

Northam Town Council – Minutes of the Environment and Maintenance committee meeting held 6th February 2025 at 6.30pm in the Town Hall, Windmill Lane, Northam.

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

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

2502/574 To receive and approve apologies for absence, in accordance with Local Government Act 1972 s85(1)

All members were present.

2502/575 Chair’s Announcements

The Chair had no announcements.

The Town Clerk reported that following the winter storms, the hedge layer instructed to work on the hedge and bank at Burrough Farm had contacted the Council to ask if the work could be delayed until the autumn. The Committee agreed to delay the work.

Action point: contact the hedge layer.

The Parks & Buildings Manager reported that a tree would be removed from adjacent to Wren Close play area following the play area inspection, which had identified it as a hazard. It was agreed to remove the tree and plant two others locally to replace it.

Action point: Communicate the decision to local residents and arrange the removal and planting.

2502/576 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.

2502/577 To agree the agenda as published

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

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

2502/578 To confirm as a correct record and sign the minutes of the Environment & Maintenance Committee held on 11th December 2024

It was **resolved** to confirm the minutes of the meeting as a correct record, though the action point at minute 2412/469 would be clarified to read: *Include consideration of the draft Biodiversity Policy on the agenda of the next meeting of the Review committee.*

The amended minutes would be signed at a later date.

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

2502/579 Public Participation

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

There were no members of the public present.

2502/580 To receive an update on action points

The Action points were considered and noted as presented overleaf

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

Chair's initials

	Action	December 2024	February 2025
9	Traffic issues at the Square, Northam		Mr Gilbert’s response is on the agenda. Costs of traffic surveys not yet researched. ONGOING
10	Offer Council help for the bus shelter opposite the Seagate Hotel, Appledore		Council assistance offered, the volunteers advised the Town Clerk that they had agreed works with TDC, to start May 2025. COMPLETE
11	Locations of Council provided Christmas trees in 2025 – liaise with the Westward Ho! Business association over the sites in Westward Ho!		To be considered later in the year. ONGOING
12	Include suitable machinery in the budget for 2025-26 and arrange for its purchase.		Following advice from the Council’s vehicle maintenance provider that one of the Council’s trucks required considerable repair, the matter has been passed to the Finance committee for further review. COMPLETE
13	Schedule the works for Life on the Verge		Works scheduled in 2025. ONGOING
14	Refer the draft Biodiversity Policy to the Review committee		The matter would be included on the next committee agenda. COMPLETE

Chair’s initials

2502/581 To consider the Devon County Council grass cutting agreement

The committee **recommended** that the contract be signed and referred the matter to a meeting of the Full Council.

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

Action point: Include on a Full Council meeting agenda.

2502/582 To note the plans for Churchill Way bank

The Parks & Buildings Manager had submitted the below plans to DCC Highways the Ecologist.

The Ecologist was supportive of the plans, noting the bramble had become out of control, though its ecological benefits are considerable. The bramble patch to the southern end of the bank, towards the retaining wall, would be left (but trimmed back to aid pedestrian passage).

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

It was **resolved** to continue with the project.

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

Action points: Draft a more detailed plan as required by Devon County Council.

**2502/583 To consider plans for improving the street scene at Golf Links Rod, between Avon Lane and Beach Road**

It was **agreed** that Town Council officers would seek a derelict boat for use as a planter along that stretch of road and enhance the current planting.

Action points:

Seek a suitable derelict boat.

Make the land good after recent utility works and enhance the current planting scheme.

2502/584 To consider offering a Christmas tree recycling scheme to residents of the Northam Town Council area in 2025

It was resolved to offer a Christmas Tree recycling scheme across the Parish after the 2025-26 festive season, identifying a number of suitable collection locations, which could include:

- Northam Hall
- Burrough Farm, allotment entrance and football club entrance
- Lords Meadow, both entrances

- Anchor Park, main entrance
- Westward Ho! Park, both entrances
- Bone Hill
- Other local play areas
- Town Hall

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

Action point: Advertise service in December 2025.

2502/585

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

The Town Clerk reported that he had received a response from the Torridge District Council Public Health and Community Safety Manager, which is copied below:

Yes, we are responsible for air quality monitoring in the district. We have a number of fixed sites around the district, as described in the appendices of the air quality status reports, produced annually and available on this page:

<https://torridge.gov.uk/article/20227/Air-Quality>

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

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

The Council's officers noted that they were in the process of seeking costs for private air quality and traffic monitoring.

Action point: Include on a future meeting of this committee when costs are available.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7:30pm.

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