

Northam Town Council – Minutes of the Full Council meeting held 29th July 2026 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber, Windmill Lane, Northam.

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

In attendance: Guy Langton (Town Clerk & RFO), Rev Tim Sutton and one member of the public.

2607/194 Apologies

Cllr Singh submitted his apologies, the reasons for which were approved. Cllr K O'Rourke (Torridge District Council), Cllr D McGeough (Devon County Council) and the representative of Devon and Cornwall Police also apologised.

2607/195 To agree the agenda as published.

It was **resolved** to proceed with the agenda, as published.

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

2607/196 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.

2607/197 Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor reminded members that the Town Clerk had arranged training from a planning specialist on the Council's role in the planning system and the changes to planning nationally. This would be on the 13th August, starting at 6:30pm.

2607/198 To confirm and sign the minutes of the Special meeting of the Council held 1st July 2026

It was **resolved** to approve the minutes, with correction of the typographical error in the agenda item title at minute 2607/129. They would be signed by the Mayor at a later date. Proposed: Cllr Leather, Seconded: Cllr Tait (majority in favour, one abstention – not present at the meeting)

2607/199 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.

- Parks & Recreation 20th May 2026
- Review 5th March 2026
- Finance & Human Resources 10th June 2026
- Planning & Development 11th June 2026

2607/200 Public Participation

The member of the public present did not wish to address the meeting

2607/201 To receive a report from Devon & Cornwall Police

No members of the Neighbourhood Policing team were available to attend the meeting.

2607/202 To receive a report from the Devon County Councillor

Cllr McGough tendered his apologies and did not provide a report.

2607/203 To receive reports from Torridge District Members

Cllr O'Rourke tendered her apologies, no written report was provided.

Cllr Whittaker provided a written report, which is appended to these minutes.

Cllr Hodson reported that she had supported Cllr Leather's motion at TDC relating to foster carers. She had also attended a briefing session on the future of police governance, with Police and Crime Commissioners being replaced in 2028 by Police Boards. Forces could be required to merge as part of that change. She would share the slides once they had been received.

Chair's initials

Cllr Leather reported that he had posted a notice of motion at Torridge District Council proposing that foster carers were exempt from the TDC element of the council tax. This would save the average fostering household approx. £200 per year. This motion was unanimously approved and would be considered in more detail at that council's Community & Resources committee in due course.

Cllr Hames reported that the Torridge District Council Planning Manager had advised that council's members of the effect of the changes to planning policy and methodology nationally. His view was that the changes would limit local democratic influence in planning decisions.

The Mayor thanks members for their reports.

2607/204 To receive a report (if any) from the Police-Councillor Advocate

Cllr Sawyer reported that he had remotely attended a session recently which gave him a clearer understanding of the role and he would be connecting the Neighbourhood Policing team in due course.

Rev Sutton left at this point (6:52pm)

2607/205 To receive an update regarding Local Government Reorganisation

DALC had published the below on its website:

"The Government has now announced its decision on local government reorganisation (LGR) in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay.

The Government has selected the proposal put forward by Plymouth and Exeter city councils, creating four new unitary councils across Devon. The 11 existing councils in the area will be reorganised into four unitary authorities, replacing the current two-tier system of county and district councils.

These new councils will comprise of the current areas of:

- *Exeter City Council, plus 15 parishes from Teignbridge District Council, 28 parishes from East Devon District Council and six parishes from Mid Devon District Council (referred to in the proposal as 'Exeter')*
- *Plymouth City Council, plus 13 parishes from South Hams District Council (referred to in the proposal as 'Plymouth')*
- *Torbay Council, plus 17 parishes from Teignbridge District Council and four from South Hams District Council (referred to in the proposal as 'Torbay')*
- *East Devon District Council (minus the 28 parishes in 'Exeter'),
Mid Devon District Council (minus the six parishes in 'Exeter'),
North Devon Council, South Hams District Council (minus the 13 parishes in 'Plymouth' and the four parishes in 'Torbay',
Teignbridge District Council (minus the 15 parishes in 'Exeter' and 17 parishes in 'Torbay'),
Torridge District Council, and
West Devon Borough Council (referred to in the proposal as 'Devon Coast and Countryside Council')*

What happens next? *The Government's decision marks an important step in the LGR process, but there is still significant work to do before the new unitary councils are established."*

Chair's initials

DALC would continue to monitor developments and keep members updated as more information becomes available.

Cllr Hames voiced his concerns at the change and understood that Devon County Council was considering launching a judicial review.

Cllr Bach noted that elections to the shadow authority would be in May 2027, with Torridge and Devon members having their term extended for 1 year to May 2028, when the new Unitary Authorities would take over.

Cllr Hodson noted that the officers at the district and county councils were now working to establish the best way forward, as were those preparing the detail of the new authorities. It was understood there would be more than 100 members of the Unitary Authority that would be the principal authority for this area.

The Town Clerk reported that the support structures for Parish/Town Councils would also change, though how was to be established and he expected more information to be forthcoming at the DALC Conference in October. He further reported that with Parish/Town elections to be held in 2027, they may be come out of alignment with those of the Unitary authority. If a solution was not provided by central government, election costs would increase for smaller authorities.

2607/206 To consider the action point update

The action points were received as below.

2508/283 Meeting with Northam Lions FC	The Council arranged a working group comprising Cllrs Leather, Edwards Whittaker, Hodson and Newman-McKie, met with Northam Lions FC, on the 28 th July 2026. The draft agreement between the Council and the Club would be presented to the 2 nd September 2026 meeting of this Council. ONGOING
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 have been placed on the Council's website and re-shared fortnightly on social media. Assistance with promotion would be sought. One volunteer had come forward and the Town Clerk was in the process of arranging the training. ONGOING
2601/551 Pension arrangements for Council Staff	Prepare a report and consultation proposition for staff regarding the Local Government Pension Scheme. Initial staff feedback to be sought when the revised staff handbook is presented to staff (planned for week commencing 13th July 2026). ONGOING
0606/067 Write to Devon County Council and bus service provider to express the Council's concern over the different levels of service provided to Appledore and Westward Ho!	No further correspondence from the County Council regarding the cost of extending the bus services serving Appledore. No further correspondence regarding the cost of providing a temporary Night Bus to Appledore. ONGOING

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2607/125 Write to PCC and Inspector to express the Council's concerns and clarify the funding of street wardens.	OPCC and Neighbourhood Policing team Inspector contacted, who responded that Westward Ho! was not considered a Hot Spot for 2026. The Town Clerk would share the email threads with Cllr Sawyer as Police Councillor advocate. ONGOING
2607/130 Continue membership of the CPRE	Membership subscription paid for 2026-27. COMPLETE
2607/131 Funding a defibrillator – Westbourne Terrace	Working with North Devon Plas and the Locality Budget team at DCC, councillor grants have been obtained to cover the full cost of a defibrillator and cabinet. Once funding has confirmed by both bodies, the Council may proceed with the purchase. Installation would be the responsibility of Torridge District Council. ONGOING
2607/132 Members to identify possible locations for taxi ranks in their wards	On the agenda. COMPLETE
2607/133 Award grant to the Bideford & River Torridge Heritage Harbour	Grant paid. COMPLETE
2607/134 Repair the deputy mayor's chain fob (Queen Elizabeth Silver Jubilee medal)	Sent for repair, awaiting return. COMPLETE
2607/135 Make part-payment of members allowances whilst awaiting the outcome of the Remuneration Panel.	Part payment (£1,075 before stoppages/member) made in July 2026. COMPLETE

It was **resolved** to arrange a meeting between this council, the bus company provider(s) and representatives of the County Council to discuss bus routes and service levels.

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

Action point: contact the relevant organisations and representatives to arrange a meeting.

Chair's initials

2607/207 To receive the Clerk's report

On 30th June 2026 the Council's balances were:

Petty Cash	£98.17	no interest	
Hinkley & Rugby Building Society	£300,000	interest rate is 1.65%	Holding account for general expenditure and £50,000 of the General Reserve
Cambridge & Counties Bank (31-day)	£98,501.85	interest rate is 2.72%	General Reserves
Nationwide (Business 95-day saver)	£98,145.04	interest rate is 3.20%	Earmarked Reserves (as per agreed budget: parks, defibrillators, LCWIP, war memorial cleaning, skate park and pavilion renovation reserve)
Cambridge Building Society	£10792.20	interest rate is 1.55%	Tennis Reserves
Coop Bank (current account)	£14331.66	no interest	General expenditure

Total cash in hand (recorded on SCRIBE): £521,868.92

Petty Cash: The council spent £16.98 of petty cash in June 2026, withdrawing £70 to maintain the balance stated in the financials regulation (£100).

Tennis courts: The gross volume of sales in June 2026 was £522.50. After fees, the Council has received £472.37. Since 1st April 2026, the Council has received £1,783.19 for tennis court memberships and bookings.

Payments: Between 1st and 30th June 2026, the council made 129 payments, totalling £70,629.41 (ex VAT). There were 46 payments of £100 or more totalling £64,657.53 (ex VAT) - overleaf.

Receipts: Between 1st and 30th June 2026, the council received 130 payments (some have the same id number - regular hall hire bookings), totalling £5,583.94 (ex VAT).

Comfort break (7:35pm to 7:45pm)

2607/208 To report identified locations for taxi ranks in the three wards for passing to Torridge District Council's Licencing Committee

Cllr Bell proposed that the Council respond saying it could identify no suitable locations in the parish. This was seconded by Cllr Edwards.

Cllr Hodson proposed that the council ask for taxi ranks to be considered for a trial period, this was seconded by Cllr Himan.

The first proposal was voted upon, which was passed by majority, the Mayor using her casting vote (there was one abstention).

The first proposal being approved, Cllr Hodson's proposal was not voted upon.

It was **resolved** to respond to the Chair of the Torridge Licencing committee advising him that the Council could not identify suitable locations.

Proposed: Cllr Bell, Seconded: Cllr Edwards (majority in favour)

Action point: Advise the Chair of the Torridge Licencing committee.

Chair's initials

- 2607/209 To consider joining the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA)**
It was **resolved** to subscribe to the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) at a cost of £114, to be allocated to the General Projects cost centre.
Proposed: Cllr Hames, Seconded: Hodson (all in favour)
Action point: Pay for the membership.
- 2607/210 To consider providing funding towards a survey to progress the cycle/pedestrian link project at Kenwith Valley**
Cllr Hames reported that the District Council has agreed to meet the full £2,500 cost of the survey.
It was **resolved** to not provide any funding, the District Council having agreed to fund the survey.
Proposed: Cllr Edwards, Seconded: Cllr Horrocks (all in favour)
- 2607/211 To receive the costs of sub-dividing rooms G14 & G15 (the back room) and consider undertaking the project**
The Town Clerk reported that a quotation of approx. £1,300 had been received from company C.
Cllr Edwards proposed that the council undertake the project, this was seconded by Cllr Bell. Cllr Bach requested an amendment to the proposal to agree a budget of £7,000. Cllrs Edwards and Bell accepted the amendment.
It was **resolved** to instruct company C and move forward with the project with a budget of £7,000, the cost to be allocated to the General Projects cost centre.
Proposed: Cllr Edwards, Seconded: Cllr Bell (majority in favour)
Action point: Instruct Andy Millar to undertake the work, to include door with a window in the partition and advise the building owner of the planned work.
- 2607/212 To consider drafting a Council responding to the North Devon Council and Torridge District Council scoping consultation**
Cllr Bell proposed that the Council would not submit a joint response, this was seconded by Cllr Tait.
Cllr Hodson proposed that responsibility for submitting a response be delegated to the council's Planning & Development committee. This was seconded by Cllr Whittaker.
The first proposal was voted upon, which was passed by majority.
The first proposal being approved, Cllr Hodson's proposal was not voted upon.
It was **resolved** to not submit a council response but to encourage members to complete the consultation individually.
Proposed: Cllr Bell, Seconded: Tait (majority in favour, 1 abstention)
- 2607/213 To receive an update on the Northam Neighbourhood Plan referendum**
Torridge District Council (TDC) approved the Northam Neighbourhood Plan (NNP) at its meeting in June 2026.
TDC advised that the referendum will be on the 20th August 2026. Postal and Proxy votes would be allowed as normal.

As the qualifying body and 'Campaign Organiser', NTC can advertise the referendum to encourage people to vote (though not whether to cast their vote in favour or against the proposal). The [Neighbourhood Planning \(Referendums\) Regulations 2012](#) define, at section 6, how much can be spent, which is a function of the number of electors plus a base allowance of £2,362.

TDC's Democratic services team have confirmed the combined electorate of Northam is 10,570. The spend is 0.59p/elector. Therefore, the total allowable spend is:

$(10,570 \times 0.059 = £623.63) + £2,362 = \textbf{£2,985.63}$

For 2026/27, NTC budgeted £3,000 for public engagement in relation to the NNP.

The NNP working group, reporting to the Planning & Development Committee, has identified the following strategy for publicising the NNP referendum:

- Full page advert in the Link magazine (paid from NNP budget)
- Roadside banners, to be placed in similar locations as the May Fair banners
- Vehicle banners to be attached to the watering vehicle and the council's two trailers
- Posters and flyers to distribute around shops, businesses and community organisations
- Posters in selected bus stops
- Social media engagement
- NTC website news post
- Press releases to local new outlets – print and radio.

The spending to date totalled £2217.18. As required by regulation 7, the Town Clerk's time has been recorded since approval by TDC as a cost, currently included in the total at £312.93.

There being no further business, the meeting close at 8:35pm

Signed _____ Dated _____

Chair's initials

This Report is very much about my visit to the Record Office in Barnstaple which took place earlier this week and which was absolutely fascinating as usual. I met several people who I knew including the newish Mayor of Great Torrington who said he was blown away by what he was able to see and read. For me, some of the most interesting things were as follows.

- The Journal of William Coppard 1814 - 1815 in which he talks about his visit to the site of the Battle of Waterloo.
- A paper about the Tywardreath Priory when Sir John Cornwall was trying to recover his possession of it .
- The Ilfracombe Parish Register from 1567 – 1691.
- The Fremington Muster List which contains the names of all the abled bodied men who were to be called to service because of the possible invasion from France 1798 -1799.
- The Northam Kyrie which is one page of a document produced in the 14th century.
- The Bideford Quarter Sessions Order Book which includes entries about Temperance Lloyd and her two companions who were known as the three Bideford Witches.

There were many more to see and read, all of which were amazing. I would strongly recommend if you're able to visit the Record Office yourself.

I attended a Plans Committee Meeting on the 2nd of July where a large demonstration was held in the foyer of the building about the proposed Data Centre. There was another held the other evening prior to and during TDC's Full Council Meeting, I gather they will be holding another tomorrow morning, again at the Business Support Centre while the Plans Committee Meeting is being held.

I was able to substitute on the O and S External Committee recently and listened with interest to Derek Green the General Manager of Lundy Island. Although certain increases have been applied and now are taking place Derek hopes to encourage Cllrs to look again at what is now a considerable increase in some cases for the Lundy Island Team and the Oldenburg absorb.

Cllr Whittaker
29th July, 2026

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

Chair's initials

V'cher	Date	Net	VAT	Total	Description	Cost Centre	Cost Code	Minute Ref
326	18.6.26	£19,200.00	£0.00	£19,200.00	Salaries	Staff Costs	Salaries, HMRC and NEST	2606/081
291	05.6.26	£7,867.14	£1,573.43	£9,440.57	Plants	Environment & Maintenance	Hanging baskets & Planters	2511/476
360	25.6.26	£7,345.32	£0.00	£7,345.32	HMRC PAYE	Staff Costs	Salaries, HMRC and NEST	2508/252
320	17.6.26	£4,059.28	£0.00	£4,059.28	PWLB	PWLB	PWLB - Northam Hall	
307	12.6.26	£3,117.09	£623.42	£3,740.51	Insurance	Human Resources and H&S	Worknest (HR and H&S Advisors)	2505/051
299	09.6.26	£2,733.15	£0.00	£2,733.15	Pensions	Staff Costs	Salaries, HMRC and NEST	
365	25.6.26	£2,640.34	£528.07	£3,168.41	Tennis Courts - final payment	Parks & Recreation	Westward Ho! Park	
343	23.6.26	£1,721.21	£0.00	£1,721.21	PWLB	PWLB	Westward Ho! Park Tranche 2	
290	05.6.26	£1,495.00	£299.00	£1,794.00	Survey	Pavilion & CPT	Large Project Reserve	2512/521
349	23.6.26	£1,320.00	£0.00	£1,320.00	War Memorial Northam	Environment & Maintenance	War Memorials	
297	08.6.26	£1,129.60	£0.00	£1,129.60	General insurance (monthly dd)	Insurances	General	2605/037
348	23.6.26	£1,080.00	£0.00	£1,080.00	War Memorial Appledore	Environment & Maintenance	War Memorials	2604/740
324	17.6.26	£921.06	£184.21	£1,105.27	Subscriptions	Administration	Subs and Memberships	2605/024
324	17.6.26	£898.61	£0.00	£898.61	Subscriptions	Administration	Subs and Memberships	2605/024
345	23.6.26	£815.28	£0.00	£815.28	Salaries (top-up)	Staff Costs	Salaries, HMRC and NEST	
306	12.6.26	£796.75	£159.35	£956.10	Civic Function	Members	Civic Reception	
294	05.6.26	£463.70	£0.00	£463.70	Insurance	Insurances	Engineering	2605/039
319	17.6.26	£463.50	£0.00	£463.50	Professional Fees (Planning permission)	MUGA	Professional Fees	2511/475
289	05.6.26	£455.00	£91.00	£546.00	Cleaning CPT	CPT	Cleaning	
253	01.6.26	£448.76	£0.00	£448.76	Room rental	Administration	Room Rental	
374	29.6.26	£441.56	£0.00	£441.56	Professional Fees - planning permission	MUGA	Professional Fees	2511/475
373	29.6.26	£400.00	£0.00	£400.00	Cleaning Northam Hall	Northam Hall	Cleaning	
375	29.6.26	£395.00	£79.00	£474.00	Audit Services	Administration	Audit & Data Protection	
276	04.6.26	£360.00	£0.00	£360.00	Vehicle Tax - transit	Council Machinery & Equipment	VED	
286	05.6.26	£345.00	£0.00	£345.00	Signs	Members	Honours Boards	
288	05.6.26	£335.00	£67.00	£402.00	Civic.ly Subscription	ICT	Civic.ly Asset Management Software	
336	19.6.26	£330.00	£66.00	£396.00	MVSIDs	Environment & Maintenance	MVSIDs	
287	05.6.26	£314.00	£62.80	£376.80	IT contract	ICT	Cloudy IT	
323	17.6.26	£250.00	£0.00	£250.00	May Fair 2026	Community	May Fair Costs	2511/472
333	19.6.26	£235.28	£47.06	£282.34	Disposal Waste Materials	CPT	Hygiene	

Chair's initials



308	12.6.26	£227.10	£0.00	£227.10	Insurance	Insurances	HR (Via Worknest)	2505/051
322	17.6.26	£200.00	£40.00	£240.00	The Link	Community	Newsletters & Communication	2505/053
293	05.6.26	£180.00	£36.00	£216.00	Alarm maintenance	Northam Hall	Alarm & CCTV	
335	19.6.26	£177.43	£35.49	£212.92	Disposal Waste Materials	Comm Centre Toilet	Hygiene Services	
280	05.6.26	£163.00	£32.60	£195.60	Truck Maintenance	Council Machinery & Equipment	Truck Maintenance	
325	17.6.26	£150.00	£0.00	£150.00	Entertainment - Appledore Band	Members	Civic Reception	
338	19.6.26	£138.49	£27.70	£166.19	MVSIDs	Environment & Maintenance	MVSIDs	
329	18.6.26	£136.44	£27.29	£163.73	Padlocks	Northam Hall	Maintenance	
309	15.6.26	£136.01	£6.80	£142.81	Gas & Electric Northam Hall	Northam Hall	Gas	
277	04.6.26	£134.96	£26.99	£161.95	Prosecco Glasses	Administration	Miscellaneous	
292	05.6.26	£130.00	£26.00	£156.00	Alarm maintenance	CPT	Alarm	
312	15.6.26	£111.28	£22.26	£133.54	Fuel	Council Machinery & Equipment	Fuel - Mowers	
328	18.6.26	£103.32	£20.67	£123.99	Repairs	Environment & Maintenance	Bus Shelters	
312	15.6.26	£102.87	£20.57	£123.44	Fuel	Council Machinery & Equipment	Fuel - WF18 PTX	
318	17.6.26	£100.00	£0.00	£100.00	Book Token	Members	Mayor's Cadet	
47	Totals	£64,567.53	£4,102.71	£68,670.24				

Chair's initials

