

Northam Town Council – Minutes of the Parks and Recreation committee meeting held 16th July 2025 at 6.30pm in the Town Hall, Windmill Lane, Northam.

Present: Cllrs Hames, Edwards, Tait, Newman-McKie, Whittaker, Hodson and Bell.

In attendance: Ian Rawle – Parks & Buildings Manager.

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

2507/185 To receive and approve apologies for absence, in accordance with Local Government Act 1972 s85(1)

Cllr Bach tendered his apologies, the reasons for which were accepted.

2507/186 Chair's Announcements

The Chair made no announcements.

2507/187 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.

2507/188 To agree the agenda as published

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

Proposed Cllr Hodson, Seconded Cllr Whittaker (all in favour)

2507/189 To confirm as a correct record and sign the minutes of the Parks and Recreation Committee held on 16th July 2025

It was **resolved** that to approve the minutes as a true and correct record, which were signed by the Chair.

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

2507/190 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 other than Christine Hutchins (FOTWHOP), who would be invited to contribute at the relevant time.

2507/191 To receive an update on actions

The Action table is presented overleaf.

Action		January 2025	March 2025	May 2025
1	Replacement of the ball fencing at Lords Meadow, a substantial sum has been included in the budget for work required at Lords Meadow for next year.	The damp weather has caused some issues. The contractor is being reminded the work needs completing. ONGOING	The contractor will undertake the works in April 25. Date TBC ONGOING	The contractor will undertake the works in April 25. Date TBC ONGOING
2	To consult the community on the use of outdoor gym.		INCOMPLETE	The committee has decided to remove the gym equipment due to safety concerns regarding its current condition COMPLETE
3	Churchfields Skate Park – paint and ‘graffiti’.	The Parks & Recreation Manager has been in discussion with a graffiti artist ONGOING		This committee agreed it would remain as painted now until it is next refurbished. COMPLETE
4	Tennis Court gate – quality of work	The matter has been raised with the LTA directly and the Surveying Firm overseeing the work. The gate installer has advised the Surveyor that the replacement parts will be installed. No date for the work has yet been advised. ONGOING		The work has been completed by the installer. The condition will continue to be monitored. COMPLETE

5	Reinstall sign bee friendly planting at Anchor Park	The sign has not yet been reinstated. The Council is advised to wait until the new work is undertaken to establish wildflower swathes at the Park. ONGOING		The work has been completed by the Maintenance Team. COMPLETE
6	Actions arising from Play Inspection Reports			On the agenda ONGOING
7	Schedule Play Inspection Reports for 2025-26			Scheduled for January/February 2026 COMPLETE
8	The installation of CCTV at Westward Ho! Park within the Northam Town Councils grounds.	The Parks & Recreation Manager is currently looking into costings and suitable locations for the installation. ONGOING	The Parks & Recreation Manager is currently looking into costings and suitable locations for the installation. ONGOING	Awaiting quote from contractor. ONGOING
9	The volunteer gardeners asked the Council to help recruit volunteers through its communication channels. Further discussion with the Town Clerk and Community Engagement Officer is needed.	Not started. INCOMPLETE	Not started. INCOMPLETE	Started. An email has been sent to Barbara asking whether the Council should design a poster or if there is an existing one we can use for social media promotion.

2507/192 Lords Meadow signage

To **Consider** the installation of a sign at Lords Meadow prohibiting golf, following a recent incident where a resident's window was broken by someone playing golf in the area.

It was brought to the officers attention that a resident's window was recently smashed due to someone playing golf at Lords Meadow. This incident has raised concerns about the safety of nearby properties and the appropriate use of the area.

To **consider** allocating a budget of £100 to instal of "No Golf" signs at both ends of Lords Meadow to prevent further incidents and ensure the safety and comfort of local residents.

The committee was informed of a recent incident in which a resident's window was broken due to someone playing golf at Lords Meadow. This raised concerns regarding the safety of nearby properties and the suitability of golfing activities in the park.

Members discussed the potential risks to residents and park users and agreed that action should be taken to discourage golfing in the area.

It was **resolved** to put out temporary "No Golfing" signs at all entrances to Lords Meadow Park.

Proposed: Cllr Tait, Seconded: Cllr Bell (all in favour) majority in favour, 1 abstention.

2507/193 Installation of Compliant Signage at Wrens Close and Westward Ho! Park

- a) Recent park inspections have identified the need for updated signage to meet safety and compliance standards. The January inspection at Westward Ho! Park reported the following:

Finding: BS EN 1176 Part 7 recommends that signage shall include emergency contact details and contact details of the owner/operator for reporting maintenance issues.

To **consider** allocating a budget of £400 to instal new signage at both Wrens Close and Westward Ho! Park that includes emergency contact details and the contact information of the owner/operator, in line with BS EN 1176 Part 7 recommendations. This will ensure compliance, improve safety, and provide clear channels for reporting maintenance issues.

Members considered the proposal to install compliant signage in line with these recommendations.

It was **resolved** to purchase and install new signage at both Wrens Close and Westward Ho! Park.

A budget of up to £400 will be allocated for this purpose.

Proposed: Cllr Tait, Seconded: Cllr Whittaker (majority in favour).

- b) To **consider** updating and replacing the existing park signage at Westward Ho! Park to improve visibility and clarity.

Cllr Edwards contacted the Council on Friday to raise concerns about the current signage in the centre of Westward Ho!, stating that it is not sufficiently clear. The existing sign was originally approved by Torridge District Council (TDC), the owner of the street furniture on which it is mounted.

To **review** the current signage and explore options for updating or replacing it with clearer, more visible signage, while ensuring compliance with TDC's requirements for street furniture, with a budget of £400.

It was **resolved** to liaise with the volunteer gardeners and commission a new, clearer sign that can be installed in the park to include information about the sensory gardens and the Changing Places toilet. The signage will also be designed to allow Northam Town Council to include additional advertisements in the future.

Cllr Hodson confirmed that she is happy for additional signage to be placed on her external wall, where appropriate.

It was also **agreed** to contact Devon County Council (DCC) to explore the possibility of installing signage along the perimeter wall near the Avon Road / Golf Links Road entrance to improve visibility and wayfinding.

Proposed: Cllr Newman-McKie, Seconded: Cllr Tait (majority in favour).

The Chair suspended Standing Orders to allow Christine Hutchins, representing the Friends of Westward Ho! Park (FOTWHOP), to give her report to the committee. (19:26)

Proposed: Cllr Hodson, Seconded: Cllr Whittaker (majority in favour).

Report from Christine Hutchins (Friends of Westward Ho! Park)

Christine informed the Committee that the park and gardens are looking very good, with increased support from new volunteers. She raised a concern that visitors to the area may not be aware of the park's location, particularly those parking near the church who may not realise the park is nearby. She advised that a grant application has been submitted to fund a replacement bench, as the existing bench has become unsafe and unusable. The new bench would be made from recycled materials, offering greater durability and reduced maintenance.

Christine also reported that efforts are ongoing to attract more members to the 200 Club.

Standing Orders were then resumed, and the meeting continued (19:29)

Proposed: Cllr Hodson, Seconded: Cllr Whittaker (majority in favour).

2507/194 Construction of Steps and improvement of 'desire line' surface at Blackies Footpath

Cllr Hames has initiated a **proposal** to construct steps at the bottom of the footpath at Blackies, improving access to the Community Land Trust housing and housing at The Mount and Western Avenue. He will approach Officers at NTC regarding the project. The steps would be constructed by NTC maintenance staff, with minimal costs limited to timber and potentially some chippings to make good the path where it crosses NTC land. The proposed steps aim to enhance safety and accessibility for residents using the footpath to reach Appledore and public transport. This supports the objectives of NTC's Carbon Reduction Plan and Neighbourhood Plan by encouraging walking and public transport use, thereby contributing to a reduction in carbon emissions.

It was **resolved** to proceed with investigating the proposal, including:

- Costing the materials and labour required for the construction of the steps;
- Investigating the public liability and legal aspects of constructing steps and formalising the desire line;
- Confirming land ownership and any permissions that may be required.

Proposed: Cllr Hodson, Seconded: Cllr Whittaker (majority in favour).

2507/195 Update on MUGA Project and Section 106 Funding Application

The Parks and Buildings Manager provided an update on the MUGA project. Three contractors have been contacted and are in the process of submitting plans and costings, which are expected within the next couple of weeks. Once a contractor has been selected, an application for Section 106 funding will be submitted to support the project.

2507/196 To consider requesting the Review Committee review the allotment tenancy agreement (Windmill Lane) in light of comments from allotment holders and local residents

It was **resolved** to request that the **Review Committee** undertake a review of the Windmill Lane Allotment Tenancy Agreement in light of recent comments and concerns raised by allotment holders and local residents regarding the level of cultivation on some plots.

Members of the allotment will be invited to attend the Review Committee meeting to contribute to the discussion.

Proposed: Cllr Edwards, Seconded: Cllr Hodson (majority in favour).

2507/197 To consider proposals for additional tree planting and the creation of a community orchard

It was **resolved** to **investigate** potential areas within the parish suitable for additional tree planting and the development of a community orchard. The Parks and Buildings Manager will investigate the site(s) within the parish. Findings will be reported back to Full Council for further consideration.

Proposed: Cllr Hodson, Seconded: Cllr Whittaker (majority in favour).

There being no further business the meeting closed at 19:54pm.

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