



AGENDA FOR THE MEETING OF TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL

MONDAY 3RD FEBRUARY 2025 IN THE GUILDHALL

Please note that public question time will be held prior to Full Council from 6.30pm.

There are stairs to the Council Chamber but if any member of the public has mobility issues the Council can relocate to the Main Chamber.

You are hereby **SUMMONED** to attend a meeting of the Council, on **Monday 3rd February 2025** at **7.00pm** for a maximum of 120 minutes the purpose of transacting the following business:

1. WELCOME TO ALL ATTENDING AND OBSERVING

The Chair will read out the following statement:

Welcome to everyone attending and observing the meeting.

A reminder that open proceedings of this meeting will be video recorded. If members of the public make presentations, they will be deemed to have consented to being recorded. By entering the Council Chamber attendees are also consenting to being recorded.

This meeting is limited to 120 minutes and therefore members are asked to raise their points succinctly and not repeat the same view expressed by colleagues if it does not add to the debate.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

To receive apologies and to confirm that any absence has the approval of the Council. The Mayor will request confirmation that all Members have completed or made any necessary amendments to their Declaration of Interests.

The Council will adjourn for the following items:

Report from Devon and Cornwall Police, Sgt Hickman – verbal update.

Reports from County and District Councillors.

- a. County Cllr Hodgson – no document.
- b. District Cllr Allen – no document.
- c. District Cllr Birch – document attached.
- d. District Cllr Presswell – document attached.

The Council will convene to consider the following items:

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

To approve and sign the minutes of the following Meeting:

(Please note confidential minutes can be agreed but any discussion must be held in Part 2)

- a. Full Council 6th January 2025 – document attached.

To note the following minutes:

- b. Council Matters Committee 13th January 2025 – document attached.
- c. Planning Committee 20th January 2025 – document attached.

d. Town Matters Committee 27th January 2025 – document attached.

4. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTERS ARISING REQUIRING A DECISION

To consider any matters arising from the Minutes and to approve any recommendations from Committees (document enclosed):

(Please note confidential minutes can be agreed but any discussion must be held in Part 2)

- a. Full Council 6th January 2025.
- b. Council Matters Committee 13th January 2025.
- c. Planning Committee 20th January 2025.
- d. Town Matters Committee 27th January 2025.

5. BUDGET FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2025/26

To consider the Council Matters Committee recommendations for the budget for financial year 2025/26. Document attached.

6. WORKING GROUP MEMBERSHIP

To consider a request from Cllr Collinson to join the Community Working Group. No document.

7. SOUTH HAMS DISTRICT COUNCIL CAR PARKING DECISION – COUNCIL RESPONSE

To consider (no document):

- a. The Council's existing reactive (rather than pro-active) position on communications around this issue; and
- b. Giving delegated authority to agree the final wording of a press release to: the Mayor, Cllrs Roberts (Economy Working Group Chair) and Chinnock, Town Clerk and Comms and Marketing Manager.

8. ANNUAL TOWN MEETING AND MAYOR MAKING

To consider (document attached):

- a. the proposed dates for the annual town meeting and mayor making; and
- b. the format of the annual town meeting.

9. LIST OF MEETING DATES

To note a list of upcoming meeting dates, Councillor communications points and link Councillor/Councillor representatives on outside bodies updates. Documents attached.

10. NEXT MEETING

To note the next meeting date of Monday 3rd March 2025, 6.30pm public session, 7.00pm formal meeting in the Guildhall.

The Council will be asked to RESOLVE to exclude the press and public "by reason of the confidential nature of the business" to be discussed and in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

11. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE (Standing Item)

To consider any recommendations or matters arising that are considered confidential in nature (legal).

12. ELMHIRST PROJECT (Standing Item)

To consider any update on the Elmhirst project (commercially sensitive). Verbal update

Agenda produced by:

Catherine Marlton

Town Clerk

27th January 2025

USE OF SOUND RECORDINGS AT COUNCIL & COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The open proceedings of this Meeting will be audio and video recorded. If members of the public make a representation, they will be deemed to have consented to being recorded. By entering the Council Chamber or Zoom meeting, attendees are also consenting to being recorded.

Televised, vision and sound recordings or live broadcastings by members of the press or public at Council or Committee debates are permitted and anyone wishing to do so is asked to inform the Chairman of the respective Committee of their intention to record proceedings.

ITEM 2C – DISTRICT COUNCILLOR BIRCH REPORT

John Birch

SHDC Member for Totnes

Report to the Totnes Town Council meeting to be held on Monday 3 February 2025

I report on the following.

Joint Local Plan

SHDC Members recently received the following report from the Council's Director of Place and Enterprise.

"The Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP), adopted in March 2019, has been a hugely successful development plan for Plymouth, South Hams and West Devon. As one of the first joint plans in the country, it has often been regarded as an exemplar of joint strategic planning. The JLP:

- Was prepared and implemented within just 35 months, and most of this was with the Planning Inspectorate
- Contained a full suite of strategic site allocations
- Met our development needs in full for housing, employment and retail
- Allocated 115 sites for housing and over 40 sites which include provision for employment and commercial development
- Provided a robust strategic policy framework to drive growth in Plymouth, improve the vitality of our towns and support the rural economy
- Unlocked significant funding towards major infrastructure projects and investment in community facilities
- Has helped us attract other funding to support digital innovation in plan making
- Has supported various economic development and other funding bids because of the clear vision and spatial framework it set out for the long term development of the city and its surrounding area

Over the last 12 months, the JLP Partnership Board, consisting of Members from each of the three authorities, has been considering the impact of the government's planning reforms for the next iteration of a local plan. When the three councils first came together to work on the JLP back in 2016, the context for preparing a plan was entirely different. There was stability in both the national planning and local government context, and the housing targets were significantly less than they are now, with the three councils able to reach consensus on how housing need is distributed across the plan area.

However, we are now in a time of significant change and this has required that we carefully reflect on the implications before committing to another JLP. This has been a complex and lengthy process, and following agreement with South Hams and West Devon Councils, Plymouth City Council has decided that the next local plan for the city will be a Plymouth only plan and not a joint local plan. This was considered the only sound option for the city in the current circumstances, and one that enables Plymouth City Council to focus their attention on city priorities, while also giving the three councils resilience to further national policy and legal changes.

On 16 January 2025, the JLP Partnership Board agreed to the publication of a statement which communicates the decision on the preparation of new local plans and also a continued commitment to joint working where this makes sense, building off the successes of our partnership working over the last few years. All three JLP councils will of course continue to work closely on the implementation of our current local plan, until it is replaced by a new one. The agreed statement will be made available on the three Council websites next week."

Reorganisation of local government

At a recent special Full Council meeting to consider the government's proposals to reorganise local government I proposed the following motion.

"Following the publication of the Devolution White Paper, and subsequent statements by the Leader of Devon County Council, South Hams District Council does not support the creation of one Unitary Council for Devon including Torbay.

Devon and Torbay are diverse and made up of over 970,000 residents across urban, suburban, and rural areas. Any reform of local government in Devon and Torbay should follow a period of proper consultation with residents, businesses, elected representatives and stakeholders. Looking at the evidence, all councils should decide collectively what is best for Devon and Torbay. A single Unitary Council for Devon and Torbay risks diminishing local representation with decision-making that is remote from the communities it purports to serve.

South Hams District Council does not support postponing the County Council elections scheduled for May 2025. The government has indicated that this will only happen in priority areas that have clear and agreed All Members SLT plans. This is not the case in Devon and Torbay and in consequence this area cannot be in the first phase of these reforms.

South Hams District Council recognises that the government's white paper sets a clear direction of travel. It is proposed that all Devon and Torbay councils work collaboratively to agree how best to respond. Any changes must be carefully considered, transparent, and inclusive, ensuring that residents and businesses are fully engaged in shaping the future governance of Devon and Torbay.

The objective must be to get this right for our residents and businesses. That cannot be achieved if rushed decisions have not been given the serious consideration they deserve.

As such, this Council strongly opposes the Government's current proposals, as set out in its White Paper, which would result in the abolition or merger of SHDC without full consultation and support by residents. We note the following:

- The Government has no mandate for abolishing district councils as this was not included in the Labour election manifesto
- There is little evidence that merging rural councils will result in financial savings as many unitary councils are in debt or suffering financial difficulties
- Devon County Council has a budget of £1.837bn in 2024-25, an increase of £127m compared to a year earlier. The total budget of SHDC is minor in comparison.
- Any merger that abolishes SHDC will reduce democratic representation and move decision making away from local people.

Therefore, while we welcome the stated Government objectives of devolving power to regions and local communities, and getting councils back on their feet with long-term settlements, the proposed plan for a unitary council will not achieve this but instead will:

- Divert resources and funds to restructuring at a time when services are already stretched;
- Lead to a reduction in the quality of services where SHDC currently operates, such as leisure centres, public toilets, waste collection, sustainable communities, planning and local housing, environmental protection, parks and open spaces, etc - due to inevitable financial pressures on any future unitary council; and
- Lead to a reduction of local democracy, fewer public representatives and less support for local people who need it

Therefore, the Council:

1. mandates the Leader to write to the Government on its behalf outlining this Council's concerns, with all related correspondence being circulated to the wider membership (i.e. all Council Members) for their information and reference only;
2. supports the joint statement issued by the Leaders of the eight district councils throughout Devon that includes opposing: a) a Single Unitary Council solution for Devon; and b) the postponement of the County Council elections in May 2025; and
3. will widely consult with its residents, businesses, community organisations and town and parish councils once a firm reorganisation proposal is ready for consideration."

The motion received majority support and was carried

Clay Park Housing Development

As part of SHDC's drive to create lower cost homes, it is investing an additional £300,000 to bring the Clay Park housing development in Dartington one step closer to completion.

The project is the first of its kind in the South Hams, delivered in partnership with Aster Group and Transition Homes Community Land Trust. It will offer 39 new energy- efficient, 100% social rental homes for local people and those with a strong connection to Dartington and the adjacent parishes including Totnes.

With this new investment, SHDC will have contributed a total of £623,000 to make the innovative housing scheme a reality. The homes, which will be available via Devon Home Choice are expected to be available from late 2026.

The homes will include six one-bedroom flats/maisonettes, two one-bedroom houses, 13 two-bedroom houses, 12 three-bedroom houses and six four-bedroom houses. All of the properties will be delivered to the highest energy efficiency rating, EPC A and will come with air source heat pumps and solar panels to help customers with their energy bills.

Plans for the site also include a community garden, an orchard, and a community building which will be delivered once the homes are complete

This development is the first in South Hams in which a Community Land Trust and housing developer has together delivered a site that offers 100% of the homes available for social rent.

Housing at Parkers Way

I have chased LiveWest on when it plans to commence its social housing development at Parkers Way. All the necessary planning documents are in place and I have been informed that it is in the process of procuring a contractor to carry out the construction works.

Government Financial Cuts

In the latest government funding round SHDC has suffered substantial cutbacks that present the council with a number of challenges. The cuts are as follows.

- The Government has repurposed the Rural Services Delivery Grant and this grant has been withdrawn from 25/26 onwards. SHDC used to receive over £0.5m in funding from this.
- The Government has also announced that 2025/26 will be the last year of New Homes Bonus payments. The Council has been using £0.7m of NHB to fund the base budget annually (and it is

proposed to use £0.96m of NHB to fund the base budget in 2025/26). Therefore the withdrawal of this is increasing the budget gap for 2026/27 onwards by this amount.

- There will be a business rates baseline reset in 2026/27. In a letter from the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution) it was stated that ‘we will also reform our approach to allocating funding within the Local Government Finance Settlement, to redistribute funding to reflect an up-to-date assessment of need and local revenue from 2026/27. An initial consultation on the principles of the funding reform has been issued. Initial modelling indicates that South Hams could suffer losses in funding from the impact of the reforms. This is very uncertain as no figures have been given in the consultation document and there will be a further consultation in the summer.
- Net additional Employers’ National Insurance costs (£267,000) – The Chancellor announced in the Autumn Budget that there would be a higher rate of employers national insurance costs for 25/26 onwards. This is predicted to cost the Council an extra £410,000. The Government has said it would reimburse Councils for the extra costs of this (£515 million nationally). However latest modelling indicates the Government compensation grant is likely to only to be in the region of £143,000 and therefore only cover a third of the extra costs. Final allocations of Government Grant will be announced in February 2025. Therefore it has been modelled that this is going to cost the Council an extra £267,000 for 2025/26 onwards.

In addition SHDC is also facing other financial challenges such as

- Increase in temporary accommodation costs (£250,000) – The Council is experiencing a significant increase in the cost of temporary accommodation..
- Reduction in planning income (£90,000)
- Pay awards (£775,000)
- Drop in Treasury Management income (£600,000)
- Inflation (£450,000)
- Additional waste collection costs (£850,000)

It is against this financially challenging background the Council has proceeded with the increases in car parking fees as set out in the report to the Executive Committee at its meeting on 23 January 2025. During the consultation concerns were raised by town councils that parking fees increases will have an adverse effect on town centre trade. To address this issue I proposed that in addition to the review of parking permits there be a review of the Residents Discount Scheme and the impact on user numbers taking into account the increase in charges.

The committee agreed my proposal and the review is to be carried out and completed by the end of 2025.

Harberton Neighbourhood Plan

At a recent Harberton Parish Council meeting it was proposed that it consider including in its emerging Neighbourhood Plan a housing development at a site known as Winsland House being close to the Totnes/Harberton parish boundary.

This site is not designated for development in the JLP. Harberton Parish Council has been informed by SHDC that it would oppose such a development being included in the Neighbourhood Plan. I would suggest that the Town Council make its views known bearing in mind it has indicated in the past it is opposed to such development.

Cllr John Birch
SHDC Member for Totnes
27 January 2025

District Councillor Report for Totnes Town Council

from Cllr Anna Presswell

27/01/2025

Totnes Tennis Club

The club arranged for a preliminary trench to be dug for the foundations of their proposed extension with only a few days to go before their planning application ran out (a pre-requisite to extend their planning application). A recommendation will be put to members to support a S106 application towards costs, but it requires a fully costed scheme to be presented to the Council (as is standard practice), which will be done.

There is £40,000 of S106 monies dedicated to Borough Park, of these funds some drainage is likely required once the new Skatepark is built if not prior. And I believe there is discussion on improving the path around the edge which is lifting in some places due to tree roots.

The Tennis Club extension is hugely important. They do an enormous amount with our local community including training disabled players and with limited room, are considering capping their membership. The limited facilities of only one changing room and no toilet, dictating this. It seems an enormous shame, when our residents are looking to train and get healthy and have another form of social engagement.

Totnes Leisure Centre

A meeting took place with the chair of Tadpool and the Leisure Centre Fusion manager early January. Several quotes for poolside refurbishment had been attained and proved a lot more expensive than anticipated. This would lengthen the time for fundraising and it was decided that a more useful scheme would be for both Tadpool and Fusions Totnes manager to develop 4 'quick win' projects. One idea being refurbish the gym and weights area, knocking through partition walls to give increased space and light.

The costs would be much less and the project would be completed in the near future rather than a lengthy term. Leisure Centre users would see the benefit of a large cleaner space. Grants funding and potentially S106 monies could support it.

Kingsbridge Inn

A group of 15-20 individuals met at the Guildhall to discuss forming a Community group to bid for the purchase of the Kingsbridge Inn. There was an interesting presentation from members of the Tally Ho (Littlehempston), who have successfully manoeuvred this journey over the last few years and are happy to support the group. Of those attending, half committed to play an active role to forward this project. The next meeting will be to organise the Steering Group.

Parking

At the Budget Advisory Committee on Thursday 16th Jan both myself and Cllr Matt Steele (Ivybridge) were planning to propose a very similar recommendation, and to save having to debate this twice, it was put forward as a single recommendation for Committee consideration.

Cllr Matt Steele presented and I seconded a recommendation regarding the increase in Car Parking charges, the various tariffs and more. We both spoke at this committee, and again at the Executive meeting.

Dartmouth, Ivybridge and Totnes (3 of the major towns in the South Hams) were all against the hike in charges, though agreeable to raise according to inflation, but not supporting the complicated two-tiered

pricing structure. Totnes Chamber of Commerce also wrote a comprehensive report detailing the adverse effect on businesses in town.

At the Executive meeting a few days later members of the various Town Councils and Chambers of Commerce were represented and spoke.

The proposer of the amendment made reference to:

- it being questionable if the additional car parking charges would generate the extra revenue projected. Furthermore, the proposer highlighted the unintended behavioural changes that could arise should the charges be increased as recommended (e.g. additional parking in residential streets and less town centre visits being to the detriment to the local economy); and
- the uncertainties around the medium and long-term future of the District Council due to the recent publication of the Devolution White Paper.

In the ensuing debate on the amendment, the following points were raised:

- Some Members were of the view that the differential charging proposals were unnecessarily complicated and bureaucratic. Moreover, a Member stated that they felt that the proposals could negatively impact upon the most vulnerable residents in the South Hams;
- The requirement to strike the balance between financial sustainability of the Council and the needs of local residents, businesses and visitors was highlighted. In addition, the fact that charges had not been increased since April 2021 and inflation over that time had equated to 22% was stressed in the meeting;
- The public consultation exercise being held over the Christmas and New Year period was considered to be unfortunate;
- A local Ward Member for Dartmouth expressed his serious reservations over the proposals and was very disappointed that he felt that the Executive was not listening to the concerns that he was raising on behalf of his local community. The Member hoped that the Committee would approve this amendment in order to send a strong message to the Executive to re-think these charging proposals;

When put to the vote, the amendment was declared **LOST**;

Burnt Out Car by Totnes Station and Network Rail outreach

I contacted Fastglobe to ask about the removal of the burnt out vehicle that confronts those arriving from Cornwall by train. It appears to be on their land at the Milk Factory. I also spoke to Jason Veasey PCSO who told me it is due to be removed in February.



DRAFT MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL
MONDAY 6TH JANUARY 2025 IN THE GUILDHALL

Present: Councillors T Bennett (Chair), L Auletta, C Beavis, J Chinnock, S Collinson, T Cooper, J Cummings, D Peters, A Presswell, N Roberts and M Trant.

Apologies: Cllrs J Hannam, J Hodgson, E Price, T Robshaw and L Smallridge, and District Cllr Birch.

In Attendance: Members of the public, District Cllr Allen, C Marlton (Town Clerk) and P Bethel (Town Sergeant).

1. WELCOME TO ALL ATTENDING AND OBSERVING

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

To receive apologies and to confirm that any absence has the approval of the Council. The Mayor will request confirmation that all Members have completed or made any necessary amendments to their Declaration of Interests.

The apologies were received and accepted. There were no amendments to declarations of interest.

It should be noted that there was repeated disruption of the meeting from a gathering outside the Guildhall. [*Post-meeting note from the Town Clerk: in the event of future disturbances, the Chair should suspend the meeting and contact the Police.*]

The Committee will adjourn for the following items:

Reports from County and District Councillors.

- e. County Cllr Hodgson**
- f. District Cllr Allen**
- g. District Cllr Birch**
- h. District Cllr Presswell**

*It was **RESOLVED** to suspend standing orders.*

- a. County Cllr (C Cllr) Hodgson was not present and had not submitted a report.
- b. District Cllr Allen was present and had not submitted a report but gave a verbal update on a devolution briefing given at South Hams District Council (SHDC) following the Government's announcement of the English Devolution White Paper. Discussion on the devolution issue included: the feasibility of having such a large authority to cover all Devon and the distance between this level of local government and local residents; questions on the local MP's involvement in the White Paper process and their views; concerns about inadequate time for Town Council engagement; concerns about district council

service delivery, as well as retention and recruitment of staff; potential delays to County Council elections due to be held in May 2025; the impact on the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority, and the Plymouth and South Devon freeport. District Councillors were asked to update the Town Council with any further information at the February meeting.

c. District Cllr Birch was not present and had not submitted a report.

d. District Cllr Presswell was present and answered questions on her written report, including: expenditure on waste vehicles given uncertainty over the future of the District Council (District Cllrs Presswell and Allen agreed to get full costs and the budgets the expenditure will come from at SHDC); the car parking proposals – impact on local businesses, limited consultation period, the lack of accessible consultation options, and limited information provided (District Cllrs Presswell and Allen agreed to raise these issues at SHDC); how the Council can respond to the devolution plans; and the potential threat to Devon County Council funding of libraries.

The Council reconvened.

3. CLERK'S REPORT

To note the Clerk's Report for November and December 2024 (general updates and correspondence).

Noted.

4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

To approve and sign the minutes of the following Meeting:

(Please note confidential minutes can be agreed but any discussion must be held in Part 2)

a. Full Council 2nd December 2024.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve and sign the minutes.

b. Extraordinary Full Council 16th December 2024.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve and sign the minutes.

To note the following minutes:

c. Council Matters Committee 9th December 2024.

Noted.

d. Planning Committee 16th December 2024.

Noted.

5. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTERS ARISING

To consider any matters arising from the Minutes and to approve any recommendations from Committees:

(Please note confidential minutes can be agreed but any discussion must be held in Part 2)

a. Full Council 2nd December 2024.

No matters arising.

b. Extraordinary Full Council 16th December 2024.

No matters arising.

c. Council Matters Committee 9th December 2024

Item 4 – Draft 2025/26 Budget. See agenda item 7.

Item 5 – Burial and Cremation Consultation. See agenda item 9.

Item 6 – Payments to Councillors. It was **RESOLVED** that the Council adopts the Payments to Councillors Policy. The annual allowance for elected members has increased to £487.50 per annum, subject to PAYE and attendance requirements as outlined.

Item 7 – Asset Transfer Policy. This item was deferred until legal advice has been received on the draft policy (as previously agreed by Committee).

d. Planning Committee 16th December 2024

No recommendations.

6. TAX BASE FOR 2025/26

To note the tax base for financial year 2025/26.

Noted.

7. PRECEPT SETTING

To consider the Council Matters Committee recommendation for the precept for financial year 2025/26.

It was **RESOLVED** unanimously to accept a 5 percent increase to the precept as detailed below:

	2024/25	2025/26
	Current	5% increase to precept
Tax base (no second homes uplift)	3000.38	3025.34
Second Homes premium tax base	N/A	53.49
Total tax base	3000.38	3078.83
Precept amount for Second Homes premium	£0.00	£11,967.26
Precept amount without Second homes premium	£656,022.00	£676,855.84
Precept TOTAL	£656,022.00	£688,823.10
Band D rate	£218.65	£223.73
£ change per year to Band D	N/A	£5.08
Percentage change per year to Band D	N/A	2.32%

8. SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS

To consider any emergency funding to community groups supporting the most vulnerable in Totnes.

It was **RESOLVED** to allocate £15K from the Strategic Priorities budget to support community groups.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendation of the Community Working Group and to allocate this £15K of funding as follows:

- £3.5K for Citizens Advice.
- £10K for Totnes Caring, with the following requests: to pursue strategic meetings with the NHS on funding; to focus to spend on Community Transport users within the Totnes parish boundary; to provide further data about the proportion of users inside and outside the Totnes parish boundary; and to approach parish councils in surrounding villages who benefit from the service for a financial contribution.
- £1.5K for Caring Town to provide a smaller emergency funding pot for projects specifically linked to food security and fuel poverty.

9. BURIAL AND CREMATION CONSULTATION

To consider the Law Commission's consultation on 'Burial and Cremation' in relation to Totnes Cemetery and make any recommendation to Full Council (deadline 9th January).

It was **RESOLVED** unanimously that the Council responds to the consultation as drafted in the papers.

10. LIST OF MEETING DATES AND COMMUNICATIONS POINTS

To note a list of upcoming meeting dates, Council communications points and link Councillor/Councillor representatives on outside bodies updates.

Noted.

11. NEXT MEETING

To note the next meeting date of Monday 3rd February 2025, 6.30pm public session, 7.00pm formal meeting in the Guildhall.

Noted.

The Council will be asked to RESOLVE to exclude the press and public "by reason of the confidential nature of the business" to be discussed and in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

12. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE (Standing Item)

To consider any recommendations or matters arising that are considered confidential in nature: Council Matters Committee item 12 (legal).

None.

13. ELMHIRST PROJECT (Standing Item)

To consider an update on the Elmhirst project and the delegation of costs associated with the bid process (commercially sensitive).

None.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.

Cllr Tim Bennett

Deputy Chair



DRAFT MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF COUNCIL MATTERS MONDAY 13TH JANUARY 2025 AT 6.30PM IN THE GUILDHALL

Present: Councillors D Peters (Chair), C Beavis, T Bennett, J Chinnock, J Hannam (from 1858) and T Robshaw.

Apologies: Cllr Price and Hannam (running late).

In Attendance: Cllrs Auletta, Collinson and Cummings, C Marlton (Town Clerk).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair read a statement about how the meeting would be conducted and recorded. The apologies were accepted.

The Committee will adjourn for the following items:

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Cllr Collinson asked to speak on item 4b relating to the Economy Working Group. It was **AGREED** to suspend standing orders to allow debate at the appropriate time on the agenda.

The Committee will reconvene to consider the following items:

2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

To approve the minutes of 9th December 2024 and update on any matters arising.

The minutes were **AGREED** unanimously as an accurate record of the proceedings.

3. RESERVES POLICY

To review the Reserves Policy.

To **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council that the policy is amended to reflect a minimum of 3-6 month in General Reserves.

4. BUDGET MONITOR

To consider the Budget Monitor including:

a. The reserves projection.

Noted.

b. Proposed earmarked reserves and budget expenditure.

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council the creation of the following Earmarked Reserves:

Reserves Impact 2024/25		
Reserves at the start of 2024/25	£694,039	
Expected 2024/25 outturn (spend from reserve)	-£1,983	
Earmarked reserve (EMR) - Green Travel	£5,993	Already agreed
Earmarked reserve (EMR) - Van replacement	£20,000	Already agreed
NEW - Suggested EMR - Council website	£8,000	RECOMMEND to Full Council
NEW - Suggested EMR - Replacement of Christmas Lights	£30,000	RECOMMEND to Full Council
NEW - Suggested EMR - Civic Funeral	£1,000	RECOMMEND to Full Council
NEW - Suggested EMR - Emergency Capital Repairs	£100,000	RECOMMEND to Full Council
NEW - Suggested EMR - Community facilities (from Strategic Priorities underspend)	£45,000	RECOMMEND to Full Council
NEW - Suggested EMR - Devolution/Transfer of Assets/Localism	£50,000	RECOMMEND to Full Council
Total est EMR at end 24/25	£259,993	RECOMMEND to Full Council
Total est general reserves end of 24/25	£436,029	

c. The Community/Economy /Environment and PR and Strategic Priorities budgets.

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council the proposed allocations (highlighted) for: a one off 'tidy up by an external contractor (£10K); and transport feasibility Phase 1 (£10K).

The Committee **AGREED** allocations for: vehicle activated signage purchase (£6K); new bins phase 1 (£5K); Vire Island tidy up (£2.5K); community mapping (£5K); and the removal of £1.5K allocated to community composting in the current financial year.

Community Development 24 25		
Environment/Public Realm		
Committed and spent	5057	
Green travel - Vehicle Activated signage	6000	AGREED by Council Matters
Community Composting Survey	300	Agreed previously
Community composting - next steps after further discussion	0	It was AGREED to remove this £1500 item from the budget plan for the current year
New Bins Phase 1	5000	AGREED by Council Matters
Initial tidy up Vire Island	2500	AGREED by Council Matters
One off 'tidy' up by external contractor	10000	RECOMMENDATION to Full Council
TOTAL	28857	
OVERSPEND	7762	
Economy		
Committed and spent	675	Previously agreed
Transport Feasibility Phase 1	10000	RECOMMENDATION to Full Council
TOTAL	10675	
UNDERSPEND	4325	

Community		
Committed and spent	39328	
Community mapping	5000	AGREED by Council Matters
50% generator cost	355	Previously agreed
TOTAL	44683	
UNDERSPEND	5817	
Strategic Priorities		
Away Day	473	Previously agreed
Emergency resilience grants	15000	Previously agreed
TOTAL	15473	
UNDERSPEND	50859	Please note that £45000 of this underspend is proposed for allocation to Community Facilities EMR
Total Community Development budget	152927	
Total proposed expenditure	99688	
Total UNDERSPEND	53239	

5. DRAFT 2025/26 BUDGET

To consider an initial draft budget for financial year 2025/26 (document attached). Recommendations to Full Council needed on:

a. Annual budget for 2025/26.

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council the Annual Budget for 2025/26 as drafted, with the caveat that the Community Development budgets are reviewed by each Working Group to ensure that the outlined projects are the priorities.

b. Anticipated spend from Reserve in 2025/26.

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council the anticipated spend from Reserve in 2025/26 as drafted, noting that the figures are based on estimated year-end figures for 2024/25.

6. MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS AND BUDGET

To consider the Mayor's engagements since October 2024 and the current budget.

The Mayor's engagements and budget was **AGREED** unanimously.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note the date of the next meeting of the Council Matters Committee – Monday 10th February 2025 at 6.30pm in the Guildhall.

Noted.

*The Committee will be asked to **RESOLVE** to exclude the press and public "by reason of the confidential nature of the business" to be discussed and in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. (CONFIDENTIAL by virtue of relating to legal and/or commercial matters, staffing and/or the financial or business affairs of a person or persons other than the Council)*

8. BANK STATEMENTS AND RECONCILIATIONS (Standing Item)

To consider the bank statements and reconciliations for September (financial).

These were reviewed and **AGREED**.

9. STAFF ATTENDANCE

To note sickness and overtime balances (personal details).

Noted.

10. STAFFING UPDATE

For any general or urgent updates that required confidential sharing with Councillors (staffing).

None.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm

Catherine Marlton

Town Clerk

January 2025



DRAFT MINUTES FOR THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

MONDAY 20TH JANUARY 2025 IN THE GUILDHALL

Present: Councillors T Bennett (Chair), L Auletta, S Collinson (from 1840), T Cooper, J Cummings (from 1835), J Hodgson (from 1835) and I Smallridge.

Apologies: Cllr Trant.

In Attendance: Cllr Beavis, District Cllr Allen and S Halliday (Governance and Projects Manager).

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive apologies and to confirm that any absence has the approval of the Council.

Cllr Bennett read out a statement about how the meeting would be conducted and recorded.

The apologies were accepted.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present.

2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

To approve the minutes of 16th December 2024 and update on any matters arising.

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of proceedings.

3. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

To make recommendations on the following planning applications:

Note: Cllr Hodgson observes and does not vote on any applications which would potentially be discussed at a Development Management Committee meeting at South Hams District Council (SHDC).

3a. 4081/24/LBC – Listed Building Consent for retrospective ground floor works. 1A Plymouth Road, Totnes.

Comment – the Committee supports the ongoing work of the SHDC Heritage Officer in this case and their detailed monitoring of the remedial works required.

The construction plan for this site was very clear about keeping the footway clear. However, the footway has frequently been blocked by vehicles involved in the works to date.

3b. 4029/24/FUL - Partial roof replacement to north side, new windows, external cladding & thermal upgrades to southern elevation & internal refurbishment. 4 Collins Road, Totnes, TQ9 5PJ.

Comment – the Committee would be minded to support this application if the following points are taken into consideration:

- Façade – appears very flat (see window comment below). The drawings show the timber cladding very close to the rendered surfaces – increasing the depth between the two would enhance the street scene. The Committee requests that the render is painted in heritage white to improve the visual amenity.

- Windows – the proposed use of aluminium framed corporate glazing results in a very flat façade which differs from other properties in the immediate area. Use of timber window frames would add depth and be more in keeping with the vernacular.
- Request the removal of future permitted development rights to ensure that the building remains an important employment space in the town.

3c. 3955/24/LBC – Listed Building Consent for internal works and repairs – shop fit out. 32 High Street, Totnes, TQ9 5RY.

Support. However, the Committee wish to ensure that the Heritage Officer is content with the methodology, materials and skills required to repair the historic ceiling.

And to note:

3d. 4003/24/PHH – Application to determine if prior approval is required for proposed rear and side extensions. 6 Priory Drive Totnes TQ9 5HU.

Noted.

4. LICENSING APPLICATION

To consider the following application for a renewal of a pavement licence:

4a. Bruto Lounge, 6 The Plains, Totnes, TQ9 5DR.

Support.

5. TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT FORUM

To:

a. Consider the potential locations for vehicle activated signs in Totnes and make any recommendation to Full Council;

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that the following locations are supported for Phase 1 Vehicle Activated Sign locations in Totnes and that further advice from Devon County Council Highways is requested: Plymouth Road; Western Bypass (below Cistern Street); Bridgetown Hill, St Katherine's Way.

b. Note the minutes from the Traffic and Transport Steering Group held on 11th December 2024.

Noted.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note the date of the next meeting of the Planning Committee – Monday 17th February 2025 at 6.30pm in the Guildhall.

Noted.

The meeting closed at 7.17pm.

Sara Halliday
Governance and Projects Manager
January 2025



DRAFT MINUTES FOR THE TOWN MATTERS COMMITTEE

MONDAY 27TH NOVEMBER 2024 IN THE GUILDHALL

Present: Councillors S Collinson (Chair), L Auletta, C Beavis, J Chinnock, J Cummings, E Price, and N Roberts

Apologies: Cllrs Peters, Presswell and Robshaw.

In Attendance: S Halliday (Governance and Projects Manager).

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive apologies and to confirm that any absence has the approval of the Council.

Cllr Collinson read out a statement about how the meeting would be conducted and recorded.

The apologies were accepted.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present.

2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

To approve the minutes of 25th November 2024 and update on any matters arising.

The minutes were **AGREED** as an accurate record of proceedings. Matters arising:

Item 5 – VE-Day 80th anniversary commemorations. It was **RESOLVED** unanimously that the Council lights a beacon on Kingsbridge Hill as part of the VE-Day 80th commemorations on 8th May 2025.

Item 7 - Reform of Bathing Water Regulations 2013' Consultation. It was **RESOLVED** unanimously that the Council responds to the consultation as drafted.

Item 8 - South Hams Way. It was **RESOLVED** by majority that the Council supports the proposed South Hams Way footpath.

3. STRATEGY DELIVERY GROUP AND WORKING GROUPS

To consider the notes and any actions from:

a. Environment and Public Realm Working Group, 27th November 2024.

Noted. Item 3 PRD2.O – Cistern Street /bypass. To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that it writes to:

- Devon County Council to ask: if there are suggestions of how best to prevent illegal parking/encampments along the stretch of land by installing boulders, railings, etc; and what site provision is made for travellers in the county, specifically around Totnes; and
- South Hams District Council to enquire that what site provision they have made or are considering for travellers in the district.

b. Community Working Group, 3rd December 2024 and 6th January 2025.

Noted.

c. Economy Working Group, 4th December 2024 and 15th January 2025.

Noted.

4. GREAT BRITISH SPRING CLEAN AND GREAT BIG SCHOOL CLEAN 2025

To consider any Council involvement in the Great British Spring Clean from 25th March to 10th April 2022.

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that the Council takes a role of awareness and promotion by providing publicity of the initiatives through:

- Posts on social media making the public aware of the scheme and inviting details of events which can be reshared to attract volunteers;
- Contacting local schools, Scouts, Transition Town Totnes/Transition Streets, Bridgetown Alive!, TQ9 Partnership to make them aware of the week and the importance of keeping our community tidy as part of an ongoing efforts;
- Coinciding the introduction of larger litter bins being installed and one-off tidy ups funded by the Town Council for these weeks; and
- Individual Councillors get involved in any larger schemes if they can.

5. COVID-19 DAY OF REFLECTION

To note the national 'Covid-19 Day of Reflection' on Sunday 9th March 2025.

Noted. The Committee supported the officer's proposed approach.

6. COMMUNITY AWARDS TIMELINE

To note the timeline for the 2025 Community Awards.

Noted.

7. OPEN SPACE, SPORTS, RECREATION AND WELLBEING PLAN UPDATE

To update on any general matters linked to the Open Spaces, Sport Recreation and Wellbeing Plan (standing item).

Cllr Auletta updated that she now has a base map that she will use to mark up with the various categories of open space/facilities set out in the OSSRW, and that she will bring a couple of options to the next meeting for the Committee to consider.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note the date of the next meeting of the Town Matters Committee – Monday 24th March 2025 at 6.30pm.

Noted.

The meeting closed at 7.45pm.

Sara Halliday

Governance and Projects Manager

ITEM 4 – CONSIDERATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

4a. Full Council, 6th January 2025

No recommendations.

4b. Council Matters Committee, 13th January 2025

Item 3 – Reserves Policy. To **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council that the policy is amended to reflect a minimum of 3-6 month in General Reserves.

Item 4b – Proposed Earmarked Reserves and budget expenditure. To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council the creation of the following Earmarked Reserves:

Reserves Impact 2024/25		
Reserves at the start of 2024/25	£694,039	
Expected 2024/25 outturn (spend from reserve)	-£1,983	
Earmarked reserve (EMR) - Green Travel	£5,993	Already agreed
Earmarked reserve (EMR) - Van replacement	£20,000	Already agreed
NEW - Suggested EMR - Council website	£8,000	RECOMMEND to Full Council
NEW - Suggested EMR - Replacement of Christmas Lights	£30,000	RECOMMEND to Full Council
NEW - Suggested EMR - Civic Funeral	£1,000	RECOMMEND to Full Council
NEW - Suggested EMR - Emergency Capital Repairs	£100,000	RECOMMEND to Full Council
NEW - Suggested EMR - Community facilities (from Strategic Priorities underspend)	£45,000	RECOMMEND to Full Council
NEW - Suggested EMR - Devolution/Transfer of Assets/Localism	£50,000	RECOMMEND to Full Council
Total est EMR at end 24/25	£259,993	RECOMMEND to Full Council
Total est general reserves end of 24/25	£436,029	

Item 4c - Community/Economy /Environment and PR and Strategic Priorities budgets. To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council the proposed allocations for: a one off 'tidy up by an external contractor (£10K); and transport feasibility Phase 1 (£10K).

Item 5 – Draft 2025/26 Budget. See item 5 on the agenda.

4c. Planning Committee, 20th January 2025

Item 5a – Potential locations for vehicle activated signs. To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that the following locations are supported for Phase 1 Vehicle Activated Sign locations in Totnes and that further advice from Devon County Council Highways is requested: Plymouth Road; Western Bypass (below Cistern Street); Bridgetown Hill, St Katherine's Way

4d. Town Matters Committee, 27th January 2025

Item 3a – Environment and Public Realm Working Group, Cistern Street/Bypass. To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that it writes to:

- Devon County Council to ask: if there are suggestions of how best to prevent illegal parking/encampments along the stretch of land by installing boulders, railings, etc; and what site provision is made for travellers in the county, specifically around Totnes; and
- South Hams District Council to enquire that what site provision they have made or are considering for travellers in the district.

Item 4 – Great British Spring Clean and Great Big School Clean 2025. To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that the Council takes a role of awareness and promotion by providing publicity of the initiatives through:

- Posts on social media making the public aware of the scheme and inviting details of events which can be reshared to attract volunteers;
- Contacting local schools, Scouts, Transition Town Totnes/Transition Streets, Bridgetown Alive!, TQ9 Partnership to make them aware of the week and the importance of keeping our community tidy as part of an ongoing efforts;
- Coinciding the introduction of larger litter bins being installed and one-off tidy ups funded by the Town Council for these weeks; and
- Individual Councillors get involved in any larger schemes if they can.

ITEM 5 – BUDGET FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2025/26

The Council Matters recommendation is as follows:

a. Annual budget for 2025/26.

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council the Annual Budget for 2025/26 as drafted, with the caveat that the Community Development budgets are reviewed by each Working Group to ensure that the outlined projects are the priorities.

b. Anticipated spend from Reserve in 2025/26.

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council the anticipated spend from Reserve in 2025/26 as drafted, noting that the figures are based on estimated year-end figures for 2024/25.

ITEM 8 – ANNUAL TOWN MEETING AND MAYOR MAKING

a. The proposed dates are as follows:

Annual Town Meeting (public meeting) – Wednesday 9th April, time to be confirmed (not before 6pm) and proposed to be in the Civic Hall.

Mayor Making (invitation only) – Wednesday 21st May in the Guildhall.

b. The format of the Annual Town Meeting. The agenda usually comprises reports from the Mayor and the Clerk, open forum for the public to ask questions, Council Awards presentation, and last year there was an item explaining the Community Economic Plan given by a South Hams District Council officer.

Officer Note: Standing Orders makes no mention of the Annual Town Meeting . However, the Local Government Act 1972 states that the Annual Town Meeting shall not be held in a premises which at the time of the meeting is being used for the supply of alcohol, which are the same rules that apply to ordinary Council meetings and as set out in Standing Orders.

ITEM 9 – LIST OF MEETING DATES

Month	Full Council, 7pm	Council Matters Committee, 6.30pm	Planning Committee, 6.30pm	Town Matters Committee, 6.30pm
January 2025	Monday 6 th	Monday 13 th	Monday 20 th	Monday 27 th
February 2025	Monday 3 rd	Monday 10 th	Monday 17 th	None
March 2025	Monday 3 rd	Monday 10 th	Monday 17 th	Monday 24 th
April 2025	Monday 7 th	Monday 14 th	Monday 28 th	None

February

Full Council – 3rd February at 6.30pm

Council Matters Committee – 10th February at 6.30pm

Community Working Group – 11th February at 6pm

Economy Working Group – 12th February at 1pm (or by Zoom)

Mayor's Civic Service and Lunch – 16th February at 10.20am at St John's Church

Planning Committee – 17th February at 6.30pm

Town Matters Committee – no meeting

March

Full Council – 3rd March at 6.30pm

Council Matters Committee – 10th March at 6.30pm

Councillor Away Day – Saturday 15th March, Dartington Hall.

Planning Committee – 17th March at 6.30pm

Town Matters Committee – 24th March at 6.30pm

Environment and Public Realm Working Group – 26th March at 4.30pm

April

Full Council – 7th April at 6.30pm

Annual Town Meeting – 9th April at 5pm (to include the presentation of the Council Awards).

Council Matters Committee – 14th April at 6.30pm

Economy Working Group – 15th January at 6.30pm

Planning Committee – 28th April at 6.30pm

Traffic and Transport Forum and Steering Group – 30th April at 6.30pm

Communications Points – please check the Totnes Town Council ‘News’ page Further verbal updates to be given by the Clerk at the meeting.

Link Councillor/Councillor Representative on Outside Body Updates

Cllr Auletta Link Cllr Activity Jan 2025:

- Gave presentation to MP Caroline Voaden about traffic and transport issues in Totnes (TTF meeting).
- Liaising with schools governor and SHDC in regards to getting School Travel Plans.
- Contact with Skatepark re new funding regime.
- Visited Museum to meet K■■■ W■■■ Chair, and archaeologist M■■■ H■■■ (The Ships Project) to look at the 1950s Castle Dig finds and discuss potential for future exhibitions.
- Discussions with Fusion Totnes Pavilions re outdoor classes for the TTT Midsummer festival.

Cllr Robshaw Link Cllr Report Jan 2025 - Stepping Stones CIC

Stepping Stones Food and Wellbeing, located at St John’s Church in Bridgetown, Totnes, offers a variety of community services:

- Totnes Food Bank: Provides a week’s worth of food and essential groceries to those referred. Supplies are obtained from a variety of donors, such as local shops, including Morrison’s, which has a designated area for customer donations.
- TQ9 Food Club: For a weekly membership fee of £3.50, members can select up to 10 items from the shelves. This initiative aims to support community members who may not access the food bank but still require assistance.

The second floor kitchen is being utilised to cook a range of nutritious 'ready meals', including vegan curries and gluten-free options, that can be taken away. This element is expanding and they are awaiting a grant for an extra fridge to store them in. They also provide packs specifically for those who do not have access to kitchen facilities or only a kettle, such as those residing at hotels. People accessing this service are of all ages, including families with young children and those living with disability.

- Warm Hearts Café: Open three lunchtimes a week, offering a pay-what-you-can model. Volunteers serve light lunches such as toasties, soup, jacket potatoes, and drinks. The café fosters lively and friendly conversations among a diverse group of diners in the accessible ground floor church foyer.
- Mindful Arts & Crafting: Regular art classes, mindfulness crafting, and free relaxation sessions are held in the first-floor space on various days. A play area for children, a corner for private conversations, a donation-based jumble sale area with quality clothing, and a shelf of free books are also available.
- Citizens Advice Bureau: Offers services for one day a week in an upstairs room, providing guidance and support to those accessing other parts of the project.

Bringing these services under one roof enhances accessibility, engagement to each and encourages social interaction among potentially isolated and vulnerable individuals and others.

The integrative and inspiring work at Stepping Stones has the potential for further expansion, creating a friendly and communal atmosphere that fosters an inviting route to essential support.

Kit Stevens, the project manager, invites all councillors to visit for a tour and a cuppa to learn more about the project.

The project requires additional funding. The rent they are paying, even at the reduced rate they have negotiated with the church, is a big draw on resources. They received no funding from the council last year. Allocating some of the funds set aside for community groups to this deserving project would assist in its sustainability and continued service to the community's much in-need members.

Here is a table showing numbers of people accessing the project:

24-25 Food bank/Food Club/Combo stats.							Week	12
Food Bank Running Totals		Average per week	Food Club Running Totals		Average per week	Combined Running Totals	Av. per wk	
Households	380	32	Households	364	30	Households	62	
Adults	523	44	Adults	540	45	Adults	89	
Children	440	37	Children	127	11	Children	47	
People	963	80	People	667	56	People	136	
Café	837							
Total people helped with food	2467							
Warm Space artists	77							
Total people helped	2544							
<i>Estimated annual totals</i>	<i>10178</i>							

2023-24 Food Bank, Food Club and Combined totals							Week number:	52
Food Bank Running Totals		Average per week	Food Club Running Totals		Average per week	Combined Running Totals	Av. per wk	
Households	1392	27	Households	1057	20	Households	47	
Adults	1865	36	Adults	1571	30	Adults	66	
Children	1345	26	Children	352	7	Children	33	
People	3210	62	People	1923	37	People	99	
Café	2895							
Total people helped with food	8028							
Warm Space Artists	471							
Total people helped	8499							

Opening hours: Monday: 12:30 - 7pm; Tuesday: 10am - 3pm; Thursday: 10am - 3pm

Contact Information: • Phone: 07988 639514. • Email: contact@steppingstonetotnes.co.uk •

Facebook: [Stepping Stones Totnes](#)