town Clerk had submitted the precept requirement to Torridge District Council, that being £644,337. The District Council has acknowledged receipt.

Annual account returns for 2023-24 for the charities for which the Council is corporate trustee

The accounts for 2023-24 for the two Charities for which the Council was Corporate Trustee (Northam Burrows Charity [charity number 1198021] and Mrs Anderson's Bequest for a Recreation Ground [charity number 300746]) had been filed by 31.01.2025 as required and could be viewed on the Charities' pages of the Charity Commission's website.

2502/612 To consider a recommendation from the Environment & Maintenance Committee

At its meeting in February 2025, the Environment & Maintenance Committee reviewed the Council's grass cutting contract with Devon County Council and recommended that it be entered into again for 2025-26, making 4 cuts in the year.

2502/613 To consider a recommendation from the Finance Committee

The Committee recommended that the Council:

- i. Replace the whole set of maintenance equipment with electric models and purchase sufficient batteries and chargers, and
- ii. That the committee resolves to purchase a petrol powered 'two-wheel tractor' and three attachments – a weed ripper, a brush and collector set and a rotary mower, and
- iii. That the committee resolve to replace the DFSK with a new ORCA, equipped with a cage tipper body and a towbar.
- iv. That in all cases, the Council seek to reduce the cost by effective negotiation and offering the Council's current equipment and truck in part-exchange.
- v. That the spending (approximately £59,000) be allocated to the cost centres for replacing a Truck and larger Council machinery (combined total of £43,250 in 2025-26), with any shortfall being identified from the Council's end of year carry-forward or earmarked reserves.

It was **resolved** to proceed with the recommendations as proposed.

Proposed: Cllr Hodson, Seconded: Cllr Leather (majority in favour, 2 abstentions)

Action point: proceed with the orders.

2502/614 To note that the Council's tennis facility has been awarded Devon Lawn Tennis Association's Park Venue of the Year for 2024

The Council noted the award, the Mayor thanked all involved in the project and operation of the courts.

2502/615 To consider the draft Asset of Community Value nomination form for land at Knapp

It was resolved to submit the application to nominate the land to be an asset of community value.

Proposed: Cllr Hames, Seconded: Cllr Leather (all in favour)

Action point: submit the application.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:05pm.

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