

Northam Town Council – Minutes of the Parks and Recreation committee meeting held 21st January 2026 at 6.30pm in the Town Hall, Windmill Lane, Northam.

Present: Cllrs Peter Hames (Chair), Barry Edwards, Claire Hodson, Sam Newman-McKie, Niki Tait and the Mayor, Cllr Louis Bach (ex-officio).

In attendance: Ian Rawle – Parks & Buildings Manager.

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

Barbara Potts – Volunteer Gardeners (Westward Ho! Park).

2601/563 To receive and approve apologies for absence, in accordance with Local Government Act 1972 s85(1)

Cllr Whittaker and Cllr Bell apologised, the reasons for which were accepted.

2601/564 Chair's Announcements

The Chair made no announcements.

The Parks and Buildings Manager updated the Committee on the following matters:

The swing chain at the single bay swings at Westward Ho! Playpark is showing excessive wear, and the maintenance team is in the process of repairing or replacing the affected links.

2601/565 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.

2601/566 To agree the agenda as published

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

Proposed Cllr Bach, **Seconded** Cllr Hodson (all in favour)

2601/567 To confirm as a correct record and sign the minutes of the Parks and Recreation Committee held on 19th November 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 Bach (all in favour)

2601/568 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.

2601/569 To receive an update on actions

The Action table is presented below.

Action		January 2025	March 2025	May 2025	September 2025	November 2025	January 2026
1	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	Awaiting camera location conformation from M&E alarms	Awaiting date of installation by M&E alarms	COMPLETE
2	The WWHO! 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.	Facebook has been used to publish recruitment posters. It is suggested that these are reposted every six weeks to maintain visibility and engagement.	A Facebook post for Volunteers to be posted 20 th November.	COMPLETE

Chair's initials

Action	November 2025	January 2026	February 2026
3. To install wooden post fencing around the grass area and boat behind St Mary's Church on Churchfield Road, to prevent vehicles from parking on the grass	Added to actions	Cannot be completed – DCC advises that bollards or posts must be at least 450mm from the kerb to avoid unlawfully obstructing the footpath. Any vehicle obstruction is a police matter, regardless of existing restrictions. Remove.	
4. To seek legal advice regarding installation of a step at Blackies (Ref: 2507/194 Construction of Steps and improvement of 'desire line' surface at Blackies Footpath	Added to actions	DCC advises that if access and steps are created for public use, they must meet required safety standards and be regularly inspected and maintained. Failure to do so could result in liability if an incident occurs. Public Liability Insurance should be considered. Permission is required from the landowner, and if the access exits onto a road, highway, or public pavement, approval from Highways is also needed. Planning Permission may be required for any structure. Further investigation with insurers/legal/landowner(s) is recommended.	
5. To purchase Beech and Hazel trees (whips) to re-establish the Hedge line/row at Burrough Farm	Added to actions	Whips purchased awaiting delivery.	
6. To replace existing entrance at Lords Meadow	Added to actions	Awaiting posts from supplier.	
7. To repair the current gates at Anchor Park and to investigate other options, including replacement or new gates for the park.	Added to actions	Advice from Navantia UK (Appledore Shipyard). Awaiting parts from supplier.	

Chair's initials

2601/570 To receive a report from the chair of FOTWHOP

Report by Christine Hutchins

Gardeners' Hours

- November: 51.5 hours (6 Volunteers)
- December: 27.5 hours (4 Volunteers)

The receipt of a donation of two-barrel planters was also noted. Councillors commented on how well the park looked, even during the winter months, and expressed their thanks to the volunteers for their continued hard work.

This was **noted** by the Council.

2601/571 To update members on the MUGA Project at Westward Ho!

The Parks and Buildings Manager updated Members on the following matters.

A pre-application response had been received from Torridge District Council officers, confirming that the proposed works fall under permitted development.

The Parks and Buildings Manager and the Clerk also met with the Environmental Protection Officer from Torridge District Council. Discussions included sound mitigation measures, consultation requirements and budget considerations.

This was **noted** by the Council.

2601/572 To update members on the community orchard and wildflower area in Anchor Park, Appledore 2511/458

The Parks and Buildings Manager updated Members on the following points:

- The event has been moved to 10:00am on Friday 23rd January, with staggered groups from the schools.
- The maintenance team will assist in ensuring the children can safely access the park.
- The event will be attended by Appledore School and St. Margaret's School.
- Donations received for the event include an apple tree, herbs, strawberries and blueberries.

This was **noted** by the Council.

2601/573 To connect the Tarmac/wetpour path to the play area at Lords Meadow

The Parks and Buildings Manager briefed Members on the proposal to connect the existing tarmac/wetpour path to the play area at Lords Meadow. Members were advised that the estimated cost of the works would be within £500, covering the purchase of MOT Type 1 sub-base, concrete and black wetpour, and that the works would be undertaken in-house by the maintenance team. It was **resolved** that the path extension be approved at a cost of up to £500.

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

Action Point: Complete works within Budget.

2601/574 To replace damaged and diseased Silver Birch trees at Lords Meadow

Members were advised that three Silver Birch trees are showing signs of disease or possible failure, including dead limbs and crown dieback. In addition, the Silver Birch located at the Diddywell Lane entrance has been confirmed as dead. Members agreed that the condition of the trees should be investigated further with appropriate professionals, including the suitability of Silver Birch trees for the location. It was **resolved** that replacement trees be purchased once the investigation into the suitability and location has been completed, within an approved budget of up to £600.

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

Action Point: *Investigate Suitability and location of the Silver Birchs and replace within the budget of £600.*

2601/575 To hire a temporary PumpTrack for Lords Meadow

The Parks and Buildings Manager updated Members on the cost of hiring a temporary PumpTrack at Lords Meadow over the summer holidays, with the proposed hire period from 3rd August to 28th August. Members were advised that the cost would be £7,800 plus VAT. Following discussion, the Council **voted against** the proposal, stating that the cost was too high.

Members agreed that alternative activities should be explored, including mini Olympics, tug of war, and an obstacle course.

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

Action Point: *To explore and develop alternative summer activities for Lords Meadow, including options such as mini-Olympics, tug of war, and an obstacle course, and to report back to Members with proposals and costings.*

2601/576 To agree a location for a permanent Concrete or fibre glass Pumptrack within the Parish.

The Members considered whether to progress with the installation of a permanent pump track within the Parish. It was agreed to investigate the feasibility and costs of a permanent concrete or fibre-glass/earth composite pump track at Burrough Farm, adjacent to Torridge Leisure Centre. Members also **agreed** that potential funding avenues should be explored, with findings to be reported back to the Council.

Proposed Cllr Newman-McKie, Seconded Cllr Hames (all in favour)

2601/577 To lay (Devon Style) and refill the gaps within the Hegde line at Lords Meadow

Members were advised of the proposal to engage Steve McCulloch to carry out the laying of the Eastern hedgerow at the Kimberley Drive, with support from members of the maintenance team, who have previously received hedge-laying training and are familiar with the required techniques. It was **agreed** that a formal quotation be obtained from Steve McCulloch and presented to Members at a future meeting for consideration.

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

There being no further business the meeting closed at 19:45pm.

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

Chair's initials