**Full Council Monday 6th January 2025 – Clerk’s Report**

**General updates from the Town Clerk and the Governance and Projects Manager**

Staffing and recruitment

We said goodbye to our Marketing and Communications Administrator before Christmas as part of a restructure. We interviewed and have provisionally offered the role of Economic Support Officer, subject to the usual checks, with the hope of them starting later in January 2025.

We will have some capacity challenges early in 2025 due to staffing absence due to illness and jury service. Members will be updated in due course.

Away Day

A successful away day was held on 30th November. The focus of the discussion was around priorities and budget planning moving forward. The suggestions from this session have or will be fed back via Council Matters and Full Council as part of the budget setting process.

Devolution

Published on 16th December 2024, the White Paper can be found here - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-white-paper-power-and-partnership-foundations-for-growth/english-devolution-white-paper>

The English Devolution White Paper outlines significant reforms to local government structures in England, with the aim of simplifying governance and improving efficiency. ([gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-white-paper-power-and-partnership-foundations-for-growth/english-devolution-white-paper))

**Key Proposals:**

* **Structural Reorganisation:** The White Paper proposes replacing the existing two-tier system of district and county councils with larger unitary authorities, each serving populations of approximately 500,000 residents. This change is intended to simplify governance, enhance service delivery, and achieve cost savings. (ft.com)
* **Enhanced Powers for Mayors:** The government indicates a preference for strategic authorities to be led by directly elected mayors, who would have increased powers over areas such as transport, housing, and economic development. (instituteforgovernment.org.uk)

**Implications for Town and Parish Councils:**

As the most local tier of government, town and parish councils play a vital role in representing community interests and delivering local services. While the White Paper primarily focuses on higher-level structural changes, it acknowledges the importance of strong community engagement and effective local governance at all levels. (mhclgmedia.blog.gov.uk)

The proposed reorganisation may result in:

* **Changes in Responsibilities:** With the abolition of district councils, some functions may be redistributed, which could affect the range of services provided by town and parish councils.
* **Opportunities for Greater Involvement:** The emphasis on devolution and localism may open up opportunities for town and parish councils to take on enhanced roles, fostering closer engagement with local residents.

However, the White Paper does not provide detailed guidance on the specific impact on town and parish councils. Further clarity is expected as the government progresses with the implementation of these reforms.

Anti Social Behaviour and graffiti

Sadly, we have returned from the Christmas break to yet more graffiti around the Civic Hall and Market Square, and more worryingly broken glass, candles and cardboard near the Guildhall. These instances have been reported and logged and I have requested a meeting with the local police, to review the CCTV footage.

Christmas Lights

The Christmas Tree was installed on 13th November. To much frustration (officer and public) there have been issues with the tree lights on The Plains following the Switch On event on 26th November. The two trees at the bottom of Fore Street were fixed and have been on since 7th December, but the three trees on the other side have not (to date been resolved). There were intermittent problems with these riverside trees in 2023 and following investigation by the contractor and their installer in October there was found to be no problem and the Council were invoiced for this work. Officers have subsequently disputed this, the Council will be credited for these costs incurred for a service not delivered but this doesn’t help the disappointment from businesses in that area of town who have spent half the switch on period with no festive lights. Due to the Wales and West Utilities road closure for gas pipe works in early January, the lights will be taken down on 2/3 January.

Christmas Markets

The three nights were extremely well received with goof footfall and feedback. There was a tweak regarding a catering operator on Fore Street week one that was resolved for the following weeks. Many more businesses served food from outside their premises which was brilliant and the last week lantern procession was beautiful. A huge thank you to everyone who made that work, community participants, Claire Allford and her team, Ben Piper for Pegasus and all Councillors and staff. Pegasus is now safely back in storage awaiting the 2025 plans! A more detailed report and cost breakdown will be sent to members in due course.

Christmas Light Switch On

The 2024 Christmas Lights Switch On was a highly successful event with strong attendance. Thankfully, the rain held off until after the lights were switched on, meaning the wet weather plan was not needed. The event featured entertainment from Elfic, The Bubble Pixie, Totnes Brass and choirs from the local schools. Inside there were a range of crafts, all of which were well-received. Over 80 jam jars were decorated as lanterns, which will contribute to the procession on December 17.

The snow globe was a popular attraction, although the noise from the generator was still noticeable despite being placed in the mural room to reduce sound. A line of chairs was used to prevent children from bouncing on the globe’s sides, with a staff member inside to ensure safety. A hand stamper system ensured that every child had just one turn.

Pizza Pirates had sufficient space, and the Town Council subsidised the cost of pizzas to keep them affordable for families (£8 each or £2 for a quarter slice). For next year, it would be beneficial to mark out a designated area for the queue to avoid congestion in the market square.

Santa was well received by all. The intention was for him to walk around but he tended to get trapped in one place so next year we will need to find a nice well-lit area for him.

The lights in the square turned on without a hitch which was a huge relief to everyone. The PA system wasn’t really loud enough though, so most people were unaware that the first countdown was to turn Graham on. Next year we will look into getting a louder outdoor PA system.

The entertainment schedule was adjusted this year to avoid a clash with the Brass Band and Elifc. The Brass band performing at the end with a silent performance by Bubbles the Pixie. This kept the crowd outside, allowing the Brass band to be heard and appreciated.

Thanks to significant support from councillors, the site was cleared quickly after the event, and waste management was adequate, leaving the area clean and tidy.

More than £100 was raised for Totnes Caring at the event.

Car Parking Charges Consultation

The Town Council submitted a second response on the proposed car parking changes, outlining a number of continued concerns, on 19th December. This formal response has been sent to all members.

2025/26 Budget Setting:

Maintenance of the Public Realm – Officers met with Newton Abbot Town Council officers to learn how the Council has approached public realm maintenance, the incremental increases to staff and equipment, what tasks are carried out, arrangements with district and county councils, insurance, costs, which helped to inform a paper that the Clerk drafted for the Cllr away day.

Totnes Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan meeting 21 Nov – the SHDC Heritage Officer appointed to this project met with Cllrs and community group representatives. She explained the process as one of reviewing the current documents, suggesting new areas for consideration, the inclusion of a Frequently Asked Questions section which aids local applicants drawing on information in the Neighbourhood Plan. SHDC will come back with an initial draft for comments.

OSSRW – following the Town Matters Committee review in November, the document has now incorporated any SHDC comments the Committee agreed. A copy with any reference to costs/funding has been put on the Town Council website. Work continues to obtain a map which can be shaded for the various facilities – the officer and Cllr Auletta have spoken with Ordnance Survey and SHDC about potential solutions, and we are waiting to hear back from SHDC.

Strategic Plan and Delivery Objectives - a revised table was prepared for the Cllr away day. This will be updated at the end of each month to capture recommendations and decisions from the working groups and committees.

Traffic and Transport Forum – meeting with he Chair to discuss governance around the format of the meetings and their structure and frequency.

Grounds Maintenance

* The tender process has concluded and the successful contractor appointed from April 2025.
* Castle Meadow – has had its winter cut of the grass and hedges, including along Collins Road. There was some storm damage with a tree being blown over, but not uprooted. Tree works have taken place to make this safe.

Cemetery

* Interments – numbers have slowed.
* Storm Damage - There was some storm damage with a conifer losing a branch but it fell in an open area of the old section and no memorial stones were damaged. This has been removed and the health of the tree checked.
* Plot Tidiness - It has been necessary to write to a number of plot holders about the placing of items on the length of the grave which hampers maintenance, can cause a trip hazard for mourners and is not permitted (as set out in the regulations that all new plot holders are sent). To mitigate future issues, all new plot holders will now be asked to sign to say that they understand and agree to how plots in the lawn section will be managed by the Council and to not place items outside of the headstone area – local funeral directors have been made aware.
* Law Commission Burial and Crematorium Consultation – officer attended a webinar to understand the scope of the proposed reforms and how this could affect the Cemetery. As directed by the Council Matters Committee a draft response to the consultation has been collated.

Artisan Markets

The 2024 monthly markets in the Civic Hall have been popular. A big thank you to the team for all their work on this, particularly Lisa and Becky. Report details below:

**Overview:** The Totnes Indoor Artisan Markets took place on the second Tuesday of each month from April to November. These events provided a platform for local and regional artisans to showcase their crafts. The markets attracted 63 artisans selling a range of crafts such as: woodturned items, handmade clothes, chai, preserves, knitted and crotched items, seaglass ornaments, handmade cards, art, ceramics, macrame, candles and more. The artisans came from Totnes, the surrounding areas, and further afield.

**Artisan Participation:**

* **Local Artisans (Totnes and surrounding areas):** 12 artisans
* **Mid-Distance Artisans (e.g., Newton Abbot, Ivybridge, Dartmouth):** 25 artisans
* **Further-Away Artisans (e.g., Plymouth, Exeter, and beyond):** 26 artisans

In total, 63 different artisans attended the markets.

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| | **Location** | **Number of Artisans** | | --- | --- | | Local | 12 | | Mid Distance | 25 | | Further Away | 26 | | **Total** | **63** | |  |  |

**Total Number of Stalls Booked:** In total, 167 stalls were booked through the course of the season.

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| | **Location** | **Number of stalls booked through the season** | | --- | --- | | Local | 40 | | Mid Distance | 62 | | Further Away | 65 | | **Total** | **167** | |  |  |

**Monthly Stall Numbers:** The number of stalls at each event varied throughout the year. Below is a breakdown of the stall numbers per month:

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| Month | April | May | June | July | August | September | October | November |
| Number of Stalls | 24 | 17 | 19 | 21 | 18 | 16 | 27 | 25 |

**Income from Pitch Fees:** The total income generated from pitch fees amounted to £2,505 across the events.

**Feedback from Stallholders:** Stallholders were generally pleased with the atmosphere of the markets, noting that they enjoyed spending the day interacting with fellow makers. While sales varied from stallholder to stallholder, some reported making a few hundred pounds, although, for the most part, people were able to cover their costs. According to Jo from Miss Ivy Events, this is a common trend for markets, especially in the current economic climate.

**Impact of Advertising and Seasonal Trends:** There was a notable increase in attendance at the final two markets, which may have been influenced by a shift in the way the events were advertised on social media. This approach, alongside the fact that the final markets took place in the run-up to Christmas, likely contributed to the rise in numbers.

**Conclusion:** The Indoor Artisan Markets have been a positive and valuable opportunity for local and regional artisans to connect with customers and showcase their work. While some stallholders saw modest sales, the events provided a platform for networking and community-building. With growing interest and some successful adjustments to social media posts, there is potential for continued success of the markets in 2025.

A collage of various items

Description automatically generatedA collage of different products

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Key meetings, training and CPD attended:

* 4th November – Full Council Meeting
* 5th November – SLCC Larger Councils Meeting
* 5th November – TQ9 Partnership Meeting
* 10th November – Remembrance Day
* 11th November – Council Matters Committee Meeting
* 12th November – Meeting with local police on ASB and graffiti
* 12th November – Community Economic Plan
* 13th November – Mayor and Clerks meeting with SHDC – car parking
* 18th November – Planning Committee Meeting
* 20th November – SLCC training/updates
* 21st November – Conservation Area Management Action Plan Meeting
* 25th November – D.Cllr, C.Cllr, Mayor and Chairs of committee Inter authority meeting
* 25th November – Community Economic Plan
* 25th November – Town Matters Committee Meeting
* 26th November – Christmas Light Switch On
* 27th November – Environment and Public Realm Working Group
* 30th November – Cllr and Clerk Away Day
* 2nd December – Paige Adams Trust
* 2nd December – Full Council
* 3rd December – Meeting SHDC Officer and Cllr Birch ref Market Square
* 3rd December – Community Working Group Meeting – inquorate and deferred
* 4th December – Economy Working Group Meeting
* 9th December – Council Matters Committee Meeting
* 10th December – TQ9 Partnership Meeting
* 10th December – Meeting Tavistock Clerk
* 11th December – Teams Meeting Town Clerks
* 12th December – Community Economic Plan
* 16th December – Extraordinary Full Council Meeting
* 16th December – Planning Committee Meeting

Administration

* There was a temporary issue with the Town Council website in early January – email updates sent to all members and now resolved.
* An audit of items held in the Muniments Room will start in January 2025, with the aim of repatriating Museum items to them.

**NALC/DALC/SLCC/RSN key updates**

19 December 2024

**NALC calls for stronger neighbourhood governance in response to English Devolution White Paper**

We welcomed the government's [English Devolution White Paper](https://www.nalc.gov.uk/e/t/c/040B6275-A1EB-4458-A6F277F648A55655/?link=37ED560D-736C-423C-93BE2E9B50065923) published on 16 December 2024, and our [immediate response](https://www.nalc.gov.uk/e/t/c/040B6275-A1EB-4458-A6F277F648A55655/?link=B46CD236-000C-4810-905EC04E12DD160B) emphasised the importance of nurturing neighbourhood governance to ensure its success. Parish and town councils have already demonstrated their ability to deliver on government priorities at the local level. With the devolution framework and local government reorganisation, there is an opportunity for them to achieve even more. During ongoing discussions about the white paper and its implications, we will advocate for several critical measures to enhance neighbourhood governance, including investment in neighbourhood governance, simplifying processes to set up parish and town councils, promoting civility and respect, allowing hybrid council meetings where local communities see fit, fairer access to funding and a tailored audit framework. It was good to see the role of parish and town councils in devolution featured in the [debate in parliament](https://www.nalc.gov.uk/e/t/c/040B6275-A1EB-4458-A6F277F648A55655/?link=A890246F-4A30-41EA-BE4FC1042EEF8149) following the statement by the minister for local government and English devolution, Jim McMahon MP. Responding to questions from MPs, he said, "At a neighbourhood level, we see parish and town councils playing a critical role in devolution, and we look forward to further discussions with the sector". Yesterday, we received the government’s [consultation on strengthening the standards](https://www.nalc.gov.uk/e/t/c/040B6275-A1EB-4458-A6F277F648A55655/?link=CE378526-DC7B-41FB-A940BBF84FD28536) regime as set out in the white paper and will brief more fully in the new year.

**NALC backs the government's remote meeting proposals**

Also, this week, we supported the government's [recent proposals to reintroduce remote meetings](https://www.nalc.gov.uk/e/t/c/040B6275-A1EB-4458-A6F277F648A55655/?link=18B01655-3634-42E2-9C6AB5BBD83C90D9) for parish and town councils, one of the policy objectives we have lobbied for. Responding to a consultation by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), we emphasised that parish and town councils should be free to decide how and when to hold their meetings. This flexibility will empower parish and town councils to respond quicker and effectively to their communities' needs through in-person, remote, or hybrid formats. However, we strongly opposed the government's proposal to introduce proxy voting at council meetings. Echoing concerns raised by other stakeholders, we warned proxy voting could undermine democratic accountability, weaken deliberative decision making and create procedural and ethical challenges, particularly for larger councils with party-political dynamics.

**The government publishes the revised National Planning Policy Framework**

On 12 December 2024, following its significant consultation earlier in the summer, the [government announced major changes to the National Planning Policy Framework](https://www.nalc.gov.uk/e/t/c/040B6275-A1EB-4458-A6F277F648A55655/?link=8967CCD1-F1CC-4470-970EAB0A95DA7A39) (NPPF). These updates aim to support the prime minister's recent Plan for Change, which targets delivering 1.5 million new homes over five years. To achieve this, principal authorities have been tasked with an ambitious combined target of building 370,000 homes a year. Key changes to the NPPF include introducing mandatory housing targets for principal authorities to accelerate housebuilding, focusing on areas with the highest housing unaffordability and greatest growth potential. Principal authorities must also review greenbelt boundaries while adhering to a brownfield-first approach. Any development on greenbelt land must meet strict requirements through the new Golden Rules, which require developers to provide the necessary infrastructure for local communities, such as nurseries, GP surgeries and transport, and a premium level of social and affordable housing. Additionally, there will be a greater emphasis on social rent, with principal authorities and developers required to prioritise this in new developments. At the same time, local leaders will have increased powers to deliver affordable housing. We continue to examine the implications for parish and town councils, particularly neighbourhood planning. We will publish further information in due course.

21 November 2024

**NALC welcomes the government's brownfield passport proposals**

This week, we responded to the government's latest paper on brownfield passports, which we broadly welcome. In [our response](https://www.nalc.gov.uk/e/t/c/D6EBBC3B-7005-488D-B897C277A8254CB2/?link=BAFC0318-7D6D-40A2-92375CF3423D534E) to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's latest paper, we argued that it supports the principle of encouraging the development of brownfield land, particularly within urban settlements, while recognising that factors other than the planning status influence whether development occurs. We recognise that while national policy may influence the overall expectations regarding the minimum scale of development for urban locations, the optimum level of development is likely to be established at the local level, combined with robust design codes. The [paper](https://www.nalc.gov.uk/e/t/c/D6EBBC3B-7005-488D-B897C277A8254CB2/?link=F17FB697-E955-4AB0-9BC96AE4987B9169) forms part of a series of working papers on different aspects of planning reform designed to inform further policy development in collaboration with the wider sector.

**Employer National Insurance contributions**

NALC’s chair, Cllr Keith Stevens, has written to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rachel Reeves MP, about the recent Budget, where he calls for compensation for the increase in National Insurance contributions (NICs) and more engagement with the sector to ensure government policies align with local needs. In summary, Keith’s letter congratulates the Chancellor on her first budget, highlights the vital role of parish and town councils in supporting communities, and raises concerns over the planned rise in employer NICs. The letter sets out how this would unfairly burden parish and town councils and increase their share of council tax. As we support devolution, our letter emphasises the need for parish and town councils to be empowered and involved in decision-making. Further priorities addressed include the rural economy, housing, and planning, reflecting the [motion approved by our recent Annual General Meeting](https://www.nalc.gov.uk/e/t/c/D6EBBC3B-7005-488D-B897C277A8254CB2/?link=33CFF2F6-C2DF-445A-A9B02B8E9FC45C00). We’ve also been briefing MPs and Peers on the Budget and NICs. Ahead of a debate on the Budget in the House of Lords, we sent a briefing to Peers, and it was good to see the impact of NICs get raised several times. You can read the full transcript of the debate on [Hansard](https://www.nalc.gov.uk/e/t/c/D6EBBC3B-7005-488D-B897C277A8254CB2/?link=31105ADA-48B1-4955-921424F43993B098). I am pleased to see the new MP for Truro and Falmouth, Jayne Kirkham MP (who is also a Falmouth town councillor), use her speech on the Budget to highlight that many parish and town councils “have taken on so many of the services of which the unitary authorities have divested themselves, and as a consequence are often large employers with big budgets”. We will continue to brief MPs on the Budget ahead of the second reading of the Finance Bill in the House of Commons on 27 November 2024.

**Joint event with the Local Government Association**

This week, we held another sold-out online [joint event](https://www.nalc.gov.uk/e/t/c/D6EBBC3B-7005-488D-B897C277A8254CB2/?link=3C44FA96-B3D6-4EA6-A0C3B6C3249AA7FF) with the Local Government Association (LGA) about democracy in action on 13 November 2024. The event was hosted by Tamsin Hewett, a leadership adviser at the LGA (and formerly of NALC). Attendees heard excellent, incisive contributions from the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils county officer Neil Wedge,  Ulverston Town Council and Westmorland and Furness District Council councillor Cllr Jackie Drake, and Loughton Residents Association representative on Epping Forest District Council Cllr Chidi Nweke. The event reviewed outcomes from the May 2024 local elections (at all levels of local government), de-mystifying the role of the local councillor and encouraging people to stand for election as local councillors in future elections. We have mapped out an [exciting event schedule](https://www.nalc.gov.uk/e/t/c/D6EBBC3B-7005-488D-B897C277A8254CB2/?link=AF9CF177-3A54-49BC-945ECFACCFD864B7), so please visit our website to learn more about them.

SLCC

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| |  | | --- | | **Government's English Devolution White Paper**  You may have seen that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has just published the government’s English Devolution White Paper. The policy paper, which focusses specifically on devolution and local government arrangements across England, notes key aspects of the government’s ‘Plan for Change’, with devolution ‘fundamental to achieving the change the public expect and deserve: growth, more joined-up delivery of public services, and politics being done with communities, not to them.’  [SLCC has published a press release on what the English Devolution White Paper means for our sector, which you can read here](https://clicks.slcc.co.uk/email/S-30861@955465@9pHEqCqMPMFQos0BEkenjfleej9G6Mz56kGmdy9m5co.@). | |

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| |  | | --- | | **Consultation: ‘Local Audit Reform: A Strategy For Overhauling The Local Audit System in England’**  As part of its devolution plan, the government is looking to transform the local audit system, ‘to give greater clarity on the purpose of audit and accounts, and ensure they take centre stage in local scrutiny’. In-line with Sir Tony Redmond’s recommendations, the government will legislate to radically simplify the system, bringing as many audit functions as possible into one body, and is now engaging with the sector on how to do this, subject to legislation.  [You can access the consultation here](https://clicks.slcc.co.uk/email/S-30861@955466@9pHEqCqMPMFQos0BEkenjfleej9G6Mz56kGmdy9m5co.@). SLCC will be making a response to this consultation by the deadline of **29 January 2025**. | |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Consultation: ‘Strengthening The Standards and Conduct Framework For Local Authorities in England’**  The government is also seeking views on proposals to introduce measures to strengthen the standards and conduct regime for local authorities in England. The proposals being consulted upon include:   * The introduction of a mandatory minimum code of conduct for local authorities in England * A requirement that all principal authorities convene formal standards committees to make decisions on code of conduct breaches, and publish the outcomes of all formal investigations * The introduction of the power for all local authorities (including combined authorities) to suspend councillors or mayors found in serious breach of their code of conduct and, as appropriate, interim suspension for the most serious and complex cases that may involve police investigations * A new category of disqualification for gross misconduct and those subject to a sanction of suspension more than once in a 5-year period * A role for a national body to deal with appeals   [You can access the consultation here](https://clicks.slcc.co.uk/email/S-30861@955467@9pHEqCqMPMFQos0BEkenjfleej9G6Mz56kGmdy9m5co.@). SLCC will be making a response to this consultation by the deadline of **26 February 2025**.  Clerks and their councils are encouraged to make their own responses to both consultation documents too.  DALC  **2024/25 Pay Award Agreed**  The Joint National Council for local Government Services (NJC) has come to an agreement on the 2024/25 pay award, applicable from 01 April 2024-31 March 2025.   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  |  |  | | --- | | Improving water services in your area South West Water is committed to reducing the operation and impact of storm overflows across Devon, and has published their [**Storm Overflow Action Plan**](https://devonalc.us9.list-manage.com/track/click?u=bd0bc7009504fc55a438a3f1e&id=1260824edb&e=7cce490277). Part of their commitment relies on others understanding what they can do to help achieve these targets. | | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | They have [**attached a letter**](https://devonalc.us9.list-manage.com/track/click?u=bd0bc7009504fc55a438a3f1e&id=59e9e6307f&e=7cce490277) outlining how you can help prevent pollutions caused by blockages from fats, oils, and greases with some resources you can share in your communities, along with a [**publication on their 'Love Your Loo' and 'Think Sink' campaigns**](https://devonalc.us9.list-manage.com/track/click?u=bd0bc7009504fc55a438a3f1e&id=f7bf5f945a&e=7cce490277). | | | | |  | | --- | |  | | The [**VE Day 80 commemorations**](https://devonalc.us9.list-manage.com/track/click?u=bd0bc7009504fc55a438a3f1e&id=e434ba2fd9&e=7cce490277) are taking place on 8 May 2025 and we have been asked to circulate the following documents, including the [**VE Day 80 Anniversary Guide**](https://devonalc.us9.list-manage.com/track/click?u=bd0bc7009504fc55a438a3f1e&id=fb63b59215&e=7cce490277) to help councils organise events in their communities:  [Ringing out in celebration of peace on 8 May 2025](https://devonalc.us9.list-manage.com/track/click?u=bd0bc7009504fc55a438a3f1e&id=c34de6f035&e=7cce490277) - encouragement for church bell ringers to ring their bells at 6.30pm.  [Music for I Vow to Thee, My Country](https://devonalc.us9.list-manage.com/track/click?u=bd0bc7009504fc55a438a3f1e&id=b8b16fa8f5&e=7cce490277) - communities are being encouraged to sing this hymn when lighting beacons or Lamp Lights of Peace. | | | |

**General**

**Correspondence log**

November

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| **Date** | **Contact** | **Query** | **Response** |
| 4/11/2024 | 101 and local police | Reported graffiti on the Eastgate. | N/A |
| 11/11/2024 | SHDC report online | Reported flytipping outside St Mary's Church and the Civic Hall. | RP/524928. |
| 11/11/2024 | 101 and local police | Reported Graffiti on the Eastgate. | N/A |
| 13/11/2024 | email | Expressed concern that bread and cakes are being scattered along the riverside path from Morrisons. | Advised to contact SHDC report a problem page. |
| 15/11/2024 | phone | Enquiry from an 'off grid bus' that travels around talking to communities about farming. Enquiry about local spaces/farms they could meet and talk to. | Named several local farms - Riverford, Apricot Centre, Sharpham, Dartington. Asked for them to share any info with Visit Totnes. |
| 18/11/2024 | email | Information shared by MoP about Fishchowters lane and possible active travel opportunities. | Information forwarded to Traffic and Transport Group. |
| 19/11/2024 | 101 and local police | Reports of 3 different examples of graffiti on the Civic Hall and  one on the Eastgate. | N/A |
| 20/112024 | 102 and local police | More political graffiti on the Eastgate | DP-11704-24-5050-IR01 |
| 28/11/2024 | Member of the public | Report of lots of litter on the bench on Castle Meadow and request that the bench should be removed. | Advised that the area is checked regularly by the Town Maintenance Team. TMO carried went to clear the area. |
| 28/11/2024 | Facebook post | Expression of concern about the lack of hygiene at Totnes Pavillion Leisure Centre | Town Clerk sent reply and copied in Town and District Councillors |

December

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| **Date** | **Contact** | **Query** | **Response** |
| 2/12/2024 | 102 and local police | Reported graffiti to the door of civic hall. | N/A |
| 2/12/2024 | email | Letter expressing concern over the state of hygiene and safety at  Totnes Pavillion Leisure Centre. | Response from Clerk |
| 4/12/2024 | phone | Concern over stalls at the late night shopping event preventing access to emergency vehicles in the case of an emergency. | Resolved with a change of layout from week two, this was fed back to the member of the public. |
| 4/12/2024 | email | I regularly lead walk my dog around the cemetery, and have noticed large flocks of goldfinches around the areas managed for wildlife - the middle of the roundabout and around the old crematorium.  The goldfinches are feeding on the seed heads that these unmown/unstrimmed areas have and are a joy to watch and hear chattering to themselves.  I imagine you get some complaints about it looking ‘untidy’ but I’d like to thank you for letting these areas be managed for wildlife.  If you could circulate this to all councillors in the Totnes Ward I would be very grateful | Forwarded to all members. |
| 5/12/2024 | In person | Informing us that she has reported Palm Oil in the River Dart to South West Water. | N/A |
| 9/12/2024 | 102 and local police | Report of Graffiti at Civic Hall | N/A |
| 11/12/2024 | email | Expression of concern that there was loud music playing at a business in town until late after the Christmas market. | Emails sent to both parties by the Clerk – resolved. |
| 12/12/2024 | phone | Visitor to the town called to let us know what a wonderful event the Christmas Market was. Everyone was so friendly and there was a fabulous festive spirit. | N/A |
| 16/12/2024 | email | Detailed email regarding the Israel conflict. | Forwarded to members for a response. |
| 16/12/2024 | 101 and local police | Reporting graffiti at Civic Hall. | N/A |
| 17/12/2024 | email | Concerns over planned changes to stagecoach bus timetables. | Passed to link members and Chair of the Traffic and Transport Forum |
| 18/12/2024 | email | Reporting fly tipping by old bridge. | Explained this is SHDC and reported in. |
| 19/12/2024 | online report | Online report of fly tipping to SHDC | N/A |

**Council Assets**

Guildhall

We have had a great 2024 season with a significant increase in visitor numbers and donations. Weddings continue to be popular and an analysis of cost versus income will be tabled in the coming months for consideration by members. A huge thank you to Becky and the volunteers for enabling the Guildhall to open so consistently this year.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Guildhall Visitor Numbers 2024** | | | |
| **Month** | **Visitor Numbers 2024** | 2023 | 2022 |
| **April** | **1062** | **750** | **closed** |
| **May** | **1082** | **647** | **580** |
| **June** | **1235** | **990** | **669** |
| **July** | **1680** | **1156** | **915** |
| **August** | **1813** | **1235** | **1012** |
| **September** | **1304** | **924** | **870** |
| **October** | **1164** | **562** | **closed** |
|  |  | **6264** | **4046** |
| TOTAL | **9340** |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| ***Visitor Number up by approx £3000 and donations up by approx £1500 (less bank charges)*** | | | |

Civic Hall

Bookings for 2025 have gone a bit manic so it’s looking very busy. Becky has had a very positive meeting with Dartington Playgoers about future plans. CAMRA are now holding their annual Beer and Cider Fest in the civic in June/July. Lots of music events with Agile Rabbit productions planned (into 2026!).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **October 2024**  **(Mon-Thurs Regular hirer bookings)**   * Pollen Tribe – music & dance * Artisan Market * SHDC public consultation * Totnes Jobcentre * Holistic Fair * Channel-one-sound system – live music * Bachata Dance Workshop * Forestry Commission - consultation * Valuation Day - auctioneers * Mount Olive Ministries – church choir   + 2 events cancelled by hirers  **Hall in use 24/31 days (2 bookings per day on occasion)** | **November 2024**  **(Mon-Thurs Regular hirer bookings)**   * Artisan Market * Pollen Tribe – music & dance * T& D District Flower Show * Grief Space & Sound Healing * Private birthday party * Artist & Makers Fair * Mount Olive Ministries – church workshop * Christmas Light Switch on – Community event * Landscove Primary School * Amos Trust Palestinian Charity event   + 2 events cancelled by hirers  **Hall in use 23/30 (2 bookings per day on occasion)** | **December 2024**  **(Mon-Thurs Regular hirer bookings)**   * Late Night Shopping x 3 * Pollen Tribe – music & dance * TAODS – rehearsals * Mount Olive Ministries – Church workshop x 2 * Theatre & wellbeing rehearsals * Theatre & Wellbeing Festival   +1 event cancelled by hirer  **Hall in use 20/30 days (2 bookings per day on occasion)** |
| **January 2025**  **(Mon-Thurs Regular hirer bookings)**   * TAODS – Rehearsals & Performance * Transition Town Totnes * WeBuyVintage Antique valuation * Antiques Valuation Day * Agile Rabbit Events -Live Music * NHS NDPP * Mount Olive Ministries x 2   **Hall in use 23/31 so far (2 bookings per day on occasion)** | **February 2025**  **(Mon-Thurs Regular hirer bookings)**   * NHS NDPP * Mount Olive Ministries x 2   + 1 event cancelled by hirer  **Hall in use 12/28 so far** | **March 2025**  **(Mon-Thurs Regular hirer bookings)**   * Agile Rabbit Events - Live Music * Totnes Holistic Fair * Natural Voice Choir concert & talk * Agile Rabbi Events - Live Music * NHS NDPP * Mount Olive Ministries x 2 * Pollen Tribe music and dance * Wild Tribe Events Holistic Fair * Schumacher College pop up workshop * Transition Town Totnes – Mother Roots TBC   **Hall in use 24/31 days so far (2 bookings per day on occasion)** |

**Catherine Marlton**

**Town Clerk**

**5th January 2025**