

Northam Town Council – Minutes of the Full Council meeting held 4th March 2026 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber, Windmill Lane, Northam.

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

In attendance: Guy Langton (Town Clerk & RFO), Rev Tim Sutton, PC D Ciantar and Hon Alderman S Eastman.

2603/649 Apologies

Cllrs Edwards, Tait and Whittaker submitted their apologies, the reasons for which were approved. Cllr McGeough (Devon County Council) and Cllr K O'Rourke (Torridge District Council) also apologised.

2603/650 To agree the agenda as published.

It was **resolved** to proceed with the agenda, though item 6 would not be heard, the papers had not been circulated in advance of the meeting.
Proposed Cllr Hames, Seconded Cllr Bell (all in favour)

2603/651 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.

2603/652 Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor thanked those that attended his civic dinner on the 13th February, where over £2,000 was raised for the Devon Air Ambulance, his chosen charity. Over £4,000 had been raised through the year.

The Mayor had been invited to the first day of the works to replace the roof at St Margaret's Church, Northam. The Rector, Rev Jules Harris would be leaving the parish in April and it was proposed by Cllr Bach and Seconded by Cllr Newman-McKie that the Council arrange an informal leaving tea for Rev Jules.

Action point: Town Clerk to suggest dates.

2603/653 To confirm and sign the minutes of the Full Council meeting held 28th January 2026

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

2603/654 Public Participation

Hon. Alderman Eastman did not wish to address the Council on this occasion.

2603/655 To receive a report from Devon & Cornwall Police

PC Ciantar attended the meeting and made the following report in relation to crime statistics:

During the month of February 2026, officers covering the areas of Westward Ho!, Northam and Appledore area, responded to 92 logs.

This number is down 21.4% from the same period in 2025 and included, but was not limited to:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| • 13 Public safety and Welfare | • 2 RTC |
| • 5 Domestic related incidents | • 2 Sudden Deaths |
| • 4 Missing Persons | • 1 Burglary |
| • 9 Reports of Violence | • 7 Stalking/Harassment |
| • 1 Criminal Damage | • 5 Sexual Offences |
| • 6 Reports of ASB | • 2 Shoplifting |
| • 8 Road Offences (Not including speeding or Road Traffic Collisions (RTC)) | • 7 Suspicious Incident |

Chair's initials

A large proportion of police incidents were not crime related. Of those which were, some investigations can be progressed through out of court disposals such as Community Resolution, Individuals being reported, or by voluntary interview.

As well as responding to the 92 logs, officers also worked on file building for court, taking witness and victim statements, foot and vehicle patrols, booking in evidence, surveillance, executing warrants, attending court, attending training courses and inputting intelligence onto the system.

PC Ciantar reported that the Police had been working with the owners of Knapp House, who had installed new gates, CCTV cameras on towers and had engaged a security firm to patrol daily. There were ongoing incidents of persons accessing the site and there had been some damage to CCTV cameras. the Owners would be removing the derelict static caravans in an effort to reduce incidents of antisocial behaviour.

The Hotspot funding for Bideford that had been used to increase patrols in Westward Ho! and at Knapp House would cease in the spring 2026, however, the neighbourhood policing team would see the return of a PCSO from maternity leave and the PC that had been undertaking driving courses through the summer of 2025 would also be available.

The Neighbourhood Policing team would be working with Appledore School on a road safety project, which would raise awareness of the issues of speeding and problem parking. The police were working with local schools to identify alternative parking areas to minimize the impact of parents' vehicles at school drop-off and pick up. Cllr Hames raised the point that some parents were idling their vehicles whilst waiting for their children. PC Ciantar would include a request that parents turn engines off whilst waiting for their children, which would reduce emissions.

Cllr Himan brought the problem of anti-social driving along Atlantic Way to PC Ciantar's attention. The vehicles were not being driven too quickly, rather had very loud exhausts, drove in convoy and were not driving safely in the road conditions. This activity was more prevalent in summer months, usually late afternoon and early evening. PC Ciantar advised that Section 59 warnings can be issued for anti-social driving and vehicles. A second offence could lead to the vehicle being impounded.

Cllr Hodson noted the number of stalking / Harassment logs and asked if specialist police teams were taking note and if the numbers were up or down on the previous year. PC Ciantar confirmed specialist teams dealt with such cases but had no comparison to the previous year's figures.

Rev T Sutton left the meeting at this point (7pm)

Cllr Singh noted the large number of fake bank notes that were being passed by people using shops and other businesses. PC Ciantar confirmed that the police were aware and were logging the trend. CCTV images had been requested and would be used to identify offenders.

Cllr Singh also noted the number of people openly using drugs in Westward Ho!. PC Ciantar advised that offences should be reported in the usual way and would endeavour to undertake more patrols in the summer season.

Cllr Hodson asked why cyber-crimes were not in the statistics. PC Ciantar advised that such crimes were dealt with by Action Fraud.

The Mayor thanked PC Ciantar for attending the Council meeting, for his detailed report and responses to member's questions.

Chair's initials

PC Ciantar left the meeting at this point (7.15pm)

2603/656 To receive a report from the Devon County Councillor

Cllr McGeough tendered his apologies and would submit a written report in due course.

2603/657 To receive reports from Torridge District Members

Cllr O'Rourke tendered her apologies.

Cllr Hames reported that Torridge members had had a productive meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner at which she had promoted the HotSpots initiative and urged all councils to have a Police-Councillor Advocate.

2603/658 To receive an update regarding Local Government Reorganisation

Local government reorganisation (LGR) proposals for Devon are now out for consultation, with five alternative models for consideration.

These proposals will shape how services are delivered, how decisions are made, and how parish and town councils are engaged in the future structure of local government.

The deadline for submissions was 26 March.

DALC encouraged all member councils to:

Review the proposals

- Discuss LGR at a formal council meeting
- Engage residents through surveys, public meetings or newsletters
- Consider how each proposal:
 - o Recognises parish identity
 - o Enables effective partnership
 - o Clarifies service delivery
 - o Supports community engagement
- Submit the Council's position before 26 March
- Share the Council's submission with DALC to help inform the collective position.

Northam Town Council did not wish to meet to discuss LGR and form a council-wide position but encouraged members to complete the consultation themselves.

2603/659 To consider the action point update

The action points were received as below.

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 will be drawn up. ONGOING
2512/520 Libraries Unlimited Consultation	Write to the relevant officer and cabinet member at Devon County Council requesting Northam Library be re-banded to a band C and to request the criteria used to place branches in the various bands. COMPLETE
2512/525 Speedwatch	Advise the Police of the intention to recommence the SpeedWatch initiative in the Parish and of the volunteer coordinator. A total of four volunteers needed, the coordinator plus three. Adverts to be placed on the Council's website and social media now the Christmas and New Year break is over. ONGOING

Chair's initials

2512/525 Speed surveys	Approach the County Council and private sector providers of traffic and speed surveys for quotations. Request for quotations sent. The Town Clerk had heard back from DCC but had yet to read the communication in detail. No quotations received despite following up. The Environment & Maintenance Committee has purchased two MVSIDs, which are able to record speed and traffic numbers. The requirement for 3 rd -party surveys may therefore be removed. COMPLETE
2601/551 Pension arrangements for Council Staff	Prepare a report and consultation proposition for staff regarding the Local Government Pension Scheme. ONGOING
2601/592 Review use of the 'back room'	The task-and-finish group met and made a recommendation. On the agenda. COMPLETE
2601/593 DCC Grass Cutting agreement	Agreement signed and returned to DCC. COMPLETE
2601/595 Civic regalia	The Mayor's and Deputy Mayor's chains and spare links have been sent to the Council's regalia supplier. Receipt has been confirmed. Their return is awaited, expected to be approx. 5 weeks. COMPLETE

2603/660 To receive the Clerk's report

On 31st January 2026 the Council's balances were:

Petty Cash	£80.84	no interest	
Hinkley & Rugby Building Society	£230,400	interest rate is 1.75%	holding account for general expenditure
Cambridge & Counties Bank (31-day)	£97,358.47	interest rate is 3.25%	Earmarked Reserves
Nationwide (Business 95-day saver)	£96,864.49	interest rate is 3.35%	General and Earmarked Reserves
Cambridge Building Society	£9,281.88	interest rate is 1.75%	Tennis Reserves
Coop Bank (current account)	£12,587.67	no interest	General expenditure

Total cash in hand (SCRIBE) £446,573.35

Petty Cash: A screen shot of the petty cash cashbook is presented, showing the items on which the Council has spent petty cash in the month. The financial regulations seek to maintain a balance of £100 in Petty Cash.

Chair's initials

Petty Cash				2025-26 Northam TC Petty Cash													
Details				Income			Expenditure						Balance at start of FY				
Date	Trans action	Description	Ref	Petty Cash Withdrawal	Carry forward	Total in	VAT	Events	Refresh ments	Maint enance	Office expenses	Total out	£	13.45	Reconciliation balance		
5.1.26	108	Refreshments	PC25-26.101			0.00			1.39			1.39	101.86		£ 101.86		
5.1.26	109	Refreshments	PC25-26.101a			0.00			1.45			1.45	100.41				
13.1.26	109	Refreshments	PC25-26.102			0.00			1.35			1.35	99.06				
14.1.26	110	Photography (Councillors)	PC25-26.103			0.00					10.00	10.00	89.06				
20.1.26	111	Refreshments	PC25-26.104			0.00			1.39			1.39	87.67				
20.1.26	112	Refreshments	PC25-26.105			0.00			1.45			1.45	86.22				
29.1.26	113	Disinfectant (CPT shower head)	PC25-26.106			0.00	0.58			2.91		3.49	82.73				
29.1.26	114	Refreshments	PC25-26.107			0.00			1.89			1.89	80.84		£ 80.84		
Number of transactions	117			690.00		690.00	51.46	65.06	165.22	258.90	61.97	602.61	87.39		Difference between receipts and payments		

Tennis courts:

The gross volume of sales in January 2026 was £80.00. After fees, the Council has received £76.66. Since 1st April 2025, the Council has received £5,508.84 for tennis court memberships and bookings.

Payments: Between 1st and 31st December 2025, the council made 48 payments of £100 or more totalling £57,788.19 (exVAT), appended to these minutes, and made a total of 141 payments totalling £59,242.83 (exVAT).

Receipts: Between 1st and 31st January 2026, the Council received 115 payments, totalling £8,463.63 (exVAT).

2603/661 To consider Adopting the public defibrillator at Appledore Lifeboat station

It was **resolved** to adopt the public defibrillator at the Lifeboat Station, Appledore and commend the Town Council for its provision of community defibrillators across its parish.

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

Action point: Advise the Coxswain of the Council’s decision to adopt the public defibrillator at the lifeboat station.

2603/662 To consider the schedule of proposed modifications collated following the receipt of the Examiner’s Report on the Northam Neighbourhood Plan

It was **resolved** to agree an extension of the date for making the Neighbourhood Plan to the 22nd June 2026, to align with the Planning Authority’s Full Council meetings (pursuant to Reg 18A of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012), and to delegate the work to prepare the amendments following receipt of the Examiner’s report, the recommendations within which the Council adopts in full, to the NNP Working Group, overseen by the Planning and Development Committee.

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

Action point: Advise the Planning Authority and arrange a meeting of the Working Group.

2603/663 To consider the recommendation of the task-and-finish group regarding the Council’s continued lease for 2 rooms at the Windmill Lane offices

It was **resolved** to continue the lease for the two rooms (G14 & G15) at the Windmill Lane Offices, extended to five years (with a rent review at three years) and drawn up costed plans for room changes for consideration by the Council in due course.

Proposed: Cllr Hodson, Seconded: Bell (majority in favour, two against)

Chair’s initials

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2603/664 To consider and adopt the below listed controlled documents recommended by committee

- i. **CCTV policy v0.1**
- ii. **Honorary Freeman and Honorary Freewomen policy v0.1**

It was **resolved** to adopt both policies as presented, suspending the Community Champions scheme until further notice.

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

2603/665 To consider undertaking a survey not the need and support for a bus route serving the new developments off Bay View, Buckleigh and Cornborough Roads

The Council considered the relative merits of doing a survey against preparing a more general information leaflet for circulation and publication.

It was **resolved** to prepare a general information leaflet, with a link to a simple survey regarding public transport, for delivery by volunteers.

Proposed: Cllr Newman-McKie, Seconded: Lo-Vel (majority in favour, 2 abstained)

2603/666 To consider the request for an extraordinary grant by the Crimestoppers Trust

It was **resolved** to agree to the £200 grant request from Crimestoppers Trust from the Council’s ‘ad hoc and emergency’ grant budget.

Proposed: Cllr Newman-McKie, Seconded: Lo-Vel (majority in favour, 2 abstained)

Action point: send the Crimestoppers Trust the grant approval paperwork and invite them to the Grants Awards evening.

There being no further business, the meeting close at 8:45pm

Signed _____ Dated _____

Chair’s initials

Column1	Date	Net	VAT	Total	Description	Cost Centre	Cost Code	Minute Ref
1146	06.01.2026	£155.01	£31.00	£186.01	Photocopier lease	Administration	Photocopier Lease	
1147	06.01.2026	£110.00	£0.00	£110.00	Equipment Protection	Administration	Office Equipment	
1153	06.01.2026	£213.75	£42.75	£256.50	Festoon & Festive Lighting	Environment & Maintenance	Festive & Festoon Lighting	
1154	06.01.2026	£284.70	£56.94	£341.64	IT contract	ICT	Cloudy IT	
1155	06.01.2026	£400.00	£0.00	£400.00	Cleaning Northam Hall	Northam Hall	Cleaning	
1156	06.01.2026	£335.00	£67.00	£402.00	Civic.ly Subscription	ICT	Website	
1157	06.01.2026	£455.00	£91.00	£546.00	Cleaning CPT	CPT	Cleaning	
1158	06.01.2026	£7,134.38	£0.00	£7,134.38	Election Fees	Elections	Election Costs	
1159	06.01.2026	£7,562.74	£0.00	£7,562.74	Election Fees	Elections	Election Costs	
1160	06.01.2026	£183.87	£36.77	£220.64	Copier Charges	Administration	Photocopier Fees	
1165	07.01.2026	£430.76	£0.00	£430.76	Room rental	Administration	Room Rental	
1174	08.01.2026	£1,307.47	£0.00	£1,307.47	Insurance	Insurances	General	2405/027
1185	09.01.2026	£112.35	£22.47	£134.82	Payroll	Staff Costs	Payroll Processing Fees	
1186	09.01.2026	£360.00	£0.00	£360.00	Mayor's Charity event	Members	Civic Reception	
1194	13.01.2026	£106.85	£5.34	£112.19	Electricity - Pavilion	Pavilion & CPT	Electric	
1195	13.01.2026	£196.20	£9.81	£206.01	Electricity Account	Northam Hall	Electric	
1196	13.01.2026	£102.46	£20.49	£122.95	Fuel	Council Machinery & Equipment	Fuel	
1198	13.01.2026	£136.66	£27.33	£163.99	Wildflowers	Parks & Recreation	Anchor Park	2511/458
1199	13.01.2026	£290.00	£0.00	£290.00	Trees	Parks & Recreation	Anchor Park	2511/458
1202	15.01.2026	£520.10	£26.00	£546.10	Gas Account	Northam Hall	Gas	
1203	14.01.2026	£101.00	£0.00	£101.00	Plants	Parks & Recreation	Anchor Park	
1217	16.01.2026	£137.14	£27.43	£164.57	Repairs	Parks & Recreation	Lords Meadow	
1218	16.01.2026	£200.00	£40.00	£240.00	The Link	Community	Newsletters & Communication	2505/053
1220	16.01.2026	£1,664.28	£332.86	£1,997.14	CCTV	Parks & Recreation	Westward Ho! Park	2508/280
1223	19.01.2026	£19,200.00	£0.00	£19,200.00	Salaries	Staff Costs	Salaries, HMRC and NEST	2601/560
1226	20.01.2026	£148.75	£29.75	£178.50	Legionella Risk Assesment	Comm Centre Toilet	Health & Safety	
1226	20.01.2026	£148.75	£29.75	£178.50	Legionella Risk Assesment	CPT	Health & safety	
1226	20.01.2026	£148.75	£29.75	£178.50	Legionella Risk Assesment	Northam Hall	Health & Safety	
1226	20.01.2026	£148.75	£29.75	£178.50	Legionella Risk Assesment	Pavilion & CPT	Health & Safety	
1235	21.01.2026	£996.00	£199.20	£1,195.20	Scribe Accounts Renewal	ICT	Scribe - Accounts	
1238	21.01.2026	£2,161.64	£0.00	£2,161.64	Pensions	Staff Costs	Salaries, HMRC and NEST	2512/507
1239	21.01.2026	£470.56	£0.00	£470.56	Pensions	Staff Costs	Salaries, HMRC and NEST	2512/507
1244	23.01.2026	£7,266.92	£0.00	£7,266.92	HMRC PAYE	Staff Costs	Salaries, HMRC and NEST	2508/252
1249	23.01.2026	£1,637.50	£327.50	£1,965.00	Trailer	General Project Budget	Projects	2601/562
1256	26.01.2026	£165.00	£0.00	£165.00	Highways Application	General Project Budget	Projects	
1266	28.01.2026	£168.33	£33.67	£202.00	Wildflowers	Parks & Recreation	Lords Meadow	
1266	28.01.2026	£168.32	£33.67	£201.99	Wildflowers	Parks & Recreation	Anchor Park	
1267	28.01.2026	£100.80	£20.16	£120.96	Footpath work	Environment & Maintenance	Footpaths	
1268	28.01.2026	£1,499.17	£299.83	£1,799.00	Notice Boards	Notice Boards	Town Hall	2507/224
1268	28.01.2026	£914.17	£182.83	£1,097.00	Notice Boards	Notice Boards	Orchard Hill	2507/224
1268	28.01.2026	£848.33	£169.67	£1,018.00	Notice Boards	Notice Boards	Appledore	2507/224
1268	28.01.2026	£674.33	£134.87	£809.20	Notice Boards	Notice Boards	Maintenance	2507/224
1269	28.01.2026	£10,500.00	£2,100.00	£12,600.00	Mower	Council Machinery & Equipment	Large Machinery	2601/561
1274	30.01.2026	£573.06	£114.61	£687.67	Machinery Maintenance	Council Machinery & Equipment	Machinery Maintenance	
1275	30.01.2026	£375.18	£75.04	£450.22	Trailer	Council Machinery & Equipment	Truck Maintenance	
1276	30.01.2026	£400.00	£0.00	£400.00	Cleaning Northam Hall	Northam Hall	Cleaning	
1277	30.01.2026	£103.42	£20.69	£124.11	Copier Charges	Administration	Photocopier Fees	
47 Total		£71,317.45	£4,667.93	£75,985.38				

