

Northam Town Council – Minutes of the Full Council meeting held 27th November 2025 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber, Windmill Lane, Northam.

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

In attendance: Guy Langton (Town Clerk & RFO), Ian Rawle, (Parks & Buildings Manager), Tina Stewardson (Community Engagement Officer), Rev J Harris, Andrew Bell (CEO, North Devon Biosphere) and two members of the public.

The meeting opened with a presentation from Andrew Bell, the CEO of the North Devon Biosphere regarding the installation of a water quality monitoring buoy that was to be sited off the beach at Westward Ho!, funded by the Levelling Up fund. A similar buoy off Croyde was already deployed. The buoy would carry out chemical analysis of the water, not bacterial analysis. Further information and how to access the data, which would be available online could be found on the North Devon Biosphere's website at <https://www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/water-quality-buoys.html>.

2511/459 Apologies

Cllr Newman-McKie submitted her apologies, the reasons for which were approved. Cllr K O'Rourke (District Councillor) and PC Ciantar also submitted their apologies.

2511/460 To agree the agenda as published.

It was **resolved** to consider business on the agenda as published. Proposed Cllr Hodson, Seconded Cllr Whittaker (all in favour)

2511/461 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.

2511/462 Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor announced that at the forthcoming meeting of the Torridge District Council Standards Committee on the 3rd December, the Monitoring Officer would be outlining the changes to the Standards regime nationally. The meeting could be watched live or the recording accessed at that Council's YouTube page (<https://www.youtube.com/@torridgedc>).

The annual Appledore Christmas Light Switch On would be on the 5th December 2025.

Bideford Town Council had resolved to support the establishment of a Trust Post in the Taw and Torridge Estuary, the matter would be on the next agenda for this Council.

The Working Group had drafted a response to the Examiner's initial questions about the Northam Neighbourhood Plan. The response would be considered by the Planning & Development Committee on the 4th December 2025.

2511/463 To confirm and sign the minutes of the Full Council meeting held 22nd October 2025

It was **resolved** to approve the minutes, which were signed by the Mayor. Proposed: Cllr Bell, Seconded: Cllr Bach (majority in favour, one abstention – not present at the meeting)

2511/464 To receive and adopt the reports of the confirmed minutes and resolutions contained therein from Committees and Sub-Committees

- Finance 10th September 2025
- Planning and Development 11th September 2025
- Environment & Maintenance 30th July 2025

The Council noted some of the minutes were not as listed.

Action point: represent the approved committee and sub-committee minutes at the December 2025 meeting.

Chair's initials

2511/465 Public Participation

One member of the public addressed the Council about the Leisure Centre (Old Schoolhouse), Northam Square. He noted that the building had been identified as a community facility and heritage asset in the Northam Neighbourhood Plan, had Grade II listed status and the past and possible future use as a community building and the possible use of the outdoor space in the future.

The Town Clerk was asked to reply, he did so saying that the council would be updated on the matter as part of the action points.

2511/466 To receive a report from Devon & Cornwall Police

The representatives of the Neighbourhood Policing Team were unavailable but Sgt Clark had submitted a written report, as follows:

I do have sight of the issues that councillors have raised such as speeding vehicles, and understand that is of concern for you, one which I am not ignoring. This will be ongoing work for the neighbourhood team as I have described already to the councillors and still intend to do according to the plan of action I have decided upon in spring next year. I will however take advice for any further measures that we can bolt on from PC Andy BENNETT, the roads safety officer in the near future, balanced with other work across all the communities that we serve subjective to the relevant priorities and demand that we face, such as Knife Crime initiatives, Retail Theft initiatives, Drug dealing / county lines that we have to respond to in order to benefit a whole diverse community spread across a large Torridge patch. The speeding concerns are on my mind however and I want to reassure you that we will try to help as planned in the near future. I appreciate your patience, perseverance and passion regarding wanting to make the community a safe place to live and work in.

Cllr Hames noted his concern regarding the brevity of the report, which did not contain crime figures but did address the issue of speeding and he noted this council could extend the work it is planning with Speed Indicator Devices, speed and traffic volume surveys, and reinstate the Speedwatch scheme in the parish.

2511/467 To receive a report from the Devon County Councillor

Cllr McGeough reported that:

He would liaise with the Neighbourhood Highways Officer regarding the possible painting of 30mph signage on the road surface;

The roundabout at Golf Links Road had not yet been adopted by Devon Highways and would not be until the roads on that development were complete;

That when the roads on the development north of Tadworthy Road had been opened and adopted, Devon Highways would look again at the section of Atlantic Way immediately west of the new junction with the Boulevard;

Concerns regarding Library parking had been received and Devon Highways were working with the Housing Association that managed Glebefields. Concerns and comments should be directed to the Housing Association in the first instance; The new road layout on Bay View Road had been repainted, damaged drain covers had been scheduled for repair, new waiting restrictions on Golf Links Road (close to the promenade)

Devon County Council had submitted its bid for a new pattern of Unitary Councils across Devon to central government; and

A copy of the Devon County Council Strategic Plan has been left with the Town Clerk, if members wished to read it.

Cllr Hames asked if the one-way signage would be replaced at Oxman's Lane. Cllr McGeough confirmed that it was scheduled to be replaced.

Cllr Hodson asked if the surface of Stanwell Hill was scheduled for repair. Cllr McGeough confirmed that it was.

Cllr Edwards asked when Hubbastone Road/New Quay Street past the Maritime Innovation Centre site would be reopened. Cllr McGeough advised that the closure was a condition placed upon planning approval by Torridge District Council and questions should be directed at that council.

2511/468 To receive reports from Torridge District Members

One Torridge Council member submitted the appended written report.

No further reports were provided at the meeting.

Cllr Tait asked if Torridge members were aware of the resolution by Bideford Town Council seeking to establish the Taw Torridge Estuary as one Trust Port.

Cllr Whittaker confirmed it had not been put before Torridge District Council.

2511/469 To receive an update regarding Local Government Reorganisation

The report detailing the submissions made by the district, county and unitary councils across Devon was noted.

Cllr Hames reported that Torridge District Council had met in an extraordinary meeting on the 26th November 2025, following extensive debate, that council had resolved to submit a bid which sought to establish two new unitary authorities, alongside Plymouth City Council.

Local Government Reorganisation Calendar, as currently published:

<u>28 November 2025</u>	<u>Deadline to submit final proposals to Government.</u>
<u>January – April 2026</u>	<u>Government-led public consultations will be held to hear local views.</u>
<u>May – August 2026</u>	<u>The Minister will announce a final decision on which proposals will be taken forward.</u>
<u>May 2027</u>	<u>Shadow Elections will take place and Shadow Councils will work alongside the current councils during what will be known as the transition period.</u>
<u>1 April 2028</u>	<u>New unitary councils will come into being and current councils will be abolished.</u>

2511/470 To consider the action point update

The action points were received as below.

2508/279 Flagpole/mast at the Trinity House Buoy Store – Appledore Quay	<p>The landowner has been contacted and would be written to requesting he repair the flagstaff.</p> <p>Trinity House has confirmed that it has no assets on the Quay in Appledore and has no formal ‘interest’ in the flagpole/mast.</p> <p>The District Council would also be written to, requesting it enforce the matter from a dangerous structure, damaged structure in the conservation area or environmental health basis. ONGOING</p>
2508/283 Meeting with Northam Lions FC	<p>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</p>

Chair's initials

2509/342 Conduct surveys at the Leisure Centre, Northam	The Council has commissioned the following: Condition inspection and report Mechanical and Electrical inspection and report Valuation report (RICS 'Red Book' compliant) The surveyor's report had not yet been received. ONGOING
2510/390 Road Layout at Atlantic Way (close to Tadworthy Road junction)	<p>The Town Clerk has liaised with the Neighbourhood Highways Officer on the matter, requesting a change to priorities and/or amended signage. The NHI has responded indicating that this has been raised in previous years and the response remains the same:</p> <p>The road has no centre line marking because it is beneath the width which requires a centre line.</p> <p>The road is wide enough for most two-way traffic and it is the responsibility of the driver to drive accordingly to the conditions of the road and give way should they need too.</p> <p>DCC have no accident data for that location, showing no record of incidents which require consideration and most pertinent is that there are not the funds currently to carry out such road improvements or alterations.</p> <p>When the Tadworthy link is open DCC will review the traffic flows etc and consider future alterations. Atlantic Way is a B road and a strategic route and it needs to be remembered that we also need a sufficient width to get snow ploughs along this road if necessary. ONGOING</p>

2511/471 To receive the Clerk's report
On 31st October 2025 the Council's balances were:

Hinkley & Rugby Building Society	£232,500	interest rate is 1.75%	holding account for general expenditure
Cambridge & Counties Bank (31-day)	£96,565.02	interest rate is 3.25%	Earmarked Reserves
Nationwide (Business 95-day saver)	£96,054.71	interest rate is 3.35%	General and Earmarked Reserves
Cambridge Building Society	£9,162.18	interest rate is 1.9%	Tennis Reserves
Coop Bank (current account)	£224,989.15	no interest	
Petty Cash	£60.31		
Total cash in hand (SCRIBE)	£ 659,331.37		
Less unrepresented payments	£50,009.35		
Plus unrepresented receipts	£299.20		
Adjusted balance	£609,621.22		

The unrepresented payments are as follows:

£25,000 bank transfer to H&R BS 30/10/2025

£25,000 bank transfer to H&R BS 31/10/2025

£9.35 is related to vouchers 860, 861, 862 & 863 which all have the correct dates on Scribe but weren't cashed until 3/11/25 (and were not on the statement dated 29/10/25 as they went through the account on 30th and 31st October).

Chair's initials

The unrepresented receipts are as follows:

These receipts relate to vouchers 329, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338 & 339 which all have the correct dates on Scribe but weren't cashed until 3/11/25 (and were not on the statement dated 29/10/25 as they went through the account on 30th and 31st October – 329 went through on 29th but AFTER the statement was issued). The bank reconciliation was **signed** by the Proper Officer and the Chair.

Payments: Between 1st and 31st October 2025, the council made 147 payments totalling £43,193.56, detailed below. A full list of these is presented on the appended pages. There were 27 payments of £100 or more (exVAT), presented overleaf. It was **resolved** to approve the list of payments.

Receipts: Between 1st and 31st October 2025, the Council received 132 payments, totalling £18,551.39 (including a VAT refund of £9,388.03).

Tennis courts: The gross volume of sales in October 2025 was £165.00. After fees, the Council has received £153.85. Since 1st April 2025, the Council has received £5,290.70 for tennis court memberships and bookings.

Petty Cash: A screen shot of the petty cash cashbook is presented (right) showing the items on which the Council has spent petty cash to 22nd September to 31st October 2025. The financial regulations seek to maintain a balance of £100 in Petty Cash and a further £40 has been withdrawn.

The financial regulations seek to maintain a balance of £100 in Petty Cash.

Petty Cash			2025-26	Name: Northam TC Petty Cash													
Details					Income			Expenditure						Balance at start of FY			
Date	Trans action	Description	Ref	Scribe	Petty Cash Withdrawal	Carry forward	Total in	VAT	Events	Refresh ments	Maint enance	Office expenses	Total out	£	13.45		
22.9.25	65	Refreshments	PC25-26.62	868			0.00			2.78			2.78	99.61			
24.9.25	66	Vehicle bulb	PC25-26.63	869			0.00	0.56			2.79		3.35	96.26			
25.9.25	67	Refreshments	PC25-26.64	870			0.00			4.45			4.45	91.81			
25.9.25	68	Refreshments	PC25-26.65	871			0.00	0.52		1.45		2.58	4.55	87.26			
1.10.25	69	Refreshments	PC25-26.66	872			0.00			1.39			1.39	85.87			
2.10.25	70	Refreshments	PC25-26.67	873			0.00			1.65			1.65	84.22			
6.10.25	71	Refreshments	PC25-26.68	874			0.00			1.45			1.45	82.77			
8.10.25	72	Tools	PC25-26.69	875			0.00	10.00			49.98		59.98	22.79			
8.10.25	73	Cash withdrawal	-	-	100.00		100.00						0.00	122.79			
15.10.25	74	Vehicle bulb	PC25-26.70	876			0.00	4.84			24.14		28.98	93.81			
15.10.25	75	Refreshments	PC25-26.71	877			0.00			1.65			1.65	92.16			
16.10.25	76	Refreshments	PC25-26.72	878			0.00			1.19			1.19	90.97			
20.10.25	77	Refreshments	PC25-26.73	879			0.00			1.20			1.20	89.77			
22.10.25	78	Refreshments	PC25-26.74	880			0.00			5.88			5.88	83.89			
22.10.25	79	Refreshments	PC25-26.75	881			0.00			1.80			1.80	82.09			
28.10.25	80	Batteries	PC25-26.76	882			0.00	0.73				3.62	4.35	77.74			
30.10.25	81	Tools	PC25-26.77	883			0.00	2.66			13.32		15.98	61.76			
30.10.25	82	Refreshments	PC25-26.78	884			0.00			1.45			1.45	60.31			

Chair's initials

797	20.10.2025	£19,200.00	£0.00	£19,200.00	Salaries	Staff Costs	Salaries, HMRC and NEST	2509/296
841	23.10.2025	£6,932.07	£0.00	£6,932.07	HMRC PAYE	Staff Costs	Salaries, HMRC and NEST	
818	21.10.2025	£2,900.00	£580.00	£3,480.00	Survey	General Project Budget	Projects	2509/342
847	24.10.2025	£2,025.72	£0.00	£2,025.72	Pensions	Staff Costs	Salaries, HMRC and NEST	2510/372
826	21.10.2025	£1,359.00	£271.80	£1,630.80	Festoon & Festive Lighting	Environment & Maintenance	Festive & Festoon Lighting	2510/380
808	10.10.2025	£1,339.50	£0.00	£1,339.50	Training	Staff Costs	Training	
770	08.10.2025	£1,322.04	£0.00	£1,322.04	Insurance	Insurances	General	
809	10.10.2025	£815.50	£0.00	£815.50	Training	Staff Costs	Training	
765	06.10.2025	£705.60	£141.12	£846.72	Scribe Bookings Renewal	ICT	Scribe - Bookings	
764	06.10.2025	£574.00	£114.80	£688.80	Smart Access Entry Maintenance Contract	Tennis Courts	Gate Fees	
824	21.10.2025	£511.92	£102.39	£614.31	Council Machinery & Equipment	Council Machinery & Equipment	Truck Maintenance	
783	08.10.2025	£455.00	£91.00	£546.00	Cleaning CPT	CPT	Cleaning	
733	01.10.2025	£430.76	£0.00	£430.76	Room rental	Administration	Room Rental	
827	21.10.2025	£395.00	£79.00	£474.00	Audit Services	Administration	Audit & Data Protection	
782	08.10.2025	£375.00	£75.00	£450.00	Training	Staff Costs	Training	
759	06.10.2025	£284.70	£56.94	£341.64	IT contract	ICT	Cloudy IT	
801	14.10.2025	£209.65	£41.93	£251.58	Fuel	Council Machinery & Equipment	Fuel	
810	10.10.2025	£202.50	£40.50	£243.00	Electrical work	Northam Hall	Maintenance	
823	21.10.2025	£200.00	£40.00	£240.00	The Link	Community	Newsletters & Communication	2505/053
781	08.10.2025	£187.50	£37.50	£225.00	Refreshments	Community	Remembrance	
746	03.10.2025	£186.01	£0.00	£186.01	Photocopier lease	Administration	Photocopier Lease	
848	24.10.2025	£145.40	£29.08	£174.48	Refreshments	Twinning	Attendance at Other Events	
828	21.10.2025	£130.00	£26.00	£156.00	Alarm maintenance	Administration	Town Hall - Alarm	
798	16.10.2025	£117.72	£5.89	£123.61	Electricity Account	Northam Hall	Electric	
762	06.10.2025	£112.35	£22.47	£134.82	Payroll	Staff Costs	Payroll Processing Fees	
763	06.10.2025	£111.94	£22.39	£134.33	Copier Charges	Administration	Photocopier Fees	
780	08.10.2025	£102.96	£0.00	£102.96	Community Centre Water	Comm Centre Toilet	Water	
Totals		£41,331.84	£1,777.81	£43,109.65				

Chair's initials



One member of the public left at this point 8:00pm

2511/472 To consider the May Fair working group report

It was noted that the May Fair would take place on the 2nd May 2026, that the cost of stalls cost would not be increased this year, that the programme would be a pull-out centre-spread in the Link magazine rather than a larger booklet and that the event could be advertised in Tidal magazine at a cost of £270 for a full page. New banners were needed and would cost approximately £750 for 15 2m x 1m banners.

Entertainers:

Bideford Youth Pipe Band	(Parade and 20-minute performance)
Punch and Judy Show	(Two 30-minute performances)
Bubbles the Pixie	(Parade, Two 30-minute performances, and two walkabouts)
Torrige Elite Majorettes	(Parade and one 30-minute performance)
Martial Arts Display	(One 30-minute performance)
Superheroes	(Parade, Two 20-minute walkabouts, and two 20-minute superhero academy sessions (Characters: Captain America, Catwoman, Superman, Rogue))
Appledore Band	(One 45-minute performance in the Square)
Exmoor Zoo	(All day)
Dog Show	(All day, on Bone Hill)

Total cost quoted as £2,883 (including a best in show trophy for the Dog Show).

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

Action point: Book the acts and carry out the other actions as indicated.

One member of the public left at this point 8:15pm

2511/473 To consider updating the Mayor's Chain

Cllr Himan proposed that the Council update the current chain and earmark funds to purchase a new chain in due course. This was seconded by Cllr Hodson.

Cllr Edwards proposed that the Council retire its older chain and purchase a new chain, this was seconded by Cllr Sawyer.

Cllr Himan's proposal was voted on first and it was **resolved** to update the current chain, at a quoted cost of £2,660 agreeing to use the general projects budget for the cost over the budgeted £2,600, and to earmark sufficient funds (£1,300 per year, to account for inflation and other cost increases) in each of the next five budgets (2026-27, 2027-28, 2028-29, 2029-30 & 2030-31) to purchase a new chain in due course.

Proposed: Cllr Himan, Seconded: Cllr Hodson (majority in favour)

The proposal having been passed, Cllr Edwards' proposal was not put to the vote.

Action point: Arrange for the work to be carried out on the Chains.

Cllr Bell left at this point 8:25pm

2511/474 To receive a verbal update from the Pavilion Working Group

The Parks & Buildings Manager's reported that he was in the final stages of drafting a report to put before the Council in December 2025, outlining the cost of engaging a professional to advise the Council on the cost and benefits of the various ways forward.

Action point: Prepare the report.

Chair's initials

2511/475 To receive an update on and consider the procurement process for a MUGA at Westward Ho! Park

It was **resolved** to proceed with the MUGA project, making use of up to £10,000 of the budgeted funds and elect a tender evaluation panel with 4 members.

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

Action point: elect a 4-person tender evaluation panel at the December 2025 meeting.

2511/476 To consider the cost of planting hanging baskets and planters in 2026

It was **resolved** to instruct the Council's current provider to plant and grow on the Council's hanging baskets and provide plants for the Council's other planters at a total estimated cost of £7,975

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

2511/477 To consider using the Council Chamber for all Council and committee meetings

It was **resolved** to use the Council Chamber for all Council and Committee meetings.

Proposed: Cllr Himan, Seconded: Cllr Hodson (all in favour)

There being no further business, the meeting close at 8:50pm

Signed _____ Dated _____

Chair's initials

Cllr Whittaker

I attended the latest meeting of the Harbour Board during the past few weeks; it's always an interesting meeting. The range of its interest and responsibilities are wide ranging, so the following provides a small flavour of recent activities. During the last quarter there has been 8 Ship movements, two of which were discharged over a spring tide something that hasn't happened in the last ten years. Some dredging has been done to excavate and level the commercial berths in Bideford, and the Pilot Boat has undertaken crew training. During October one of the Houseboats called emergency services because the incoming tide was flooding her living room, happily the Fire Service attended and pumped the boat out. Finally, the Crown Estate is looking for assistance to survey the number of vessels moored throughout the river without permission as it wants to create a voluntary register.

There is an idea being considered which has been taken to Bideford Town Council and recently approved to establish a Harbour Trust. This proposal has to come before Northam Town Council, which I am sure will happen sooner rather than later now. I am just raising this issue as one about which a great deal of information will need to be circulated to NTC Cllrs before much longer.

Not the happiest thing to report back is that I attended both Rev John Ewington and Mrs Pam Biggs Funerals. Rev Ewington was a dearly loved local Vicar based for some years in Appledore and even after retirement was regularly called upon to officiate at many local resident's funerals, he did in fact take my own Mother's Funeral Service. Former Cllr Mrs Pam Biggs, who was also an Alderman of Northam and had in the past served on all three Councils, County, District and Town. She was also well known as a huge supporter of the Burton at Bideford, a commitment she maintained over many years. She is sadly missed by all who knew her.

I attended the short TDC Remembrance Service at Riverbank House and of course attended the service held at St Margaret's Church on Sunday the 9th of November.

It was the Bideford and District Archives AGM last evening; I attended to represent TDC as usual. The Organisation celebrated another successful year although it always has to be careful when managing its finances. However, that said having set aside some funding over time it was finally able to replace 4 PC's this year, this was a very welcome improvement to its capabilities IT wise. The number of active volunteers remains at around the 25 mark which means that there is usually at least seven people busy during each of the three days that the Archives are open. As well as the work the volunteers usually undertake there are often enquiries made either in person or by email. These range from enquiries from local people interested in a property or asking about family members/businesses to those from farther afield from people when researching their ancestors. One of the volunteers Debbie Halesworth has recently developed a History Walk around Westward Ho! This has been very well received, and there is another one if anyone's interested taking place this Friday morning. Meeting by the Holy Trinity Church at 1.30 and all being well I hope to join it.

Cllr Jane Whittaker

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

Chair's initials

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