

**Northam Town Council – Minutes of the Full Council meeting held 25<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber, Windmill Lane, Northam.**

Present: Cllrs Bell, Bach (Mayor), Hames, Hodson, Horrocks, Leather, Newman-McKie, Sawyer, Singh and Tait

In attendance: Guy Langton (Town Clerk & RFO), Rev Jules Harris, and N Arnold (co-opted member of the NNP Working Group) and seven members of the public.

**2603/710 Apologies**

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

**2603/711 To agree the agenda as published.**

It was **resolved** to proceed with the agenda, as published.  
Proposed Cllr Bach, Seconded Cllr Bell (all in favour)

**2603/712 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.

**2603/713 Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor announced that his engagements continue, attending the Bideford Manor Court and opening the revitalised Devon Hospitals Charity shop in Westward Ho!

The Deputy Mayor announced she and her consort had represented this Council at a fundraising quiz for the Ilfracombe RNLI.

The Town Clerk advised that he had a letter for each member of the council from a resident of Appledore, which would be circulated at the end of the meeting.

**2603/714 To confirm and sign the minutes of the Full Council meeting held 4<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

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

**2603/715 To receive and adopt the reports of minutes and resolutions contained therein from Committees and Sub-Committees**

The below listed minutes were received and adopted.

- Finance & Human Resources 14<sup>th</sup> January and 11<sup>th</sup> February 2026
- Planning & Development 15<sup>th</sup> January, 5<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> February 2026
- Environment & Maintenance 15<sup>th</sup> October 2025
- Review 6<sup>th</sup> November 2025 and 12<sup>th</sup> January 2026

**2603/716 Public Participation**

One member of the public addressed the Council on two matters, both of which were on the agenda. He voiced his support for the Northam Neighbourhood Plan and urged the members to approve submitting it to Torrige District Council for adoption and referendum. He also provided the members with an update on the Friends of Northam Square Hall's actions and progress with grant applications., He announced that the owners had rejected the Friends Group's first offer and urged the council to award the group a grant when it was to be considered later in the agenda.

*Rev J Harris left the meeting at this point (6:45pm)*

Chair's initials

**2603/717 To receive a report from Devon & Cornwall Police**

The Police were unable to send a representative. This council had a Police Councillor Advocate and requested she ask for better engagement by the Police with this council. Cllr Hodson, the Police Councillor Advocate reported that though meetings were scheduled quarterly, a number had been cancelled.

It was **resolved** to write to the Police and Crime Commissioner to request meetings are held as scheduled.

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

**Action point: Town Clerk to write to the Police and Crome Commissioner raising this council’s concerns over the cancellation of the Police Councillor Advocate quarterly meetings.**

**2603/718 To receive a report from the Devon County Councillor**

Cllr McGeough tendered his apologies, his written report is appended to these minutes.

**2603/719 To receive reports from Torridge District Members**

Cllr O’Rourke tendered her apologies.

Cllr Hodson reported on her attendance of the Local Councils’ Network (previously District Councils’ Network) where the next phase of Local Government Organisation had been presented by Government. Devon was not in that phase and the expected timescale of June remained.

Cllr Bach reported that the Local Government Association (LGA) had reported that there were national plans to once again allow elected members to contribute to a pension scheme.

**2603/720 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 2026.

**2603/721 To consider the action point update**

The action points were received as below.

<b>1</b>	<b>2508/283</b> 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. <span style="float: right;">ONGOING</span>
<b>2</b>	<b>2512/520</b> 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. <span style="float: right;">COMPLETE</span>
<b>3</b>	<b>2512/525</b> 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. And include in the next edition of the Link magazine. <span style="float: right;">ONGOING</span>

Chair’s initials

<b>4</b>	<b>2601/551</b> Pension arrangements for Council Staff	Prepare a report and consultation proposition for staff regarding the Local Government Pension Scheme. ONGOING
<b>5</b>	<b>2603/652</b> Suggest dates for farewell for Rev Jules	Arranged for Tuesday 31 <sup>st</sup> March at 3pm. COMPLETE
<b>6</b>	<b>2603/661</b> Adopt the Defibrillator at the Lifeboat Station in Appledore	Coxswain advised of Council's decision. COMPLETE
<b>7</b>	<b>2603/662</b> Prepare the final version of the Northam Neighbourhood Plan	On the agenda. COMPLETE
<b>8</b>	<b>2603/663</b> Continue to lease G14/G15 at Windmill Lane	The landlord has been advised. COMPLETE
<b>9</b>	<b>2603/665</b> Revise the council services leaflet	To be started. COMPLETE
<b>10</b>	<b>2603/666</b> Advise Crimestoppers of their successful grant application	Crimestoppers have been advised of their successful request and have been invited to the Grant Award evening. COMPLETE

**2603/722 To receive the Clerk's report**

On 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026 the Council's balances were:

Petty Cash	£54.55	no interest	
Hinkley & Rugby Building Society	£183,784	interest rate is 1.75%	holding account for general expenditure
Cambridge & Counties Bank (31-day)	£97,601.27	interest rate is 3.25%	Earmarked Reserves
Nationwide (Business 95-day saver)	£97,102.27	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)	£5,717.36	no interest	General expenditure

**Total cash in hand (SCRIBE) £393,541.33**

The bank reconciliation to be signed by the Chair is presented overleaf.

**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										Balance at start of FY		Reconciliation balance
Details				Income			Expenditure						Balance at start of FY		Reconciliation balance	
Date	Transaction	Description	Ref	Petty Cash Withdrawal	Carry forward	Total in	VAT	Events	Refreshments	Maintenance	Office expenses	Total out	£	13.45	Reconciliation balance	
2.2.26	115	Cash withdrawal	-	20.00		20.00						0.00	100.84			
4.2.26	116	Refreshments	PC25-26.108			0.00			1.20			1.20	99.64			
5.2.26	117	Batteries	PC25-26.109			0.00	0.73				3.62	4.35	95.29			
5.2.26	118	Refreshments	PC25-26.110			0.00			1.89			1.89	93.40			
6.2.26	119	Refreshments	PC25-26.111			0.00			3.99			3.99	89.41			
9.2.26	120	Trickle vent	PC25-26.112			0.00	0.56			2.80		3.36	86.05			
10.2.26	121	Refreshments	PC25-26.113			0.00			3.98			3.98	82.07			
10.2.26	122	Refreshments	PC25-26.114			0.00			1.45			1.45	80.62			
11.2.26	123	Refreshments	PC25-26.115			0.00			1.20			1.20	79.42			
16.2.26	124	Town Hall Keys	PC25-26.116			0.00	1.50				7.50	9.00	70.42			
16.2.26	125	Refreshments	PC25-26.117			0.00			2.98			2.98	67.44			
19.2.26	126	Town Hall Keys	PC25-26.118			0.00	1.67				8.33	10.00	57.44			
23.2.26	127	Refreshments	PC25-26.119			0.00			1.39			1.39	56.05			
25.2.26	128	Refreshments	PC25-26.120			0.00			1.50			1.50	54.55	£	54.55	
Number of transactions	131			735.00		735.00	55.92	65.06	184.80	261.70	81.42	648.90	86.10		Difference between receipts and payments	

### Tennis courts:

The gross volume of sales in January 2026 was £155.00. After fees, the Council has received £147.00. Since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025, the Council has received £5,665.84 for tennis court memberships and bookings.

**Payments:** Between 1<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026, the council made 38 payments of £100 or more totalling £60,994.21 (exVAT) (appended to these minutes), a total of 139 payments, and received £7.68 in refunds, totalling £62,890.46 (exVAT).

**Receipts:** Between 1<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026, the Council received 104 payments, totalling £5,924.43 (ex VAT), plus a VAT refund of £7,665.50, detailed below.

### 2603/723 To note the initial data collected by the Council's two operational Mobile Vehicle Speed Indicator Devices

It was noted that the Environment & Maintenance committee would receive a more detailed report at each of its future meetings as a standing item. The data would also be shared with Devon County Council and the Neighbourhood Policing Team.

**Action point: Include as a standing item on future Environment & Maintenance committee agendas.**

### 2603/724 To consider:

- a) presenting the final version of the Northam Neighbourhood Plan to the District Council for adoption, and
- b) making plans for the referendum

It was noted that the referendum must take place no less than 56 days from the date of the District Council adopting the NNP. This referendum is undertaken in the same way as any other election managed by the District Council, using postal and proxy voting (etc.) and the usual polling places.

The District Council may not undertake any undue publicity of the NNP as part of the referendum. This Council and its community may, however, do so. The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012 prescribe the detail of the process. This

Chair's initials

Council may incur expenses in publicising the referendum, to a statutory limit of £2,362 + 0.059p/elector:

(Appledore: 2974+  
 Northam: 4218+  
 WWHo!: 3329+  
 Total (31.12.25):10,521x  
 0.059p  
 £620.74+  
 Base limit: £2,362  
 Maximum: £2,982.74  
 All expenses must be declared.

It was **resolved** to submit the Northam Neighbourhood Plan, amended following examination, to the District Council for adoption and then on to referendum.

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

**Action point: Advise the District Council and arrange a meeting of the Working Group.**

**2603/725**

**To consider closing the council for staff training**

It was **resolved** to close the offices on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June and the date of the DALC conference 2026 for staff training (expected to be 7th October) for staff training.

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

**2603/726**

**To consider and adopt the below listed controlled documents recommended by committee**

- i. **Grants Policy v1.1**
- ii. **DBS Policy v0.1**
- iii. **Maternity Scheme (2026.02.26)**

It was **resolved** to adopt the Grants Policy as presented.

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

It was **resolved** to adopt the DBS Policy as presented.

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

It was **resolved** to adopt the Maternity Scheme as presented.

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

**2603/727**

**To consider meeting Cllr Hind and other members of Bideford Town Council to hear that Council's proposals for the Torridge and Taw Trust Port**

It was **resolved** to not meet with Cllr Hind and other members of Bideford Town Council until Cllr Hind had spoken to local people in Appledore, the date of which had yet to be arranged.

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

**2603/728**

**To consider the request for an extraordinary grant by the Friends of Northam Square Hall**

Cllr Leather proposed that the Council earmark £10,000 as a grant to the Friends of Northam Square Hall to assist with any purchase of that Hall. This was seconded by Cllr Singh. There were two votes for the proposal and six votes against, with two abstentions. The motion was not carried.

There being no further business, the meeting close at 7:55pm

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Dated \_\_\_\_\_

Chair's initials

Voucher	Date	Net	VAT	Gross	Description	Cost Centre	Cost Code	Minute
1352	13.02.26	£100.00	£20.00	£120.00	End of year health check	ICT	Scribe - Accounts	
1386	18.02.26	£100.00	£0.00	£100.00	May Fair 2026	Community	May Fair Costs	
1350	13.02.26	£110.00	£22.00	£132.00	Northam Hall	Northam Hall	Maintenance	
1312	06.02.26	£110.92	£22.18	£133.10	Burrough Farm	Environment & Maintenance	Burrough Farm	
1323	10.02.26	£111.21	£5.56	£116.77	Electricity - Pavilion	Pavilion & CPT	Electric	
1294	02.02.26	£112.35	£22.47	£134.82	Payroll	Staff Costs	Payroll Processing Fees	
1293	02.02.26	£120.10	£0.00	£120.10	Plants	Parks & Recreation	Anchor Park	2511/458
1391	19.02.26	£130.48	£26.10	£156.58	Flags	Environment & Maintenance	Bone Hill Memorial	
1351	13.02.26	£135.00	£0.00	£135.00	Repairs	Environment & Maintenance	Bus Shelters	
1353	13.02.26	£135.00	£27.00	£162.00	Training	Training	Training	2602/607
1354	13.02.26	£135.00	£27.00	£162.00	Training	Training	Training	2602/607
1355	13.02.26	£135.00	£27.00	£162.00	Training	Training	Training	2602/607
1326	13.02.26	£139.60	£27.92	£167.52	Fuel	Council Machinery & Equipment	Fuel	
1313	06.02.26	£141.52	£28.30	£169.82	Burrough Farm	Environment & Maintenance	Burrough Farm	
1295	02.02.26	£144.69	£0.00	£144.69	Insurance	Administration	Town Hall - Buildings Insurance	
1405	26.02.26	£170.00	£34.00	£204.00	Mower	Council Machinery & Equipment	Machinery Maintenance	
1356	13.02.26	£190.00	£38.00	£228.00	Electrical work	Pavilion & CPT	Maintenance	
1324	10.02.26	£191.72	£9.59	£201.31	Electricity Account	Northam Hall	Electric	
1357	13.02.26	£240.00	£48.00	£288.00	Computer and software	Planning & Development	NNP	
1296	02.02.26	£284.70	£56.94	£341.64	IT contract	ICT	Cloudy IT	
1367	13.02.26	£316.00	£63.20	£379.20	Mower Repair	Council Machinery & Equipment	Machinery Maintenance	
1297	02.02.26	£335.00	£67.00	£402.00	Civic.ly Subscription	ICT	Pear Mapping	
1358	13.02.26	£338.00	£67.60	£405.60	Truck Maintenance	Council Machinery & Equipment	Truck Maintenance	
1281	02.02.26	£430.76	£0.00	£430.76	Room rental	Administration	Room Rental	
1359	13.02.26	£455.00	£91.00	£546.00	Cleaning CPT	CPT	Cleaning	
1322	10.02.26	£565.43	£113.09	£678.52	Gas Account	Northam Hall	Gas	
1360	13.02.26	£731.12	£146.22	£877.34	Electrical work	Northam Hall	Maintenance	
1314	06.02.26	£832.25	£166.45	£998.70	Training	Training	Training	
1361	13.02.26	£950.00	£190.00	£1,140.00	Burrough Farm	Environment & Maintenance	Burrough Farm	
1320	09.02.26	£1,307.47	£0.00	£1,307.47	Insurance	Insurances	General	2405/027

Chair's initials



Voucher	Date	Net	VAT	Gross	Description	Cost Centre	Cost Code	Minute
1395	24.02.26	£2,485.00	£497.00	£2,982.00	Mayor's Charity event	Members	Civic Reception	
1362	13.02.26	£2,603.00	£520.60	£3,123.60	Finger Post	Environment & Maintenance	Westward Ho! Finger Post	
1407	27.02.26	£2,632.20	£0.00	£2,632.20	Pensions	Staff Costs	Salaries, HMRC and NEST	
1376	18.02.26	£4,793.84	£0.00	£4,793.84	Pensions	Staff Costs	Salaries, HMRC and NEST	2601/560
1400	24.02.26	£5,179.98	£1,036.00	£6,215.98	MSVIDs	Environment & Maintenance	MVSIDs	2602/236
1401	25.02.26	£7,186.26	£0.00	£7,186.26	HMRC PAYE	Staff Costs	Salaries, HMRC and NEST	2508/252
1363	13.02.26	£7,665.61	£0.00	£7,665.61	Election Fees	Elections	Election Costs	
1387	18.02.26	£19,200.00	£0.00	£19,200.00	Salaries	Staff Costs	Salaries, HMRC and NEST	2602/619
Totals:	38	£60,944.21	£3,400.22	£64,344.43				

### Report from Cllr McGeough, Devon County Council:

#### Bayview road bus route.

Devon County Council Transport and Highways development management teams have been working together on the section 106 funding issues related to the local bus services for the new developments. I expect an update Monday the 30th of March from the deputy director- Transport Operations, Environment, and waste.

#### Westward Ho!

Great to see the three new light columns erected opposite the waterfront inn, in keeping with the original style. The new finger post has now been erected near the Tesco express, funded from my locality budget- Cllr Louis Bach (NORTHAM TOWN MAYOR) worked with me to help improve the tired old finger post. Our previous Westward Ho! Councillor, Mr Laws started this initiative in his term of office.

#### Council Tax increase.

The Liberal Democrat leading team, presented their first financial budget, the promise of more funding for Potholes, education, adult social care, children's services- must be taken serious by me. (Central government have not provided the extra money to deliver the funding needed for the residents of Devon) I voted for the Council tax increase at our full budget meeting on DCC, this was very hard to do given the huge strain on our community!

I spoke at the full council, so my comments are in the public domain. To vote against the budget would have been complete madness as my priority is to try my hardest to secure the investment locally for Northam, Westward Ho! and Appledore. I am also hopeful that voting for the increase will help SAVE our staff who work in the Libraries of Appledore and Northam, our local champions who have worked so hard delivering the petition to keep them open, deserve my full support.

#### Local government reorganisation ( LGR )

The cabinet on Devon County Council are due an update imminently from government on the next steps to deliver the new unitary authority and the makeup thereof on how Devon will be carved up...

Chair's initials

I spoke against the new unitary authority, as i believe that the local representation will be lost- it's already hard enough to champion our areas within Torridge to receive fair funding. Who is going to pay for this project from central government, oh, us!! The residents....

My major concerns go out to all the staff within the District Councils, County Council. Who are facing potential loss of employment due to this reorganisation. How will this impact on our locally economy, higher unemployment, less financial investment from staff who spend their hard-earned wages within their Local communities.

The most distasteful part of the new authority will be the financial delight for all residents to carry the current debt of Devon County Council, roughly £580,000,000 to help us transition into the unitary. Starting off on in debt, struggling to deliver services for residents. Government should wipe off all debt connected to Devon County Council before any new authority is formed, Economic downfall.

### **Potholes**

I have been continuing repairing potholes within the Northam Division, also large numbers of repairs have been completed from the contractor. Driving around the areas, you will see many drain covers being re-instated. Patching areas along Bayview Road etc.

I am awaiting the new financial year for further investment to improve the problematic roads within Appledore, Northam and Westward Ho! (a challenge I will not give up on).

Chair's initials