

Northam Town Council – Minutes of the Full Council meeting held 24th September 2025 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber, Windmill Lane, Northam.

Present: Cllrs Bach (Mayor), Bell, Edwards, Hames, Himan, Hodson, Horrocks, Leather, Lo-Vel, Newman-McKie (Deputy Mayor), Sawyer, Singh, Tait and Whittaker.

In attendance: Guy Langton (Town Clerk & RFO), Rev A Vidamour and three members of the public.

2509/329 Apologies

Cllr D McGeough (County Councillor) and Cllr K O'Rourke (District Councillor) submitted their apologies.

2509/330 To agree the agenda as published.

It was **resolved** to considering business on the agenda as published.

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

2509/331 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.

2509/332 Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor announced that the Burrows Charity Management Committee scheduled for the 25th September 2025 had been postponed to the 23rd October 2025, the start time remained 10am.

2509/333 To confirm and sign the minutes of the Full Council meeting held 27th August 2025

It was **resolved** to approve the minutes, which were signed by the Mayor.

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

2509/334 To receive and adopt the reports of minutes and resolutions contained therein from Committees and Sub-Committees

- Finance 13th August 2025
- Planning and Development 21st August 2025
- Parks & Recreation 16th July 2025

The above listed minutes were received and adopted.

2509/335 Public Participation

One member of the public addressed the Council about Westward Ho! Park and the recent 'Visit Westward Ho!' Facebook post seeking feedback on the future of the pavilion building in the park explaining some of the community were concerned that it may be operated by a private organisation in the future.

The second member of the public addressed the Council about the future of the building known as the 'Leisure Centre' on The Square, Northam. The building was a Grade II listed structure, comprising an old schoolhouse and two dwellings (flats). Parts of the building were thought to date back to medieval times. She requested the Council purchase the building and renovate it, the old school part to be used again as a community building.

The third member of the public addressed the Council about the future of the building known as the 'Leisure Centre' on The Square, Northam. He urged the Council commission surveys of the building and offered his assistance should the Council resolve to purchase and renovate the building as a public/community building.

Chair's initials

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2509/336 To receive a report from Devon & Cornwall Constabulary

No report had been received.

2509/337 To receive a report from the Devon County Councillor

The County Councillor requested the Clerk make the following report:

Regarding the request for 30mph signs on Wooda Road, he had been in contact with Cllr Hames, outlining the process and explaining the any such scheme would need to be financed by the Town Council, should it resolve to request their installation. Speeding vehicles were of course a matter for police enforcement.

Regarding the metal finger post at Westbourne Terrace, he was willing to part fund. The project.

Cllr Edwards reported that the street lighting at Market St and Meeting St in Appledore was working.

2509/338 To receive reports from Torridge District Members

Torridge Council members submitted the appended written reports.

Cllr Hodson reported that the DCC Health and Care Scrutiny committee had at its meeting on the 22nd September 2025 had a long and vigorous debate regarding the move to replace Fire Service first responders with volunteers from the community. It was agreed that the two services, volunteer-based and Fire Service would run in parallel until it was clear all the hours required could be covered.

2509/339 To receive an update regarding Local Government Reorganisation

Following the launch of the Devolution White Paper on 16th December 2024, DALC has been working hard to engage with our members on this topic, and to provide support and updates where we can and has published the following:

We will endeavour to keep our members up to date on what we know about devolution as matters in Devon progress. Local government reorganisation (LGR) is being required by government in order to achieve the kind of Devolution deal they want to see. Updates will be circulated in our e-bulletin, and on our website.

At the moment, we have no information about what reorganisation might look like in Devon. The Leaders of Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council and Torbay Council are working together to explore the creation of a Mayoral Strategic Authority.

The Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority (CCA) – the governance needed for devolved decision-making powers and funding to flow from Whitehall to local decision-makers in Devon and Torbay – is now official.

Following meetings with our member councils in January, steps that DALC are already taking include:

- *Working with NALC and other county associations to share knowledge and best practice*
- *We have asked NALC to lobby for funding package for local councils to assist with asset transfers*
- *We are investigating the legal position around asset transfer*
- *We have asked NALC for examples of best practice in terms of devolution*
- *We have requested that NALC deliver a briefing for all DALC councils*
- *We have worked with Devon County Council to arrange for regular briefings for our members*
- *We will continue to engage with district councils wherever possible*

We will continue to keep you updated. We have asked encouraged member councils to carry out asset mapping in their communities. Thanks to all councils that submitted statements to help us build an evidence base, we are very grateful for your assistance in this matter. If you haven't yet sent anything in, we would still be delighted to receive your statements, which all help us build an understanding of our member councils.

Further information was available on the DALC website.

Chair's initials

Rev Vidamour left the meeting at this point (7:00pm)

2509/340 To consider the action point update

The action points were received as below.

2507/201 & 2508/278 Adoption of Red Telephone Kiosk – Appledore Quay	Evidence of the consultation and Council response has been circulated to members, together with a timeline. BT were not written to as they confirmed that the removal of the telephony from the kiosk at Appledore Quay has been cancelled. COMPLETE
2507/212 Notify Torridge District Council of this Council's intention to submit a bid for the 'Leisure Centre', Northam Square	On the agenda. COMPLETE
2508/273 Request DCC highways review the signage on Irsha Street – road users were regularly travelling the wrong way.	The County Council Officer has responded stating: The signage has been reviewed and is compliant with the regulations. It is the responsibility of the Police to enforce traffic law. COMPLETE
2508/279 Flagpole/mast at the Trinity House Buoy Store – Appledore Quay	The landowner has been contacted. Trinity House has confirmed that it has no assets on the Quay in Appledore and has no formal 'interest' in the flagpole/mast. ONGOING
2508/280 CCTV at Westward Ho! Park	The relevant company has been contacted and a detailed survey of the site undertaken. The lamp columns have been inspected and a report is awaited. Consideration is being given to reducing the column height (by cutting a part off each column) in the future. COMPLETE
2508/283 Meeting with Northam Lions FC	Cllrs Bach, Edwards and Lo-Vel, with the Town Clerk, met with representatives of Northam Lions FC. A way forward was identified and a revised agreement would be drawn up. ONGOING

2509/341 To receive the Clerk's report

On 31st August 2025 (according to the last available statement balance), the Council's balances were:

Hinkley & Rugby Building Society	£150,000	interest rate is 1.75%	holding account for general expenditure
Cambridge & Counties Bank (31-day)	£95,514.32	interest rate is 3.25%	Earmarked Reserves
Nationwide (Business 95-day saver)	£95,224.45	interest rate is 3.69%	General and Earmarked Reserves
Cambridge Building Society	£5,452.32	interest rate is 1.9%	Tennis Reserves
Coop Bank (current account)	£44,396.81	no interest	
Petty Cash	£92.05		
Total cash in hand (SCRIBE)	£ 390,679.95		

The main bank account was reconciled to **29/08/25**. There were no further payments or receipts up to 31/08/2025.

The bank reconciliation was signed by the Proper Officer and the Chair.

Chair's initials

Payments

The Council made 97 payments since 26th July 2025, totalling £41,804.14 (exVAT). A full list of these is presented on the appended pages. There were 29 payments of £100 or more (exVAT), presented below.

Voucher	Date	Net	VAT	Total	Cost Code	Description	Minute Ref
511	30.07.25	£87.08	£17.42	£104.50	Website	Web Hosting	
560	15.08.25	£114.00	£0.00	£114.00	Water	Water bill	
568	19.08.25	£107.52	£21.50	£129.02	Anchor Park	Paint	
517	05.08.25	£112.35	£22.47	£134.82	Payroll Processing Fees	Payroll	
531	07.08.25	£119.57	£23.91	£143.48	Internet	Wifi N Hall	
524	05.08.25	£151.93	£0.00	£151.93	Water	Community Centre Water	
525	05.08.25	£128.08	£25.62	£153.70	Stationery	Stationery	
574	20.08.25	£174.50	£0.00	£174.50	Miscellaneous	TV Licence	
572	19.08.25	£150.38	£30.08	£180.46	Photocopier Fees	Copier Charges	
555	13.08.25	£160.89	£32.18	£193.07	Fuel	Fuel	
515	03.08.25	£166.67	£33.33	£200.00	Franking Machine & Costs	Franking Machine	
600	29.08.25	£174.94	£34.99	£209.93	Hanging baskets & Planters	Watering Equipment	
570	19.08.25	£200.00	£40.00	£240.00	Subs and Memberships	Membership Fee	
569	19.08.25	£200.00	£40.00	£240.00	Advertising	The Link	
576	21.08.25	£218.86	£43.77	£262.63	NNP	Poster	2501/507
547	12.08.25	£284.70	£56.94	£341.64	Cloudy IT	IT contract	
522	05.08.25	£296.85	£59.37	£356.22	Machinery Maintenance	Mower Repair	
548	12.08.25	£400.00	£0.00	£400.00	Cleaning	Cleaning Northam Hall	
513	01.08.25	£430.76	£0.00	£430.76	Room Rental	Room rental	
518	05.08.25	£360.00	£72.00	£432.00	Hanging baskets & Planters	Hanging Baskets	
549	12.08.25	£399.26	£79.85	£479.11	Town Hall - Maintenance	Electrical work	
550	12.08.25	£437.50	£87.50	£525.00	Cleaning	Cleaning CPT	
553	12.08.25	£606.41	£121.28	£727.69	Access Control System	Access Control System	
532	08.08.25	£1,322.22	£0.00	£1,322.22	General	Insurance	2405/027
520	05.08.25	£2,076.55	£0.00	£2,076.55	Salaries, HMRC and NEST	Pensions	
575	21.08.25	£2,161.64	£0.00	£2,161.64	Salaries, HMRC and NEST	Pensions	2508/252
571	19.08.25	£2,938.24	£0.00	£2,938.24	Salaries, HMRC and NEST	Salaries	
551	12.08.25	£6,793.20	£0.00	£6,793.20	Salaries, HMRC and NEST	HMRC PAYE	
563	18.08.25	£18,800.00	£0.00	£18,800.00	Salaries, HMRC and NEST	Salaries	2508/252

Receipts:

Since 26/07/2025, the Council received 37 payments, totalling £3,872.74.

Tennis courts:

The gross volume of sales in August 2025 was £1,165.00. After fees, the Council has received £1,093.08. Since 1st April 2025, the Council has received £4,958.82 for tennis court memberships and bookings. As a comparison the tennis receipts for 1st April to 1st Sept 2024 and 2025, 2025 saw an increase of 14%. 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. In the first year, the Council received £5,452.

The committee resolved to transfer £3,709.86 to the Council's holding account for tennis court funds, leaving £1,248.96 in the Council's current account to meet the cost of the tennis camps.

Chair's initials

Petty Cash:

A screen shot of the petty cash cashbook is presented to the below showing the items on which the Council has spent petty cash to 31st August 2025. The financial regulations seek to maintain a balance of £100 in Petty Cash.

Cllr Singh entered at this point (7:15pm)

2509/342 To consider engaging a surveyor in respect of the ‘Leisure Centre’, Northam Square

It was **resolved** instruct the surveyor to carry out three surveys:

Condition inspection and report	£2,900 (exVAT)
Mechanical and Electrical inspection and report	£1,500 (exVAT), estimated
Valuation report	£1,750 (exVAT)

RICS ‘Red Book’ compliant and produced once costings are established.

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

Action points:

Instruct Surveyor

Re-share the link to the shared drive so members can view the photographs

Two members of the public left at this point (7:40pm)

2509/343 To note the Planning & Development Committee’s to agree the recommended Neighbourhood Plan Examiner be appointed by Torridge District Council and receive an update on the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan

Full Council noted the recommendation from the Planning and Development Committee.

Action point: Advise the Officer at Torridge District Council.

2509/344 To note the DALC Conference 2025

It was noted that the DALC conference would be held on the 1st October 2025.

2509/345 To receive a verbal update from the Pavilion Working Group

The Council heard that a recent post on Facebook regarding the possibilities had received over 6,500 interactions. Cllr Sawyer noted that the building could be a focal point for the community as a public/community space. The issue was money

Action point: advise the organisation making the request.

2509/346 To note the North Devon Coast National Landscape (AONB) Draft Management Plan Public Consultation and consider making a response as a Council

It was noted that the North Devon Coast National Landscape (AONB) Draft Management Plan Public Consultation was open for comment and would close on **Monday 27th October 2025.**

[Draft Management Plan Public Consultation Now Live – North Devon Coast](#)

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:00pm.

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

Chair’s initials

External members' reports to Full Council 24th September 2025**Cllr Louis Bach – Combined Mayoral and District Councillor Report to NTC Full Council Meeting - 24th September 2025.**

TDC have their next full council meeting on the 22nd September, which consists of a very full agenda, including ongoing negotiations around the future expansion of the Holsworthy AGI Business Centre. Any decisions can be reported at the next available opportunity.

I attended a meeting at the vacant Northam Leisure Centre with other members and NTC officers, to view these premises, and potential future acquisition. However, all this subject to surveyor's condition report, valuation, business plan and grant funding etc.

There seems to have been more than the usual number of unrelated matters revolving around possible planning contraventions / and or inquiries relating to existing buildings and sites, which seems to take up and inordinate amount of time.

A joint meeting has taken place with other NTC members, the TC and officers from TDC to discuss the Section 106 grant allocation for public art in Westward Ho! Further information on this can be reported at a later date, when details have been finalised.

I attended a joint meeting with other NTC members, the TC and representatives from the Northam Lions FC, to discuss future management and agreements. Hopefully a way forward can be agreed soon, once the TC has prepared the draft agreement / licence.

The NTC Mayfair Working Group has had its first meeting, ideas and suggestions have taken place, no doubt further details will evolve in due course.

I'm pleased to report that the three defective lighting columns in the Westward Ho! Park have been rectified and are now fully working. Also new dog fouling signs have been installed. Thank you to the NTC officers for resolving these issues.

As agenda item the TC has obtained a quote for the replacement directional finger post sign at the junction with Golf Links Road and Westbourne Terrace. Hopefully the cost of this can be recovered from the DCC Councillor Locality Fund.

Last week I had the pleasure of attending the Proclamation Ceremony of the Barnstable Town Fair, an historical event that goes back over 800 years. Thank you Cllr Janet Coats Mayor Barnstable Town for the kind invitation. I was seated next to Ian Roome the MP for North Devon, which was an opportunity to compare and share many issues, not least LGR.

By invitation from the Chair, I attended the Bideford Blues & Appledore Football Club in Westward Ho! last Sunday to celebrate the installation of their new Astro-Turf football pitch. The official opening was conducted by former Crystal Palace professional player Mark Edworthy, who once played at this club. The cost of this new surface cost over £200,000 and was funded from grants from many organisations including NTC. The club supports football for ladies, gents, girls & boys of all ages, including walking football. I was very impressed by the opportunities and facilities offered at this club.

Finally, **"Save the Date"** information has been sent out, so I do hope very much that you will be able to attend my Mayoral fund-raising event on the 13th February next year in aid of the Charity Devon Air Ambulance Trust. Tickets and final details will be available soon from the NTC office. As with any fund-raising event, the success really does depend on the numbers attending, so please do try to support this and encourage your families and friends to attend. We need to sell lots of tickets, as we have some great prizes for the auction and raffle, but **more are still needed, so please donate prizes if you can.**

Thank you

Cllr Louis Bach, Northam Town Mayor. 24th September 2025

Chair's initials

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Cllr Wendy Lo-Vel – District Councillor

I attended the Member Briefing on 11th September at which we were informed of the progress or lack of progress of the plans for the local government reorganisation.

I also attended the Licensing meeting on 17th September where taxi licensing policy and maximum taxi fare rates were being reviewed. Maximum taxi fare rates had not been reviewed for three years so it was agreed that they should be increased (£4.50 for the first mile and £3.30 thereafter). Another important issue was discussed, that of the requirement to move to low emission or electric vehicles by 2030. One of the main deterrents apart from cost was the lack of functioning charging points in the area. If we are asking this of the fleet reliable, affordable charging infrastructure must be a high priority for the Council. The fact that we only have one taxi rank in the area was also raised and it was suggested that ranks should be created in both Westward Ho and Appledore. It was acknowledged that the main difficulties would be that a rank on the road would have to be approved by Devon County Council and a rank in a car park would potentially not be supported by TDC as they could lose car parking revenue because of it.

After receiving an email from a concerned constituent regarding the legal challenge regarding Pension investments in companies enabling Israel's genocide and having followed up Steve Hearse's and Staci Dorey's responses, I contacted Steve Lodge who is the Chair of Investment and Pensions Committee for DCC. He was able to reassure me that they are aware and are taking it very seriously - both as a fund and within the pool of funds other which they are a member and discussions are ongoing.

Cllr Jane Whittaker – District Councillor

Quite an odd few weeks really with not a great deal going on.

I've attended a Senior Management Team Meeting whereas usual anything that can be shared with District Cllr colleagues is done so.

A Plans Committee meeting where the only item was about The Appledore Clean Maritime Innovation Centre (AMIC). This was principally about some fairly modest changes to be made to the over overall development. There was a discussion though about the fact that the slipway wall had already been altered which should really have been brought to the meeting as a retrospective application it was felt.

I was invited by John Puddy, the Chairman of the Trustees of the SS Freshspring Trust to come and see how much local school children enjoy visiting the ship and how they learn all sorts about maritime engineering. There were a number of volunteers helping during the visit to ensure that the children learnt while enjoying the experience of being on the ship.

Full Council at TDC last evening was spent mainly in Part Two. There was an earlier mention of LGR, but only to say that nothing new is known at this time. I think it may well have broken the record of being the longest Full Council meeting ever, well certainly in the time I've been a District Cllr, I arrived home at 10.40!

Councillor Jane Whittaker, Town and District Councillor, Northam and Orchard Hill
Conservative Group Leader

Chair's initials