

AGENDA FOR THE MEETING OF COUNCIL MATTERS

MONDAY 8TH MARCH 2021 AT 6.30PM – HELD REMOTELY USING ZOOM

MEETING LINK: <https://zoom.us/j/95887764430>

Meeting ID: 958 8776 4430 Passcode: Not required

You are hereby SUMMONED to attend the **Council Matters Committee**, which is to be held using remote meeting service Zoom on **Monday 8th March 2021 at 6.30pm** for the purpose of transacting the following business:

Committee Members: Councillors E Price (Chair), M Adams, C Allford, J Hodgson, C Luker, P Paine, B Piper, V Trow.

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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 on Zoom and live streamed on social media. If members of the public make presentations, 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. If a member of the public wishes not to be recorded they are able to turn their video off or watch the meeting via the Town Council Facebook page.

Can members of the public please note that given the current climate Councillors and staff are adapting to remote and mainly paperless working and therefore you may see use of mobile phones and other devices for reference to the agenda and associated papers.

As Council meetings are not permitted to be held in a location where alcohol is served, we ask that all attendees refrain from consuming alcohol directly prior or during the meeting as per our Code of Conduct.

This meeting is limited to 90 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.

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

The Committee will adjourn for the following items:

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A period of 15 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions or make comment regarding the work of the Committee or other items that affect Totnes.

The Committee will convene to consider the following items:

2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

To approve the minutes of 8th February 2021 and update on any matters arising. Document attached.

3. PUBLIC REALM AND CEMETERY WORKING GROUP

To note the minutes of and consider any recommendations from the Public Realm and Cemetery Working Group held on 10th February 2021. Document attached.

4. ARTS WORKING GROUP

To note the minutes of and consider any recommendations from the Arts Working Group held on 25th February 2021. Document attached.

5. TREE PLANTING

To consider a proposal to plant a tree along each parish boundary. Document attached.

6. MAYORAL CHOOSING AND ANNUAL MEETING

To consider the dates for Mayoral Choosing and the annual Town Meeting, changes to the May Full Council date and an additional Extraordinary meeting date for Full Council on 1st April 2021.

- 1st April at 6.30pm (public time) and 7pm start, Extraordinary Full Council on Road Closures/Covid-19 town centre measures. Via Zoom.
- Monday 10th May Full Council moved to Thursday 5th May 2021 at the same time to accommodate the potential change to virtual meeting legislation. This meeting will also be the Annual General Meeting of the Town Council where the Mayor is elected. It may be worth considering a resolution to allow the previously appointed Chairs and Deputies of Committees to roll forwards for continuity. Via Zoom.
- Thursday 24th June at 7pm – Annual TOWN Meeting in the Civic Hall, assuming Covid regulations allow.

7. IN PERSON MEETINGS

To consider the practicalities of the resumption of in person meetings once the emergency legislation permitting virtual meetings ceases in May 2021. Verbal update Town Clerk.

8. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

To review the Financial Regulations. Document attached.

9. COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

To consider the draft Communications Strategy from 2021-24. Document attached.

10. PAY POLICY

To review the Pay Policy. Document attached.

11. TRAINING

To consider the training requirements of Councillors and officers for 2021. Verbal update Town Clerk.

12. RECRUITMENT

To consider the recruitment timelines for the administrator posts and the job description for the Administrator 1 position. Document attached.

13. PROTOCOL ON THE DEATH OF A SENIOR NATIONAL FIGURE

To note the protocols that the Town Council will observe on the death of a senior national figure. Document attached.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note the date of the next meeting of the Council Matters Committee – Monday 19th April 2021 at 6.30pm. No document.

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)

15. BANK STATEMENTS AND RECONCILIATIONS (Standing Item)

To consider the bank statements and reconciliations. Documents enclosed.

16. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REVIEWS

To note the outcomes of the officer performance management reviews for 2020. Document enclosed.

17. STAFFING UPDATE (Standing Item)

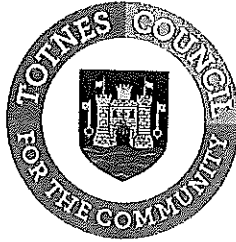
For any general or urgent updates that required confidential sharing with Councillors. No document.

Catherine Marlton
Town Clerk
3rd March 2021

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.



**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL MATTERS
MONDAY 8TH FEBRUARY 2021 AT 6.30PM – HELD REMOTELY USING ZOOM**

Present: Councillors E Price (Chair), M Adams, C Allford, C Luker, P Paine, B Piper, V Trow and J Hodgson (joined the meeting at 7.15pm).

Apologies: None.

In Attendance: Cllrs Collinson and Hendriksen, C Marlton (Town Clerk) and C Bewley (Finance, HR and Lettings Manager).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

None.

The Committee will adjourn for the following items:

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A period of 15 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions or make comment regarding the work of the Committee or other items that affect Totnes.

There were no members of the public who wished to speak.

The Committee reconvened.

2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

To approve the minutes of 18th January 2021 and update on any matters arising

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of proceedings. There were no matters arising.

3. FUNDING REQUESTS

To consider urgent funding requests from TRAYE (Totnes Rural Area Youth Engagement Project) and Totnes Caring.

Cllr Hodgson declared a personal interest in the TRAYE funding request. The Totnes project involves various outreach with young people over the past 5 years. The funding is requested for opening a youth cafe in Totnes.

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that both funding requests are granted, £2,000 for TRAYE and £4010 for Totnes Caring, from S137 funding as per the formal motion and table below:

Council Matters of 8th February 2021 are asked to consider whether the proposals in red, in accordance with its powers under section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, will be spent in the interests of the area of its inhabitants and will benefit them in a manner commensurate with expenditure. If they do agree they must **RECOMMEND** to Full Council of 1st March 2021 that these allocations be **RESOLVED**.

Name	Amount of grant	Reason
Transition Town Totnes	£5,809	PHASE 1 Support for large Climate Change Lottery Bid
Caring Town/Totnes Caring/Citizens Advice	£25,000	Community service to the vulnerable
Totnes Caring	£15000 (includes £2750 of 8 weeks staff support by secondment)	Emergency COVID 19 crisis
Food in Community	£800	Refrigeration costs during COVID 19
Totnes Connection Hub	£561	Food for food bank during COVID 19
Totnes Gardens	£2,000	Support for annual programme of improvements
Bridgetown Alive	£1344	Community Hall improvements
Totnes Caring	£4,010	Covid Response
TRAYE	£2,000	Youth Engagement
TOTAL	£56,524	
Remaining allocation	£360.00	Until the new financial year

4. COMMUNITY GRANT SCHEME

To consider a Community Grant Scheme application process.

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that a Community Grant Scheme is administered through a formal application process with two deadlines spaced evenly to allocate the £50000 equally over the two rounds.

5. BUDGET MONITOR

To consider the budget monitor.

The budget monitor and forecast was reviewed and unanimously **AGREED**. There will be an underspend in the current financial year due to a postponement of capital projects.

6. RESERVES POLICY

To consider a draft Reserves Policy.

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council with the amendment that the reserve has a minimum six months' operational costs.

7. GDPR PRIVACY NOTICE AND POLICY

To consider an updated GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) Privacy Notice and Privacy Policy.

It was **AGREED** to consider this item under Part 2.

8. PAYMENTS TO COUNCILLORS POLICY

To review the Payments to Councillors Policy.

The policy was reviewed and it was **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council for adoption.

9. CIVIC AND MAYORAL BUDGET POLICY

To review the Civic and Mayoral Budget Policy.

The policy was reviewed and it was **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council for adoption.

10. COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCE POLICY

To note the timeline, eligibility and process for claiming the Councillor allowance.

Noted.

11. SOLAR BENCHES

To note the grant money for solar benches.

Noted. It was **AGREED** that the benches should be purchased and that the Public Realm and Cemetery Working Group should consider potential locations with good sunlight at the meeting in April (The Plains, the Rotherfold, near the Pavilions) before relocating them to the Skatepark when complete.

12. TOTNES COUNCIL WEBSITE

To note the expected live date for the new Totnes Town Council website.

Noted. It is hoped that the website will be live by the end of February.

13. OFFICE MOVE

To note an update on the proposed office move.

Noted. Site meetings have not been possible due to lockdown, surveys are expected and further input is awaited from the architect before a consultant writes the planning application. The proposal and project plan will be taken through the Venues and Public Assets Working Group. The Clerk confirmed that the Town Council is on a repairing lease for the premises so funding from South Hams is not expected.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note the date of the next meeting of the Council Matters Committee – Monday 8th March 2021 at 6.30pm.

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)*

7. GDPR PRIVACY NOTICE AND POLICY

To consider an updated GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) Privacy Notice and Privacy Policy.

This was unanimously **AGREED** and it was **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council for adoption.

15. LEGAL ISSUE

To note an update on an insurance query.

Noted. Councillors **AGREED** with the Clerk's current course of enquiry.

16. STAFF ATTENDANCE

To note sickness and overtime balances.

Noted.

17. BANK STATEMENTS AND RECONCILIATIONS (Standing Item)

To consider the bank statements and reconciliations.

These were unanimously **AGREED**.

18. STAFF APPOINTMENT

To ratify the appointment of the Town Maintenance Officer.

This was unanimously **AGREED**.

19. STAFFING UPDATE (Standing Item)

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

Noted.

Catherine Marlton
Town Clerk

Public Realm and Cemetery Working Group Minutes

Wednesday 10th February 2021 at 12pm

Meeting held via Zoom.

Present: Cllrs Adams, Matthews, C. Allford, Trow, Hodgson, P. Allford, Price (Working Group - WG - members), Cllrs, Piper, Clerk, Communications and Marketing Manager, Governance and Projects Manager, Administrator (Minutes). Guests: Cathy [REDACTED] and Laurie [REDACTED] (Totnes Allotment Association – TAA), Richard [REDACTED] (Totnes Trust), Richard [REDACTED] (Member of the Public), 2 x Perch & Ponder signage Consultants.

Apologies: Cllr Skinner

1. To elect a Chair for the Working Group. Cllr Adams volunteered, and Cllr Hodgson nominated Cllr C. Allford. Cllr C. Allford was voted in as Chair by the members of the working group.

2a. Castle Meadow – to consider the requirement for a strategic plan for the site.

The Clerk summarised the current situation at Castle Meadow and that the WG needs to consider its future use. The TAA are keen for more allotments on the land based on local demand. The Clerk proposed holding a separate meeting to discuss this in detail, the area required and suitability of the land, and that the Public Assets and Venue Working Group is included as part of that discussion. Cllr Hodgson suggested creating a 3-year strategic plan and timeline which would be useful for future Council's to follow.

Decision in Principle: To **RECOMMEND** to the Council Matters Committee that the principle of allocating more land for allotments in Castle Meadow is agreed subject to further work and discussion to define the precise area, any archaeological restrictions and practicalities of the arrangement (ground clearance, fencing, etc).

Actions: Governance and Projects Manager to contact the TAA for maps and supporting planning documents.

2b. To consider whether the current 'no dogs' rule should be removed once the current farm tenancy expires at the end of March 2021.

This was deferred until a decision is taken regarding allotments.

2c. To consider a request from the TTA to extend the allotments into Castle Meadow.

This item was discussed with item 2a above.

2d. To consider the maintenance of the boundary hedges along upper Collins Road.

It was noted that the new Town Maintenance Officer will need to check bird nesting season in relation to any maintenance of the hedges and in liaison with the contractor.

It was **AGREED** that items 2b and 2d go to a separate meeting for discussion in due course.

3a. Cemetery – to consider the future uses of the cemetery areas to inform any future review of the Grounds Maintenance Contract.

Cllr P. Allford explained the areas of the cemetery, current uses and features in place (see agenda papers for reference) and some ideas for future uses:

- Segments in the Circle for scattering ashes.
- Possible reburials in the Old Part (NB: This would need approval from the Secretary of State).
- New Garden of Remembrance location used for scattering of ashes and plaques to be places (source of revenue). Councillors **AGREED** the length of time and cost of plaques would need to be discussed further if the idea were agreed in principle.

The Cllrs discussed the planting and cultivation of wildflowers in the Circle, Garden of Remembrance, Old Part and on the slope by the Chapel. Cllr Hodgson suggested a Tree of Remembrance.

Cllrs Trow, P.Allford and Adams left the meeting at 1pm.

To **RECOMMEND** to the Council Matters Committee:

- that the grass around the Chapel be left to grow long this year to see what wildflowers come up and how the area looks visually.
- that the current Garden of Rest does not extend beyond rows currently in use to enable full burials in the remaining ground; and
- that a new Garden of Rest, potentially including a garden for scattering ashes be created at the back of the Extension (section L).

Actions:

Governance and Projects Manager to liaise with colleagues regarding informing the Grounds Maintenance contractor to not cut grass by the Chapel.

3b. To review the cemetery fees

The Cllrs discussed whether cemetery fees need to increase and by how much.

It was **AGREED** that during a pandemic raising fees was unnecessary.

To **RECOMMEND** to the Council Matters Committee that there is no increase to fees until the 2022 annual review.

3c. To review requests for tree planting and wildflowers in the cemetery

The Cllrs discussed a memorial planting of a Rowan tree; where it could be planted, whether it would create maintenance issues for the council, and therefore whether a fee could be requested from the family.

To **RECOMMEND** to the Council Matters Committee that following pricing of a tree and projected maintenance costs the request for a memorial tree be granted.

The Cllrs **AGREED** to request an update from the organisation that has planted wildflowers including their plans for 2021.

Actions: Governance and Projects Manager to contact Plant Life and bring an update back to the next meeting.

3d. Memorandum of Understanding request from Incredible Edibles

To **RECOMMEND** to the Council Matters Committee that a Memorandum of Understanding is agreed with Incredible Edibles.

Actions: Governance and Projects Manager to draw up the Memorandum

4. To consider the consultants ideas for signage around the Town Mill and to use this area as a starting point for revised signage in the town (see agenda papers for reference)

The Clerk and Communications and Marketing Manager ran through the proposal of new signage including ideas of using the signage for council advertisements and information and requesting direction from the Cllrs in how to proceed.

The Cllrs discussed and concluded that in the first instance the signage at the Mill should be moved back to enable a clear view of the water wheel, the design should be simplified, and that all signage should be consistent throughout the town – it needs to be sustainable and cost effective and link to the heritage background.

To **RECOMMEND** to the Council Matters Committee that a simplified brief is given to the consultants and request 3 options of signage.

5. To consider the requirements of additional Grit Bins around the town

The Clerk suggested starting a conversation with Devon County Council to request new bins but to suggest that TTC is responsible for re-stocking bins. The Cllrs **AGREED** to take a list of where Grit Bins are required to a future Council Matters meeting. For discussion. Detail on ongoing responsibility for must be considered.

ACTION: Town Maintenance Officer to create a list of places Grit Bins are, and additional ones required. Town Maintenance Officer to liaise with SHDC on roles and responsibilities regarding existing Grit Bins.

6. To update on the Planters to be installed as apart of Shared Space improvements

The Clerk updated the Cllrs on the planters, confirming there are 3 different sizes due to be installed in early March. Planting has yet to be considered but needs to be low in height (a request by Devon Highways) and low in maintenance.

7. To consider where to put additional benches at Longmarsh

The Clerk to Berry Pomeroy Parish Council will be emailed to seek their agreement as this land falls in their Parish.

Action: Governance and Projects Manager to contact Berry Pomeroy PC before handing the sourcing and installing of additional benches to the Town Maintenance Officer.

8. To consider the weeding and topping of the Vire Island Boule Pit

Action: Governance and Projects Manager will email SHDC to determine which has responsibility for maintenance of the boule pitch.

9. To consider a tree planting partnership with Incredible Edibles

The Cllrs agreed this item to go to the Climate Change Working Group.

Action: Governance and Projects Manager to forward said agenda item to the Green Travel Coordinator and Community Fundraiser for inclusion in a future Climate Change meeting.

10. Date of the Next Meeting: Wednesday 14th April 2021 at 12pm

Arts Working Group Meeting Notes

Thursday 25th February @ 12.00 via Zoom

Working Group Members: Cllrs. Allen, Allford, Galvin, Matthews, Piper

Cllr. Skinner sent her apologies

External Attendees: Sarah [REDACTED] Chamber of Commerce (COC) and The Barrel House, Paul [REDACTED] NDP Circus, Rupert [REDACTED] Drift Records, Christian [REDACTED] TRAYE and The Blackbird Collective, Helen [REDACTED], and Jacqui [REDACTED] Jamming Station

TTC: Catherine Marlton, Sam Branch, Lesley Nel, Mairead Phipps

Informal session

1. Introductions from outside attendees

Cllr. Piper introduced the outside attendees to the Arts Working Group members and officers. Each one gave a run down on their background, what they do and plans for the forthcoming months/year.

2. Brief discussion: collaboration between individuals/organisations towards working together for community-based events - winter '21 and through '22.

See individual agenda item no. for further information.

Agenda items

1. Elect a Chair

Cllr. Piper proposed Cllr. Galvin as the new Chair which was seconded by Cllr. Allen and carried by the remaining Councillors

2. Proposed day change from Wednesdays to Thursdays

This proposal was agreed and accepted by all the Councillors that future AWG meeting will take place on Thursdays at 12pm

Action – M Phipps to change the internal diary and update all Councillors and attendees of future dates.

3. Halloween Event – paper attached

M Phipps directed the members to the attachment for a debrief on the Halloween event. All members agreed that the event was a huge success.

4. Totnes Events 2022 – Rupert Morrison

Rupert said his intention is to run a contemporary music festival in partnership with Totnes venues in May 2022. Was unable to run Sea Change in 2020 and will not be running it in 2021 either. May organise a 1-day event in August if restrictions allow.

5. Totnes Christmas Lights – Sarah [REDACTED]

Sarah said that she is looking to June 21st and not before to restart events as it is only on the 10th of May that we will know if the restrictions will lift on the 17th May according to the Music Venues Trust.

Sarah also said that she's managed to organise funding to hold an event around International Women's Day which is the 8th March. She will do something small online for that date but will hold a live event sometime in October, dates to be confirmed. This event is to promote women in Arts, getting employment for women and women in general.

Sarah outlined the problems with the towns Christmas lights. The lights are owned and stored by the Council but are installed by the Chamber of Commerce. Sarah said that the lights may only last another two years and also the hooks on the sides of the town buildings are rusty and some have come loose and/or insecure. Proposed we change/renew/refurbish the lights in 2022. The Narrows are a particular problem. Prepping the lights, pat testing and hanging them plus the electrician's time amounted to approx. £1000. Insurance cost was £336 which the Town Council paid. She has not collected any subs from the Chamber of Commerce members this year and has spent all last year's subs.

Cllr. Allen said she will speak to Geetie [REDACTED] and a rep from South Hams about lighting in the Rotherfold.

Cllr. Piper said that we need to refurbish and update the towns Christmas lights and that the rigging points are in a bad condition. He suggested that the COC could speak to the shop owners about upgrading/reinstating the points.

Cllr. Allford proposed the Council should reimburse the Chamber their costs.

The Clerk, C. Marlton, queried where this money would come from?

Action: M Phipps to prepare a paper on Totnes Christmas Lights and recommendations to go to Council Matters on March 8th. See Annex A

6. Mayday in Totnes, A Celebration – Paul Liengaard, paper attached

A paper from Paul on his proposed May Day event was attached to the Agenda. Paul said that communication was crucial to the success of setting up events and that a more joined up approach with South Hams would be helpful. Cllr. Piper said that there was a meeting planned for March 10th with South Hams representatives to try and organise a better working relationship. Cllr. Allen said that they have a Futures Forum meeting coming up soon where they are looking at a strategic 5-year approach with the Head of Place Making from South Hams and that representatives from South Hams may be attending this meeting.

Paul questioned the current restrictions about outdoor art events which did not encourage people to leave their houses or mix with others. Cllr. Galvin said that there is a 'Stay at home' restriction in place and for further guidance he should contact the Arts Council.

7. A Totnes Tale – Helen [REDACTED], paper emailed

A document from Helen explaining 'A Totnes Tale' was emailed to all attendees. She described the event in detail and said that her budget was £15,000. She said that she was in email conversation with Lesley Nel, Community Fundraiser with the Town Council. Helen said that she intends to hold the event in October, but a date hasn't been confirmed yet but will hold a workshop in the Civic Hall on the preceding Saturday so that people can make outfits for the event.

Helen also suggested that there could be a diary/calendar for all town events and that the Council should organise this. Cllr. Allen suggested a Facebook page could be a better option.

There is a 'What's On' page on the Visit Totnes website which can be referred to when scheduling events or for any clash of dates.

Action: M Phipps to collate any emails received from event holders holding events in Totnes and liaise with S Branch and the TIC Officer about ensuring the 'What's On' calendar is updated.

8. Christian [REDACTED] – TRAYE and The Blackbird Collective

Christian explained that they have been limited as to what events they were able to put on over the past year and it's also limited this year. They managed to hold some events in Dartington and in the town library and also a series of live sessions in collaboration with the Barrel House which they're channelling via the Barrel House YouTube Fortnightly. They are hoping to hold some small-scale events this year and would like to be involved in the carnival and lantern procession if/when they happen.

Cllr. Allford said that the carnival procession has been cancelled this year but would like to do something later in the year.

Christian said that they are hoping to have a scaled down version of Party in the Town this year to maintain the buzz, but it will depend on restrictions.

Christian is also involved with youth engagement and made a request for funds to be donated to pay for Civic Hall hire to hold an arts youth project.

Action: M Phipps to send a Designated User Application to TRAYE for Paige Adams Trustees to consider.

9. BT Phone Boxes – paper attached

A paper was attached to the email and Cllr. Galvin read it out to the group. Cllr. Galvin said that she is happy to be involved with this project but cannot lead it. Cllr. Piper offered to powerhose the phone box on Plymouth Road.

Jacqui [REDACTED] suggested we think about doing 'My little library' like the Nick [REDACTED] projects.

Actions: Cllr. Galvin will email all Councillors to see who is willing to be involved in this project and take on some of the tasks which need to be done.

J. [REDACTED] to email M. Phipps information on 'My little library'. This email has been received and also an email from Nick [REDACTED].

M Phipps to add any smaller maintenance actions to the TMO job list.

10. To review the Arts Working Group budget allocation – C. Marlton

C. Marlton said that there is £750 left in the Arts Working Group budget which needs to be spent by end of March as there can be no carry over. It was agreed to split this money between the phone box, craft packs for the community, requested by Liz [REDACTED] of the Food Bank and organised by Cllr. Allford, and Christian's youth project in the Civic Hall.

Cllr. Piper said that he would support these projects through his Mayor's budget also.

Action: Cllr. Allford to organise the purchase of these craft packs.

M Phipps to ask TRAYE to invoice the Town Council for £250 (including details of what it is covering).

11. Proposed date of next meeting Wednesday 24th or Thursday 25th March at 12.00 (depending on outcome of day change discussion)

Date of next meeting is Thursday 25th March at 12.00pm.

Idea – Totnes Christmas Lights, set up a Working Group comprised of TTC and CoC to determine:

1. What is right for this year - Town Council finds the budget for putting up the Christmas lights (including install, replacing bulbs, PAT testing etc.), and CoC help with the actual install days (CoC mentioned finding volunteers, getting a discounted rate and manning the sign to stop cars coming up). From the numbers mentioned below, it looks like overall cost to TTC for this year would be £1276 plus extra for the electrician to come out if (when) it trips. However, there could be additional costs this year e.g. the fixing points.
2. What is the right kind of collaboration in a 'normal' year and how we go about funding the lights in future years. Suggest a collaborative approach perhaps with CoC covering the installation, and Town Council covering the maintenance of the lights (e.g bulbs, PAT testing etc.)
3. What to do about a refurbish / buy new project around 2022/23 - combination of council budget and fundraising.

Timings – Working Group to meet in June/July 2021 to determine way ahead for this year and in late 2021/early 2022 to discuss replacement lights and requirements.

Priorities – Promoting Totnes as an attractive destination to shop for residents and visitors alike, particularly in assisting post-Covid recovery for businesses in the town.

Background – Chamber of Commerce have provided the following background to the lights:

Historically the lights have been put up by the Chamber but are owned by the Town Council. They are still serviceable for this year and CoC is sure some strands can go on for a few years more but some are definitely on their last legs. For the record CoC estimate that there is approx. 1000 meters of lights – CoC measured one bins worth and we have five full bins of them.

Challenges:

Some rigging points are damaged and some have disappeared altogether – the state of some of the buildings means it's going to be problematic to use them as rigging points unless the owners of the buildings do some repairs.

- In some places, in particular the Narrows the rigging points are quite low (we have lost a few strings of lights to tall lorries) so festoon lighting for there is the only option.
- To just replace what we have will cost £1000s – Kingsbridge spent 10k on new lights a couple of years ago – they have lit up banners crossing the street every few 100 feet or so plus lots of lights in the town square and on lamp posts.
- The electric points in Fore Street kept tripping which means multiple trips up ladders by the electrician.
- Some residents complain (its random) about lights outside their windows so CoC often have to go up ladders to take bulbs out in the week after they go up.

Positives:

- The fixtures in Fore Street are quite robust and they are high up so there are options for other banner type lights to go up or just a different type of light. [Officer note – the Council received a phone call from a lorry in Dec 2021 whose roof touched the lights in Fore Street – we need to check if there is a minimum distance for lighting across a road and provide signage if it is below the legal limit.]
- The street as a whole can quite easily be divided up so that different lights can be used without it looking messy/un-coordinated

Proposals/ideas for this year:

- Have the electric points in Fore Street serviced (they belong to the town council)
- Festoon Fore Street up to the Church
- Festoon the Narrows as normal and maybe look at getting a lit banner for the entrance to the Narrows
- Look at lighting up the trees on the Plains, Shady Garden and Civic Square
- Welcome to Totnes banner as usual at the bottom
- Make something more of the Civic Square and Church as they are focal points over the festive period
- Maybe look at paying for the light displays that were done a few years ago over the arch area? Look at doing other light displays for example I would be happy to have a gobo in my office window projecting onto Seasalt building (nobody lives there)
- Have the lights up longer – from early Nov to end of Jan

The lights map from the electrician can be used by CoC to identify the rigging points and see what ones need repairing.

CoC usually have the TC "Expect delays due to xmas lights" road sign but closing the road would be safer – CoC would man the sign so that cars could go up if the road was clear or they didn't need to go as far as the cherry picker.

For the future CoC would suggest getting lighting companies in to see what's possible and get quotes – would suggest having something that's not specifically xmassy (as we have now) so that they could possibly be used other times of the year.

Resources – Estimated costs from the Chamber of Commerce are:

£640 for the two days we have the cherry picker and the guys to put the lights up – this is a discounted rate for what they do

£300 for the electrician – this covers pat testing, one day to service the lights four days putting them up and taking them down (the narrows are done from a ladder) plus extra days for repairs (when they trip).

£336 insurance – which Town Council paid this last xmas – it used to be on the electrician's public liability, but he would not agree to that this year due to the state of the buildings

CoC normally do a quick whip round of businesses for new bulbs each year – they think there is still a good stock but will check.

CoC has volunteers to help with the pre-testing and servicing and the putting them up and taking them down.

TTC

Officer time (how many hours) will be needed to participate in the Working Groups, TMO may be utilised to talk to property owners whose wall fixings are of concern [and who are unlikely to have an obligation to fix them for this purpose].

Communications

Who are the stakeholders, who should the Council consult? Chamber of Commerce, residents?

Reputation

How could this be seen by the public? The Town Council's assistance with and involvement in the future replacement of the Christmas lights is likely to have a positive response from the public, however a large spend/increase in precept to fund ideas during a time of financial hardship for many may be less positively received.

Recommendations to Council Matters 8th March 2021

1. Consider setting up a Town Lights Task and Finish Group comprised of TTC Councillors and COC and any other stakeholders deemed appropriate (could this group be self administered?).
2. Task the group with investigating what condition the rigging is in and determine what lights are functional and what can be repaired and reused. Also discuss what other areas we can focus on in Totnes ie the Market Square, St. Mary's Church, the Rotherfold. Look at lighting up trees in The Plains, Shady Garden and the Market Square.
3. Request the group to come back with information/recommendations within a certain time period, directly to Council Matters. These suggestions must be costed.
4. What needs to be done/recommendations for 2021 as a one off solution, and then a longer term partnership arrangement from 2022 onwards.
5. Consider where the approx. £2,000+ expected cost for 2021 lights, insurance, installation, tree should be budgeted from.



Trees for Totnes

Tree Planting our Town and Parish Boundaries – a proposal for a new Wildlife Corridor

At the highly successful and inspiring Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Planning week in November 2019, a session was held to discuss promoting tree planting with a view to reducing carbon in the atmosphere and increasing habitats for wildlife. The idea for replanting the town and parish boundaries with new trees was put forward and the idea seems to have caught on.

The proposal is that each town or parish council starts planting trees on their boundary with their neighbouring parish. The neighbouring parishes in turn also do this. If successful this would spread into a continuous network of trees that could eventually become a very long (and very much needed) new contiguous network of wildlife corridors across the South Hams, the South West, the UK. Only the sea is the limit.

An obvious issue might occur where private property sits on the boundary. If this is a rural spot the landowner can be contacted and will hopefully give permission for trees to be planted (Parish boundaries generally follow / are followed by old field boundaries on natural geographical boundaries). If the boundary is on a private garden, then the owner can be asked if they would like to participate in the project and if the space is too small for trees, then smaller (ideally native) shrubs could be planted instead to keep the corridor intact. If a permanent building is in the way then unfortunately that will mean a gap in the corridor, but hopefully not too big or impossible to bridge or work around one way or another.

The beating of the bounds has been a longstanding tradition in the UK and a revival of this annual event could provide the opportunity for an annual maintenance and health check on the trees already planted and each year add a more trees until the boundary is complete. With the old traditional event including an annual meeting of the neighbouring parishioners across the bounds, this would be an opportunity to do this annual check-up with the 'neighbours'.

Some parish boundaries are a lot longer than others and some can be topographically very challenging. It therefore makes sense to keep each parishes annual planting target to a doable amount building on the previous totals, possibly using social targets such as:

- Year 1 – 1 tree for each neighbouring parish (=5 for Totnes)
- Year 2 – (building on the previous number) 1 tree for every household in the town / parish (~4,500)
- Year 3 – (ditto) 1 tree for every resident in the town/parish (~ 8,200)
- Year 4 – an extra tree for very new baby born that year etc, etc
- (And so on until the wildlife corridor has been established)

To get the project underway this year, the proposal for this planting season 2021 is as follows:

1. Plant one oak tree on each section of the town boundary where a neighbouring parish adjoins:
2. For Totnes this means 5 oak trees along the sections of the town boundary with:
 - Dartington
 - Littlehempston
 - Berry Pomeroy
 - Ashprington
 - Harberton
3. Establish a group of volunteers to carry out the scheme in the town/parish
4. Make contact with each of the neighbouring parishes and ask them to join the scheme and arrange to plant oak trees along their parish boundary this planting season too
5. Use a high resolution map to identify the parish boundary
6. Identify suitable sites to plant the first trees- ideally on public open space

7. Let each neighbouring parish know exactly where the trees are to be planted on the boundary
8. Invite each Parish Council to attend the tree planting being hosting and invite them to plant an oak tree close by on the parish boundary at the same time. Invite the Mayor/PC Chairperson to officiate
9. Encourage the neighbouring parish councils to continue the project with their other parish neighbours too.
10. Keep a record of the planting, take photos and tell residents and publicise that this has been done.

Future years & planting seasons

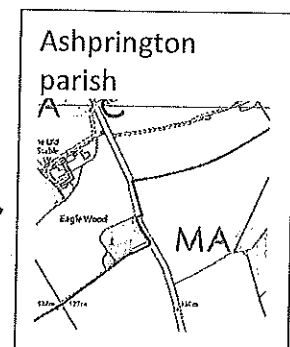
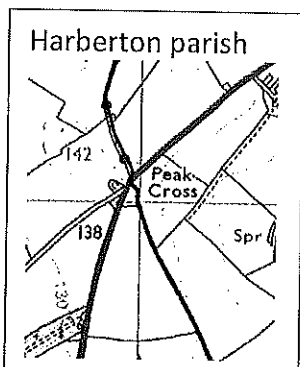
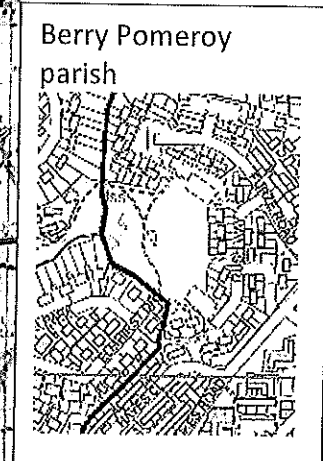
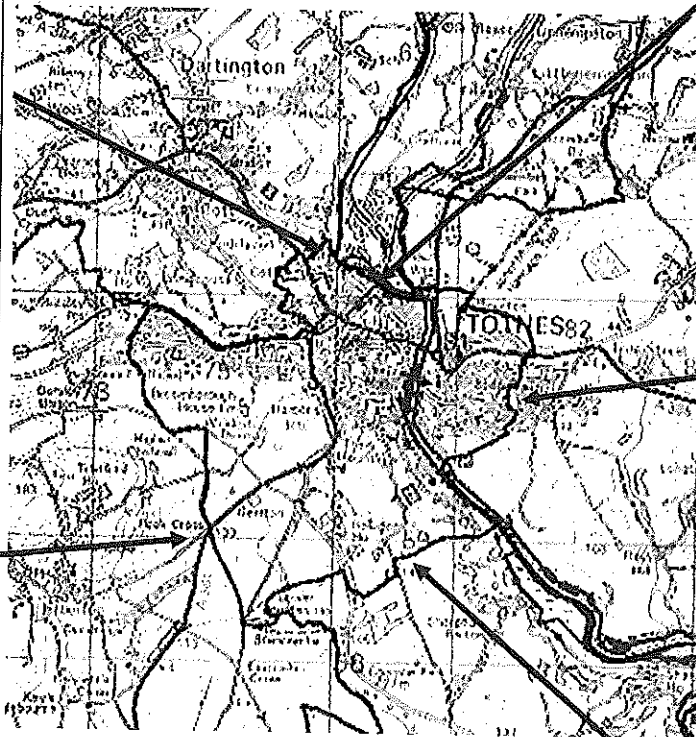
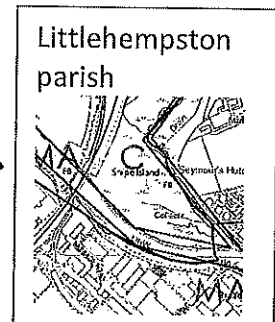
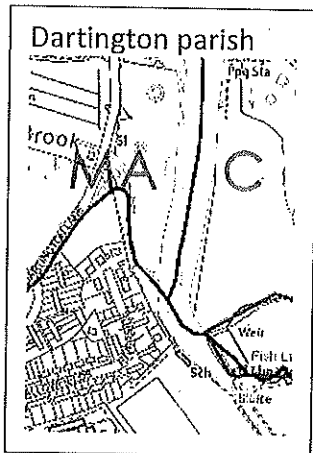
- Plan further planting of the boundary
- Plan the public open space plantings as above
- Make contact with the owners of land which is on or adjoins the boundary.
- Seek permission to plant trees or ask them if they would be willing to do this.
- For private gardens also ask the owners if they would like to participate in the scheme and plant trees or shrubs themselves as part of the wildlife corridor
- Keep records, map the planting and celebrate along the way

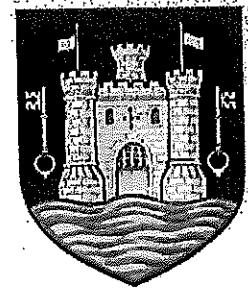
Other considerations – before planting the trees

- Stewardship, maintenance and liability for each tree planted needs to be established
- Public liability insurance needs to be in place for tree planting events

Final thoughts

- Rope in as many people as you can to get the project established asap – biodiversity and wildlife are in crisis
- Let everyone know you are doing this and encourage them to join in and do additional planting where possible
- Invite someone to estimate how many tonnes of carbon you are removing from the atmosphere with each tree planted (e.g. 1 hectare of woodland can take up 400 tonnes of carbon - <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/british-trees/how-trees-fight-climate-change/>)





FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL
MARCH 2021
REVIEW DATE: MARCH 2022

These Financial Regulations are produced in accordance with Governance and Accountability for Local Councils and were adopted by the Council at its meeting of

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1. GENERAL

- 1.1. These financial regulations govern the conduct of financial management by the council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the council. Financial regulations are one of the council's three governing policy documents providing procedural guidance for members and officers. Financial regulations must be observed in conjunction with the council's standing orders and any individual financial regulations relating to contracts.
- 1.2. The council is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that the council has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the council's functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.3. The council's accounting control systems must include measures:
 - for the timely production of accounts;
 - that provide for the safe and efficient safeguarding of public money;
 - to prevent and detect inaccuracy and fraud; and
 - identifying the duties of officers.
- 1.4. These financial regulations demonstrate how the council meets these responsibilities and requirements.
- 1.5. At least once a year, prior to approving the Annual Governance Statement, the council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control which shall be in accordance with proper practices.
- 1.6. Deliberate or wilful breach of these Regulations by an employee may give rise to disciplinary proceedings.
- 1.7. Members of Council are expected to follow the instructions within these Regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow instructions within these Regulations brings the office of councillor into disrepute.
- 1.8. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office to be appointed by the council. The Clerk has been appointed as RFO for this council and these regulations will apply accordingly.
- 1.9. The RFO;
 - acts under the policy direction of the council;
 - administers the council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices;
 - determines on behalf of the council its accounting records and accounting control systems;
 - ensures the accounting control systems are observed;

- maintains the accounting records of the council up to date in accordance with proper practices;
 - assists the council to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources; and
 - produces financial management information as required by the council.
- 1.10. The accounting records determined by the Clerk/RFO shall be sufficient to show and explain the council's transactions and to enable the Clerk/RFO to ensure that any income and expenditure account and statement of balances, or record of receipts and payments and additional information, as the case may be, or management information prepared for the council from time to time comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 1.11. The accounting records determined by the Clerk/RFO shall in particular contain:
- entries from day to day of all sums of money received and expended by the council and the matters to which the income and expenditure or receipts and payments account relate;
 - a record of the assets and liabilities of the council; and
 - wherever relevant, a record of the council's income and expenditure in relation to claims made, or to be made, for any contribution, grant or subsidy.
- 1.12. The accounting control systems determined by the Clerk/RFO shall include:
- procedures to ensure that the financial transactions of the council are recorded as soon as reasonably practicable and as accurately and reasonably as possible;
 - procedures to enable the prevention and detection of inaccuracies and fraud and the ability to reconstruct any lost records;
 - identification of the duties of officers dealing with financial transactions and division of responsibilities of those officers in relation to significant transactions;
 - procedures to ensure that uncollectable amounts, including any bad debts are not submitted to the council for approval to be written off except with the approval of the Clerk/RFO and that the approvals are shown in the accounting records; and
 - measures to ensure that risk is properly managed.
- 1.13. The council is not empowered by these Regulations or otherwise to delegate certain specified decisions. In particular any decision regarding:
- setting the final budget or the precept (council tax requirement);
 - approving accounting statements;
 - approving an annual governance statement;
 - borrowing;
 - writing off bad debts;
 - declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and

- addressing recommendations in any report from the internal or external auditors, shall be a matter for the full council only.

1.14. In addition the council must:

- determine and keep under regular review the bank mandate for all council bank accounts;
- approve any grant or a single commitment in excess of £5,000; and
- in respect of the annual salary for any employee have regard to recommendations about annual salaries of employees made by the relevant committee in accordance with its terms of reference.

1.15. In these financial regulations, references to the Accounts and Audit Regulations or 'the regulations' shall mean the regulations issued under the provisions of section 27 of the Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and then in force unless otherwise specified.

In these financial regulations the term 'proper practice' or 'proper practices' shall refer to guidance issued in *Governance and Accountability for Local Councils - a Practitioners' Guide (England)* issued by the Joint Practitioners Advisory Group (JPAG), available from the websites of NALC and the Society for Local Council Clerks (SLCC).

2. ACCOUNTING AND AUDIT (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL)

- 2.1. All accounting procedures and financial records of the council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, appropriate guidance and proper practices.
- 2.2. On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chairman shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of verification. This activity shall on conclusion be reported, including any exceptions, to and noted by the Council Matters Committee.
- 2.3. The RFO shall complete the annual statement of accounts, annual report, and any related documents of the council contained in the Annual Return (as specified in proper practices) as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and having certified the accounts shall submit them and report thereon to the council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 2.4. The council shall ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records, and of its system of internal control in accordance with proper practices. Any officer or member of the council shall make available such documents and records as appear to the council to be necessary for the purpose of the audit and shall, as directed by the council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the council considers necessary for that purpose.

- 2.5. The internal auditor shall be appointed by and shall carry out the work in relation to internal controls required by the council in accordance with proper practices.
- 2.6. The internal auditor shall:
- be competent and independent of the financial operations of the council;
 - report to council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual written report during each financial year;
 - to demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, be free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
 - has no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the council.
- 2.7. Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:
- perform any operational duties for the council;
 - initiate or approve accounting transactions; or
 - direct the activities of any council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.
- 2.8. For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as is described in proper practices.
- 2.9. The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the accounts including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and statements of account required by Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 2.10. The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors.

3. ANNUAL ESTIMATES (BUDGET) AND FORWARD PLANNING

- 3.1. The RFO must each year, by no later than December, prepare detailed estimates of all receipts and payments including the use of reserves and all sources of funding for the following financial year in the form of a budget to be considered first by the Council Matters Committee and then approved by the Full Council.
- 3.2. The council shall consider the annual budget proposals in relation to the council's three year forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments including recommendations for the use of reserves and sources of funding and update the forecast accordingly.
- 3.3. The council shall fix the precept (council tax requirement), and relevant basic amount of council tax to be levied for the ensuing financial year not later than by the end of January each year. The RFO shall issue the precept to the billing authority and shall supply each member with a copy of the approved annual budget.
- 3.4. The approved annual budget shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

4. BUDGETARY CONTROL AND AUTHORITY TO SPEND

4.1. Expenditure on revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. This authority is to be determined by:

- the council for all items over £10,000;
- the Council Matters Committee for items over £5,000; or
- the RFO for any items below £5,000.

Such authority is to be evidenced by a minute or by an authorisation slip duly signed by the RFO.

Contracts may not be disaggregated to avoid controls imposed by these regulations.

- 4.2. No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the amount provided in the revenue budget for that class of expenditure other than by resolution of the council. During the budget year and with the approval of council having considered fully the implications for public services, unspent and available amounts may be moved to other budget headings or to an earmarked reserve as appropriate ('virement').
- 4.3. Unspent provisions in the revenue or capital budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year.
- 4.4. The salary budgets are to be reviewed at least annually (as part of the budget planning) for the following financial year and such review shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Clerk and the Chairman of Council or relevant committee. The RFO will inform the council of any changes impacting on the budget requirements for the coming year in good time.
- 4.5. In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of council services, the Clerk may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the council which in the Clerk's judgement it is necessary to carry out. Such expenditure includes repair, replacement or other work, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £10000. The Clerk/RFO shall report such action to the chairman as soon as possible and to the council as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 4.6. No expenditure shall be authorised in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained.
- 4.7. All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.
- 4.8. The RFO shall regularly provide the Council Matters Committee with a statement comparing actual expenditure to the appropriate date against that planned as shown in the budget. These statements are to be prepared for Council Matters Committee meetings, at least at the end of each financial quarter, and shall include explanations of material variances. For this purpose "material" shall be in excess of £250 on overspends of the budget.
- 4.9. Changes in earmarked reserves shall be considered by the Council Matters Committee and approved by full council as part of the budgetary control process.

5. BANKING ARRANGEMENTS AND AUTHORISATION OF PAYMENTS

- 5.1. The council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and approved by the council; banking arrangements may not be delegated to a committee. They shall be regularly reviewed for safety and efficiency.
- 5.2. A schedule of the payments required shall be prepared by the RFO and, together with the relevant invoices, be presented to and signed by two Councillors who are bank signatories.
- 5.3. All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the RFO to confirm that the work, goods or services to which each invoice relates has been received, carried out, examined and represents expenditure previously approved by the council.
- 5.4. The RFO shall examine invoices for arithmetical accuracy and analyse them to the appropriate expenditure heading.
- 5.5. The Clerk/RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise the payment of items only in the following circumstances:
 - a) If a payment is necessary to avoid a charge to interest under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, and the due date for payment is before two members are able to sign the invoice, where the Clerk/RFO certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, provided that two members sign the invoice retrospectively;
 - b) An expenditure item authorised under 5.6 below (continuing contracts and obligations) provided that two members sign the invoice retrospectively; or
 - c) fund transfers within the councils banking arrangements up to the sum of £2,500.
- 5.6. For each financial year the Clerk/RFO shall draw up a list of due payments which arise on a regular basis as the result of a continuing contract, statutory duty, or obligation (such as but not exclusively) Salaries, PAYE and NI, Superannuation Fund and regular maintenance contracts and the like for which council may authorise payment for the year provided that the requirements of regulation 4.1 (Budgetary Controls) are adhered to, provided also that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next meeting of the Council Matters Committee.
- 5.7. A record of regular payments made shall be drawn up and be signed by two members on each and every occasion when payment is authorised - thus controlling the risk of duplicated payments being authorised and / or made.
- 5.8. In respect of grants the Council Matters Committee shall approve expenditure within any limits set by council and in accordance with any policy statement approved by council. Any Revenue or Capital Grant in excess of £5,000 shall before payment, be subject to ratification by resolution of the council.
- 5.9. Members are subject to the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the council and shall comply with the Code and Standing Orders when a decision to authorise or instruct payment is made in respect of a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary or other interest, unless a dispensation has been granted.

- 5.10. The council will aim to rotate the duties of members in these Regulations so that onerous duties are shared out as evenly as possible over time.

6. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE MAKING OF PAYMENTS

- 6.1. The council will make safe and efficient arrangements for the making of its payments.
- 6.2. Following authorisation under Financial Regulation 5 above, the council, a duly delegated committee or, if so delegated, the Clerk/RFO shall give instruction that a payment shall be made.
- 6.3. All payments shall be effected by bank payment or debit card.
- 6.4. Cheques for payment drawn on the bank account shall be signed by two members of council. A member who is a bank signatory, having a connection by virtue of family or business relationships with the beneficiary of a payment, should not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to the payment in question.
- 6.5. To indicate agreement of the details shown on the cheque or order for payment with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall each also initial the cheque counterfoil.
- 6.6. If thought appropriate by the council, payment for utility supplies (energy, telephone and water) and any National Non-Domestic Rates may be made by variable direct debit provided that the instructions are signed by two members. The approval of the use of a variable direct debit shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.
- 6.7. If thought appropriate by the council, payment for certain items may be made by banker's standing order provided that the instructions are signed, or otherwise evidenced by two members are retained and any payments are reported to council as made.
- 6.8. If thought appropriate by the council, payment for certain items may be made by BACS or CHAPS methods provided that the instructions for each payment are signed, or otherwise evidenced, by two authorised bank signatories, are retained and any payments are reported to council as made.
- 6.9. If thought appropriate by the council payment for certain items may be made by internet banking transfer provided evidence is retained showing which members approved the payment.
- 6.10. No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the working of the council or its bank accounts, to any person not authorised in writing by the council or a duly delegated committee.
- 6.11. Regular back-up copies of the records on any computer shall be made and shall be stored securely away from the computer in question, and preferably off site.
- 6.12. The council, and any members using computers for the council's financial business, shall ensure that anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software with automatic updates, together with a high level of security, is used.

- 6.13. Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the Clerk/RFO shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The bank mandate approved by the council shall identify a number of councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts. The bank mandate will state clearly the amounts of payments that can be instructed by the use of the Service Administrator alone, or by the Service Administrator with a stated number of approvals.
- 6.14. Access to any internet banking accounts will be directly to the access page (which may be saved under "favourites"), and not through a search engine or e-mail link. Remembered or saved passwords facilities must not be used on any computer used for council banking work. Breach of this Regulation will be treated as a very serious matter under these regulations.
- 6.15. Supplier invoices paid via internet banking facilities will be entered onto the bank payment system by the Finance Manager following signature by two authorised signatories. The Clerk/RFO will then authorise the payments on the internet banking system and carry out a random sample check of the bank account details for suppliers on the internet banking screen against the supplier invoices.
- 6.16. Any Debit Card issued for use will be in the name of the Clerk/RFO and will be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £1000 unless authorised by the Full Council or the Council Matters Committee before any order is placed. The card will be securely stored by the Finance Manager. Use of the card shall be restricted to online or telephone purchases and cash withdrawals solely for the purpose of topping up the petty cash balance. Proper VAT invoices must be obtained for all online or telephone purchases. The card can only be used by the Clerk/RFO or Finance Manager. Invoices from all card purchases must be signed retrospectively by two members.
- 6.17. A pre-paid debit card may be issued to employees with varying limits. These limits will be set by the council's Council Matters Committee. Transactions and purchases made will be reported to the Council Matters Committee and authority for topping-up shall be at the discretion of the Council Matters Committee.
- 6.18. The Clerk/RFO may provide petty cash to officers for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses.
- a) The Finance Manager shall manage the petty cash. Vouchers/receipts for payments made from petty cash shall be kept to substantiate the payment. Petty cash payments will not exceed £25.
 - b) Vouchers/receipts for payments made must be initialled/signed by the Clerk/RFO as authorisation for reimbursement and forwarded to the Finance Manager for reimbursement.
 - c) Income received must not be paid into the petty cash float but must be separately banked, as provided elsewhere in these regulations.
 - d) Cash to maintain the petty cash float shall be drawn from the bank using the debit card. The Clerk/RFO will hold the PIN number and the Finance Manager will hold the card. Cash will be collected by both the Clerk/RFO and the Finance Manager who will both sign a cash withdrawal form.

7. PAYMENT OF SALARIES

- 7.1. As an employer, the council shall make arrangements to meet fully the statutory requirements placed on all employers by PAYE and National Insurance legislation. The payment of all salaries shall be made in accordance with payroll records and the rules of PAYE and National Insurance currently operating, and salary rates shall be as agreed by council, or duly delegated committee.
- 7.2. Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be required to be made for tax, national insurance and pension contributions, or similar statutory or discretionary deductions must be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the appropriate dates stipulated in employment contracts.
- 7.3. No changes shall be made to any employee's pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the council.
- 7.4. Each and every payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a separate confidential record (Wages file). This confidential record is not open to inspection or review (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or otherwise) other than:
- a) by any councillor who can demonstrate a need to know;
 - b) by the internal auditor;
 - c) by the external auditor; or
 - d) by any person authorised under Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation.
- 7.5. The total of such salary payments in each calendar month shall be approved by the Clerk/RFO by signature, assuming that they fall within the staffing budget reported to Council Matters.
- 7.6. An effective system of personal performance management should be maintained for the senior officers.
- 7.7. Any termination payments shall be supported by a clear business case and reported to the council. Termination payments shall only be authorised by council.
- 7.8. Before employing interim staff the council must consider a full business case.

8. LOANS AND INVESTMENTS

- 8.1. All borrowings shall be effected in the name of the council, after obtaining any necessary borrowing approval. Any application for borrowing approval shall be approved by Council as to terms and purpose. The application for borrowing approval, and subsequent arrangements for the loan shall only be approved by full council.
- 8.2. Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the Secretary of State/Welsh Assembly Government. (such as Hire Purchase or Leasing of tangible assets) shall be subject to approval by the full council. In each case a report in

writing shall be provided to council in respect of value for money for the proposed transaction.

- 8.3. All loans and investments shall be negotiated in the name of the council and shall be for a set period in accordance with council policy.
- 8.4. The council shall consider the need for an Investment Strategy and Policy which, if drawn up, shall be in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.
- 8.5. All investments of money under the control of the council shall be in the name of the council.
- 8.6. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the Clerk/RFO.
- 8.7. Payments in respect of short term or long term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, or branch, shall be made in accordance with Regulation 5 (Authorisation of payments) and Regulation 6 (Instructions for payments).

9. INCOME

- 9.1. The collection of all sums due to the council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the Clerk/RFO.
- 9.2. Particulars of all charges to be made for work done, services rendered or goods supplied shall be agreed annually by the council, notified to the Clerk/RFO and the Clerk/RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all accounts due to the council.
- 9.3. The council will review all fees and charges at least biennially, following a report of the Clerk/RFO.
- 9.4. Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the council and shall be written off in the year.
- 9.5. All sums received on behalf of the council shall be banked intact as directed by the Clerk/RFO. In all cases, all receipts shall be deposited with the council's bankers with such frequency as the Clerk/RFO considers necessary.
- 9.6. The origin of each receipt shall be entered on the paying-in slip.
- 9.7. Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the council.
- 9.8. The Clerk/RFO shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33 shall be made at least annually coinciding with the financial year end.
- 9.9. Where any significant sums of cash are regularly received by the council, the Clerk/RFO shall take such steps as are agreed by the council to ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken in the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.

- 9.10. Any income arising which is the property of a charitable trust shall be paid into a charitable bank account. Instructions for the payment of funds due from the charitable trust to the council (to meet expenditure already incurred by the authority) will be given by the Managing Trustees of the charity meeting separately from any council meeting (see also Regulation 16 below).

10. ORDERS FOR WORK, GOODS AND SERVICES

- 10.1. All members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer contracting services shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers, subject to any *de minimis* provisions in Regulation 11.1 below.
- 10.2. A member may not make any contract on behalf of the council.
- 10.3. The Clerk/RFO shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order, and in the case of new or infrequent purchases or payments, the Clerk/RFO shall ensure that the statutory authority shall be reported to the meeting at which the order is approved so that the minutes can record the power being used.

11. CONTRACTS

- 11.1. Procedures as to contracts are laid down as follows:
- a. Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that this regulation need not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (vi) below:
 - i. for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services;
 - ii. for specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants;
 - iii. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant;
 - iv. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the council;
 - v. for additional audit work of the external auditor up to an estimated value of £750 (in excess of this sum the Clerk/RFO shall act after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of council); and
 - vi. for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and / or are only sold at a fixed price.
 - b. Where the council intends to procure or award a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract as defined by The Public Contracts Regulations 2015

("the Regulations") which is valued at £25,000 or more, the council shall comply with the relevant requirements of the Regulations¹.

- c. The full requirements of The Regulations, as applicable, shall be followed in respect of the tendering and award of a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract which exceed thresholds in The Regulations set by the Public Contracts Directive 2014/24/EU (which may change from time to time)².
- d. When applications are made to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the council.
- e. Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk/RFO shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk/RFO in the ordinary course of post. Each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract.
- f. All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk/RFO in the presence of at least one member of council.
- g. Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to current Standing Orders, and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
- h. When it is to enter into a contract of less than £25,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk/RFO shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the value is below £5,000 and above £1,000 the Clerk/RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. Otherwise, Regulation 10.1 above shall apply.
- i. The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
- j. Should it occur that the council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the council requires further pricing, provided that the specification does not change, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision making process was being undertaken.

12. PAYMENTS UNDER CONTRACTS FOR BUILDING OR OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKS (PUBLIC WORKS CONTRACTS)

- 12.1. Payments on account of the contract sum shall be made within the time specified in the contract by the Clerk/RFO upon authorised certificates of the architect or other consultants

¹ The Regulations require councils to use the Contracts Finder website to advertise contract opportunities, set out the procedures to be followed in awarding new contracts and to publicise the award of new contracts

² Thresholds currently applicable are:

- a. For public supply and public service contracts 209,000 Euros (£164,176)
- b. For public works contracts 5,225,000 Euros (£4,104,394)

engaged to supervise the contract (subject to any percentage withholding as may be agreed in the particular contract).

- 12.2. Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the Clerk/RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments. In any case where it is estimated that the total cost of work carried out under a contract, excluding agreed variations, will exceed the contract sum of 5% or more a report shall be submitted to the council.
- 12.3. Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be approved by the council and Clerk/RFO to the contractor in writing, the council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.

13. ASSETS, PROPERTIES AND ESTATES

- 13.1. The Clerk/RFO shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the council. The Clerk/RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties held by the council, recording the location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 13.2. No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law, save where the estimated value of any one item of tangible movable property does not exceed £1000.
- 13.3. No real property (interests in land) shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).
- 13.4. No real property (interests in land) shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).
- 13.5. Subject only to the limit set in Regulation 14.2 above, no tangible moveable property shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council with a full business case.
- 13.6. The Clerk/RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.

14. INSURANCE

- 14.1. Following the annual risk assessment (per Regulation 17), the Clerk/RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the council's insurers.
- 14.2. The Clerk/RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the council and the property and risks covered thereby and annually review it.
- 14.3. The Clerk/RFO shall be notified of any loss liability or damage or of any event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these to council at the next available meeting.
- 14.4. All appropriate employees of the council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined annually by the council, or duly delegated committee.

15. CHARITIES

- 15.1. Where the council is sole managing trustee of a charitable body the Clerk/RFO shall ensure that separate accounts are kept of the funds held on charitable trusts and separate financial reports made in such form as shall be appropriate, in accordance with Charity Law and legislation, or as determined by the Charity Commission. The Clerk/RFO shall arrange for any audit or independent examination as may be required by Charity Law or any Governing Document.

16. RISK MANAGEMENT

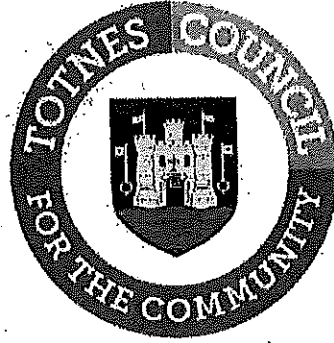
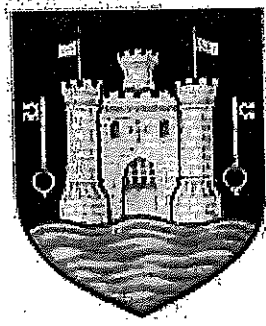
- 16.1. The council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk. The Clerk/RFO shall prepare, for approval by the council, risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the council. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.
- 16.2. When considering any new activity, the Clerk/RFO shall prepare a draft risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration and adoption by the council.

17. SUSPENSION AND REVISION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

- 17.1. It shall be the duty of the council to review the Financial Regulations of the council from time to time. The Clerk/RFO shall make arrangements to monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and shall advise the council of any requirement for a consequential amendment to these Financial Regulations.
- 17.2. The council may, by resolution of the council duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been drawn up and presented in advance to all members of council.

* * *

ITEM 9



TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY FEBRUARY 2021 - 2024



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Totnes Town Council Communications Strategy 2021 - 2024

Introduction

Communication plays an important role in everything we do at Totnes Town Council. It is crucial that everyone at the Council including all employees and Councillors communicate efficiently, effectively and consistently with all relevant stakeholders in a manner which is professional and on brand (in line with the town values).

As a Council we communicate regularly with local residents and businesses, local organisations, local media, the district and county councils, and internally. We also communicate with potential and existing visitors via the Visit Totnes channels.

We should be committed to being open and honest with the aim to inform, update and engage to promote the Council's hard work in a positive way using a multi channel approach. We should aim to create a two-way approach wherever possible to increase positive engagement, which is where social media plays an important part.

Positive communication is key to building trust within the community. At Totnes Council we should aim to encourage positivity in order to start improving our reputation and rebuilding the overall perception.

It is important to engage in difficult conversations where appropriate without getting caught up in town gossip, however it's crucial that this is handled in a proactive, consistent and confident way preferably backed up with relevant evidence. This should be balanced out with positive news and updates about services and work undertaken, and doesn't mean that we should get caught up in every local argument.

The Council's values of openness, fairness, flexibility and teamwork should be considered in all communications.

This document should be regularly adapted according to any changes along the way, whether technological or in line with the needs of the Council or the community. The strategy applies to all staff and Councillors however Samantha Branch, Marketing & Communications Manager will lead on the work.

Context

The aim of this document is to set out where we currently are in terms of our communications including how we communicate with our different stakeholders, and where we would like to be including what we can improve upon.

The entire toolkit will include:

- Communications & Media Protocol
- Councillors Code of Conduct

Background

There hasn't been a specific Communications staff member for the Council as a whole and this Strategy will be the first of its kind. The Visit Totnes brand which is designed to promote Totnes as a visitor destination has had a Marketing Manager (Samantha Branch) since its origin in 2015. As from January 2021 Samantha Branch is now the Marketing & Communications Manager for Visit Totnes and Totnes Town Council and will be responsible for promoting Totnes as a destination using the Visit Totnes brand and to promote the positive work of the Council.

Delivering the Strategy

It will be the main responsibility of the Marketing & Communications Manager to deliver the strategy but with the support of the following team, and it should always be remembered that it is the responsibility of all officers and Councillors to communicate efficiently, effectively and professionally at all times with many of the key stakeholders:

- Marketing & Communications Manager - responsibility to lead on all communications
- Town Clerk
- Governance and Projects Manager
- Administrator (Mayoral, Events, Marketing) - assisting the Marketing Manager
- Information Officer - Jane Gallagher - manages the Visit Totnes information centre

Social Media Responsibility

It has been and will continue to remain the responsibility of various officers, the Town Clerk and the Councillors to communicate via social media and to interact with the media as well, however there hasn't ever been a joined up, strategic approach before which this strategy will aim to fix.

With lots of different social media channels for the various Council brands, different members of staff have responsibility for managing different channels as outlined in the table below.

With many different people writing across a variety of channels it's important that there is consistency in terms of the type of content which is being posted but also in terms of the style

and tone of the writing. For the Council the language, tone and style of writing should remain professional and fairly formal (or standard English and not colloquial).

Brand	Channel	Responsibility
Overarching responsibility from Marketing & Communications Manager		
TTC	TTC Facebook	Catherine Marlton Sara Halliday Mairead Phipps Amy Lumsden
	TTC Twitter	Sam Branch Mairead Phipps
Community	Guildhall FB	Catherine Marlton Mairead Phipps Amy Lumsden
	Civic Hall FB	Catherine Marlton Mairead Phipps Amy Lumsden
Green Travel	Totnes Green Travel FB	Sylvia Dell
Visit Totnes	VT FB	Sam Branch Mairead Phipps
	VT Twitter	Jane Gallagher
	VT Instagram	Sam Branch
Visit Totnes / TTC	Virtual High Street - Facebook group	Cllr C Allford Sam Branch

There are many social media management tools available to bring all of the channels together to make the work easier and more efficient, which can also incorporate a filter so that certain people who post will have to have their work approved by an editor before it's posted, however these are quite expensive tools now requiring a monthly subscription. HootSuite is £39 a month for the most basic package therefore SB could monitor all accounts to make sure they remain on brand and professional.

The Communications & Media Protocol outlines the aims for all officers and Councillors when referring to social media which are:

- To ensure that social media used to communicate with the public, partners or other stakeholders by all Town Council staff in the performance of their duties is aligned to the view of the Town Council.
- To ensure that all Town Council social media sites are easily identifiable as originating from the Town Council and correctly apply the council's logo and brand guidelines.
- To protect the reputation of the Town Council while embracing the possibilities of this channel.
- To ensure that any Council communication through social media meets legal requirements and is consistent with other communication activities.
- To prevent the unauthorised use of Town Council branding on employees' or Councillors personal social media sites.

Further to the above, as all officers have a degree of responsibility for endorsing the Council they should try to follow the following guidance at all times:

- Be kept informed about everything that is happening within the Council so that they are armed with the correct information if questioned by the public or the media - if there is anything they are unsure about they should ask the Marketing & Communications Manager, Town Clerk or Governance and Projects Manager for advice.
- All staff should be partly responsible for finding positive news stories and alerting either the Marketing & Communications Manager, the Clerk, Administrator (Mayoral, Events, Marketing) or Governance and Projects Manager. These officers can filter the potential stories and push them out via the most appropriate channels to the relevant stakeholders where possible.
- Take photos of anything newsworthy or positive e.g. maintenance work, clean streets, events, attractions etc and send to the Marketing & Communications Manager or Administrator (Mayoral, Events, Marketing) for them to use via the appropriate channels.
- Officers are responsible for attending meetings and represent the Council wherever they go therefore they should all remain professional at all times in terms of their appearance and manner.

For further information on social media usage including personal, please check the Communications & Media Protocol.

Dealing with Negative Comments on Social Media

The Communications & Media Protocol says the following in relation to dealing with negative comments on social media:

From time to time the Council has to respond to negative issues. It is important that these situations are managed carefully so as to limit the potential for negative publicity.

Members and Officers must alert the Clerk as soon as a potentially negative issue which may attract media interest comes to light. They should not wait until contact is made by the media.

Members and Officers must be prepared to work together to prepare holding statements, other information and carry out research even if no media have contacted the Council about an issue.

Further to the above, if an Officer can't notify the Clerk about any negative issues they can inform the Marketing & Communications Manager or Governance and Projects Manager. An individual Officer can physically respond but the response should be checked before posting as anything can be shared numerous times and can easily be picked up by the local media.

Forbes outlines the following ways to address negative feedback on social media:

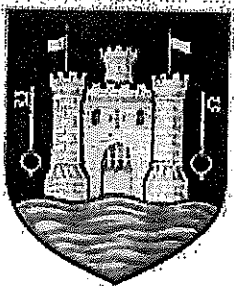


1. Don't divert blame - always accept responsibility where relevant, take it on the chin and move on. Encourage the respondent to email the Council if they want to take the matter further - try to move the conversation away from the public arena
2. Be respectful
3. Don't get defensive - acknowledge the comment and list the ways you're addressing the issue. If a comment is particularly controversial aim to encourage the conversation to continue via email or call again
4. Show you're taking the comment seriously - it may seem trivial to us but it is important to that person
5. Make sure the person feels heard - we may not have a perfect answer for them but it will go a long way if that person feels they are being heard and dealt with
6. Respond as quickly as possible - but without rushing into an unconsidered / thought out response
7. Write a personalised response - don't just send a generic, automated response to all as the person will feel devalued
8. Respond with a solution - this won't always be possible as sometimes decisions take time or there isn't a clear solution, however if we can show that we're on the path to making a decision or coming up with a solution this will help
9. Be thankful for feedback - we might not always feel like thanking people for their feedback but as long as the comment isn't extremely controversial we could thank them for taking the time to write
10. If we aren't comfortable responding on social media or if we think it might add fuel to the fire and encourage more public gossip, we should encourage the respondent to email or call to continue the conversation

Council Branding

There isn't an overall brand toolkit with designated fonts, colours etc for Totnes Town Council however there is the well established traditional crest logo which has been used to represent the council through more formal communication methods and there is the more modern Totnes Council for the Community logo.

The Council for the Community logo should start to supersede the town crest where possible and appropriate – the Marketing & Communications Manager will get guidance from the Clerk as to where this will be.

Council Brands

Brand	Logo	Communications
Totnes Town Council		The traditional crest is used to support any formal or traditional Council related communications including public information notices e.g. road closures, mayoral invitations, internal handbooks, letters etc.
Totnes Council for the Community		The Community logo is currently used on the TTC FB page and is used in general to support comms about Council surveys, events, arts and anything which has been designed or organised to support the community, particularly things that are less formal or traditional. The language should still be fairly formal unless promoting things like events or event space. The incorporation of the crest ties it in with the TTC branding.
Visit Totnes		The Visit Totnes logo is used on all tourism related channels to support any comms about Totnes as a visitor destination. Language tends to be more informal. This logo isn't in line with the TTC logos because it was developed according to the nationally recognised tourist board brands e.g. Visit England & Visit Devon however it is important that we make it much clearer that VT is managed by TTC for positivity in the community - SB has written on the FB & Twitter profiles to say that they're 'managed & funded by TTC' but will make it clearer where possible
Green Travel		The Green Travel Totnes brand is very new, developed in Oct 2020 with a designated FB page to support it. It

H2

	<p>green travel TOTNES</p>	<p>would be good to bring the logo in line with the TTC Community logo moving forward for synergy and consistency in terms of the visual branding, to ensure people recognise the activities and information associated with any comms as being Council related. As such all comms need to be in accordance with any brand guidelines (if developed).</p>
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Brand Guidelines

There is the potential to develop brand guidelines for any Council related brands to ensure any communication is on brand using a consistent typeface or fonts alongside the correct logos for the right piece of information. This would ensure that all communications are consistent, professional and relevant to the desired audience and will therefore be well-trusted and professional. The Marketing & Communications Manager can put together some Guidelines along with some examples on writing style.

It's also possible to develop a Style Guide however I don't think this is necessary at this stage. A style guide is a set of standards for writing documents including grammar which help when producing more consistent documents. As mentioned earlier in the document, all Council communications should use standard English and should be cross-checked with another Officer wherever possible. As mentioned above, The Marketing & Communications Manager can outline some good examples.

Key Strategic Aims / Priorities

Totnes Town Council has the following key strategic aims for the future. The Communications Strategy will underpin these aims but will have its own objectives as well:

- Economic - to drive the economic regeneration of the town by sustaining local jobs, encouraging young people to stay in the area through better education, encouraging more local manufacturing and local procurement
- Environment - committed to protecting climate change by encouraging green travel, more recycling & reusing, using less energy and zero waste with the aim of becoming a plastic free town
- Creating a better town by improving the built environment, cleanliness, signage, street furniture and maintenance
- Improving people's lives through a vibrant Arts programme including a programme of community events while encouraging the use of local venues such as the Civic Hall, the Barrel House and St. Mary's Church to hold community events and exhibitions

Aims & Objectives

The overall aims and objectives should reflect what we want to achieve in terms of our communications, bearing the strategic aims in mind at all times.

Aims

- To develop a good level of efficient and effective communications with the intention of keeping local residents and stakeholders informed, improving the Council's reputation, changing any negative perceptions and increasing awareness of our services and achievements
- To promote Totnes as an attractive destination for visitors from across the UK and the world with the support of Visit Devon
- Communication should be high quality, consistent, professional and on brand with a different style and tone for the general Council comms and Visit Totnes
- Any paid advertising and communications should be cost effective or relevant to the return on investment

Objectives

- To keep local residents and stakeholders informed about what services we provide
- To promote all of the positive work the Council does including day to day services (maintenance, upkeep), future plans and any achievements
- To better engage with a wide range of local stakeholders and encourage resident involvement where possible e.g. consultation processes, decision making, surveys
- To build a better reputation through positive communication
- Promote the quality events, attractions, local businesses and accommodation in the area to highlight the town as an excellent tourism destination
- Supporting staff in delivering excellent communications
- Promoting the Council to potential investors and other external stakeholders
- To create a more joined up approach with the comms team at SHDC to see if we can work together on any campaigns to create a bigger voice and wider reach e.g. encouraging people to shop local, encouraging people to be more green etc

As outlined in the Communications Protocol, the following principles should also be followed:

- Ensure that the Council is recognised as one which is open, accountable, accessible and which listens
- Share and celebrate the Council's successes
- Give information about policies and services and about the democratic process so that people feel more informed about the Council's work
- Handle negative issues clearly and decisively

Check the Communications & Media Protocol for the General Operating Guidelines.

How we're going to deliver the Aims & Objectives

Audience

It is important to understand who are we talking to as a Council which would include the following key stakeholders:

- local residents in the TQ9 postcode area including Bridgetown & Totnes
- local business owners - shops, eateries, attractions, pubs, services, accommodation
- local media - Totnes Times, Totnes Directory, Devon Live, Sound Art
- regional media – Western Morning News, Herald Express (part of Devon Live)
- Totnes organisations - Totnes Caring, Caring Town, Transition Town, Chamber of Commerce, The Connection Hub, Food in the Community, the Mansion, STAG, Incredible Edibles, Totnes Gardens and Citizen's Advice
- Visitors - via Visit Totnes

Communication Channels

The Council already uses a whole host of different communication channels which are used to promote various services and inform stakeholders about a variety of projects. It is important to analyse these existing channels to see if we can improve upon anything we're already doing and to see if there is anything else we can do.

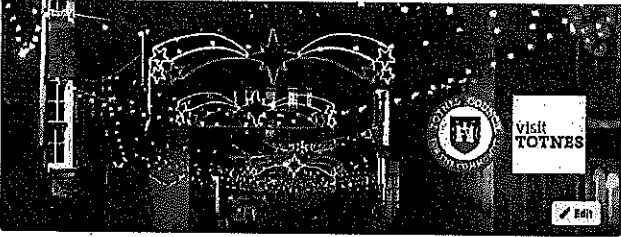
All Officers are responsible for managing a variety of the different channels. It is possible to have a checklist to make sure we're communicating in all of the possible ways for each story or piece of information which the Marketing & Communications Manager can produce.

Brand	Existing Channels	Content	Improvements
Key Stakeholders: Local residents, businesses, organisations			
TTC - Crest	Facebook	Any info or story of public interest or in the interest of local businesses / stakeholders posted direct from the Council or shared from SHDC or DCC	<p>The TTC FB page only has 955 followers - this should be significantly more as the population of Totnes is 8,000.</p> <p>Need to increase followers - promote the pages or posts through paid advertising, all staff can promote through their email signatures, via any advertising e.g. posters etc.</p> <p>SB can research the demographics to determine where these followers are from to see if we need to improve on this as well.</p>

			The TTC page uses the Community logo - possible to swap to the crest logo & use the community logo for the Guildhall / Civic pages.
	Twitter		<p>1,121 followers - again this should be higher although not as high as FB</p> <p>We should feed into the relevant hashtags & engage with community groups such as Devon Hour (56.9k followers) and South Hams Hour (4220 followers). Devon Hour will retweet anything about the area from 8-9pm every Wednesday.</p> <p>#SouthHamsHour will retweet on Wednesdays from 20:30-9:30pm - a place to promote local businesses and events.</p>
	TTC Website	Any information which needs to be made public e.g. minutes & notification plus staff & Cllr info, press releases & more	Currently being upgraded - due to go live in March 21. We can promote the social media channels through the new website. Once the new website is up & running it will be important to research Google analytics to see how the site is performing.
	Telephone & email	Reactive	<p>New phone lines have been installed and it will be the responsibility of the administrators to answer the phone. In their absence this will fall to the other officers in office. It's possible to have a standard line for answering the phones however as long as it's professional it should be ok.</p> <p>All email signatures can promote the new website & various social media channels.</p>
	Full Council meetings / working groups & committees	Open to the public or viewed via zoom & social media	It's important to maintain the professionalism of all Cllrs at all times in all meetings especially when meetings are being recorded via Zoom or live streamed via FB.
	Face to face	The most visual face to face role for TTC is the TMO	The TMO should always be branded in a presentable uniform so that people can approach him and his positive work will be visible in the community.
	Councillors	Face of the Council often on the front line both face to face (in meetings & the streets) & via social	Potential to raise the profile of individual Cllrs (areas of work, backgrounds, positive things they do for the community etc) as long as it's not during election times. Important to make sure they're using social media via the guidelines and

		media	not saying anything inflammatory or controversial even on personal accounts.
	Leaflets - door to door	Surveys, events, community workshops, important announcements or news	This is expensive (if we use a company) or timely if Cllrs distribute but it's a very good way of reaching all houses or businesses. If budget allows it would be more efficient to use Royal Mail or another organisation.
	Email	Any relevant info e.g. road closures, cancellations of Xmas markets etc.	TTC is currently building a database of all (or as many) local businesses as possible to try and reach as many via email however many businesses don't read or respond. We don't have an email database for residents. We can use an enews channel to support future B2B comms to ensure there is a consistent and professional template with consistent fonts & relevant branding e.g. Moosend or MailChimp.
	Totnes Directory	Full page once a month - Council news	This is a more cost effective way of reaching all houses and many businesses as they distribute to the whole town.
	Local Media - Totnes Times, Devon Live	Ad hoc press releases	Is there a good relationship with the editor of Totnes Times? If not we should aim to improve upon this to try and ensure positive representation. The Marketing & Communications Manager will meet with all local media as soon as it's safe.
	Poster sites	Events, important news, community announcements	There is a limited amount of poster space in town and most is used by advertisers through Visit Totnes.
	Notice boards	TTC has notice boards under the Civic Hall which are used for agendas & electoral notices etc	This only takes 4 portrait pieces of A4 therefore there is the potential to improve upon this space within the wayfinding / public realm project - the new digital screens in the market square will help to promote news, events & services. This was postponed due to coronavirus.
	Branded items – van & clothing	Relevant logos	Need to ensure they are replaced when they start to look worn.
	Advertising	Various	Should be reviewed on a case by case basis & make sure it's cost-effective or the cost is relevant to the appropriate reach.

Key Stakeholders: Local residents, organisations, residents from neighbouring areas

Totnes for the Community	Facebook - Guildhall & Civic pages	Info about the Guildhall or Civic (separate pages) - promoted as potential venues for weddings, funerals, parties and community events	<p>Guildhall FB page only has 288 followers which can be improved and the Civic page only has 468 followers</p> <p>The Guildhall page has a photo of the Mayoral boards as the profile - it's possible to change to one of an event. It doesn't have a User Name - we should try TotnesGuildhall.</p> <p>The Civic page also doesn't have a User Name.</p> <p>With both pages we should incorporate the TTC Community logo to highlight that both are managed by us & we should highlight this in the account info as well. We can layer the logo over the header images like we did on the Virtual High St FB page</p>  <p>Totnes Virtual High Street Public group · 858 members</p>
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	External websites	Key Council events	Possible to promote some of the key Council events which we've organised via Visit Devon, Visit South Devon, Visit Plymouth & more - potential to do this for some of the other key events as well (or encourage organisers to do) because this will help to promote the venues.
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Key Stakeholders: Local residents & businesses

Green Travel	Facebook page	News, events & info to support Totnes Traffic & Transport Forum promoting low carbon & sustainable travel for a greener future	Only 54 followers so far - need for improvement on this and to potentially bring the logo in line with the Community logo so that it's more consistent and more instantly recognisable.
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Key Stakeholders: Potential & existing visitors

Visit Totnes	Facebook	Any news, stories or photos which will paint Totnes in a	3120 followers. We have a high number of followers from Totnes & the surrounding area so we need to be increase from outside the area.
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48

	Twitter	positive light as a potential tourist destination	1690 followers - need more followers & more from out of the area as per FB.
	Instagram		2863 followers - need more followers & more from out of the area as per FB.
	Visit Totnes website	Information on accommodation, what to do, eating, shopping & more	We constantly review the demographics & analytics and change the home page or add blogs to keep it fresh & relevant. Adding new content also helps to improve SEO and keep it at the top of Google when people search for Totnes.
	TIC / Info Officer	Face to face in the TIC	The Information Officer wears a branded shirt and is always professional and courteous.
	Advertising	Various	There are lots of other channels / advertising methods being used by Visit Totnes as outlined in a separate VT marketing strategy.

Potential new channels

We already use most of the potential communication channels as a Council however it is possible to incorporate the following to the mix over time where possible and relevant:



Instagram


It would be good to start an account for the Council as a whole for all brands apart from Visit Totnes as there is a dedicated account for this. South Hams DC and Devon County Council are both on IG with 1053 and 3670 followers respectively. It would require some decent images (however we can share some of the town via a repost app or use some of the Visit Totnes images) plus we can use it to post some of the positive visual work we do (cleaning, maintenance etc) and share information as well.

Here are some examples from SHams & DCC:

Explore from your door devoncountycouncil • Following ...





 devoncountycouncil **Fingers crossed for some sunshine this weekend!** 





Remember, you don't need to get in your car to enjoy it. Use your daily exercise to stay local and try and spot those first signs of spring! 

We'd love to see what you discover share your photos using #ExploreFromYourDoor


6d

 theadventuresoffridapuggle **What a fabulous idea!** 


6d Reply



   

26 likes
6 days ago





 Add a comment...




 south.hams • Following ...

 south.hams **WARNING -ROAD CLOSURE** 


Jk. Due to high winds and predicted high tides over the weekend, the road at Stampton Lido has been closed. The winds have already blown sand and debris onto the road and is currently being cleared, while Bagesands Car Park is currently covered by a large amount of shingle



   





1 like
24 Apr 2020, Wed

 Add a comment...




 south.hams • Following ...

 south.hams **Our staff have been out and about at our recycling banks, making sure they're not overflowing with materials ready to be reused. There are a variety of recycling banks around the district where you can take items that are not currently collected in your household collection.** 

Liked by [mairon_bostholluo](#) and 13 others

3 days ago

 Add a comment...

YouTube

We have set up a YouTube channel for Visit Totnes however we need our own videos and we only have one so far therefore we haven't promoted this at all. It's something we can develop if and when we get more videos as you can't share videos through this channel.

It's possible to have a YouTube channel for the Council but I don't think this is necessary at the moment as it would be time-consuming to create lots of videos. Most Council channels on

YouTube are for city Councils and video examples include info on recycling, voting, paying bills and council meetings.



Local media

It's possible to improve communications with Devon Life for information on events or Cllr profiles however this title is centralised with Great British Life now and so it will probably be hard to get coverage if we don't advertise. We could utilise Sound Art FM more for promoting events or highlighting any particularly important messages via Cllr interviews.

National Press

Totnes is often featured in the Guardian and Telegraph as a destination, however coverage for the Council tends to be more negative therefore this shouldn't be a key focus for the Council, only Visit Totnes.

Potential Campaigns

With all communication we should consider what strategic Council aims or communication objectives are being fulfilled, for example for 'Improving lives' we can promote the TTC brand via photos of clean streets and maintenance jobs.

As a Council we should also start to consider becoming more proactive with some pre-planned campaigns rather than just being reactive, with the aim to forward plan what stories to promote through which channels across the year. The Marketing & Communications Manager will produce a timeline and content schedule for the year to be approved by the Clerk and Councillors.

The table below outlines just some examples of existing or potential new proactive campaigns including who we want to talk to, via which channels and the key messages. There will be many more than this which the Marketing & Communications Manager will continue to think about.

Potential or Existing Communication Campaigns

Strategic Aim / Objective	Stakeholders	Campaign	How do we communicate / Channels	What do we want to say? Key messages
To promote the positive work we do as a Council	Local residents & business owners, local organisations	New website	Social media Local media Enews Website	We will want to promote the new website once it's had a little time to settle to allow for snagging. We should highlight how it's more user friendly and aesthetically pleasing while informing people about what they can discover.
		Market Square Improvements	Social media Local media Enews Leaflets Website	Promoting any future plans or work done to improve the market square highlighting the reasons behind all changes.
Creating a better town	Local residents & business owners, local organisations	Tidy Totnes	Branded vinyls / stickers for shop windows Social media Local media	In this existing campaign we wanted to highlight the importance of keeping the streets tidy & how it isn't just the responsibility of Totnes Council or SHams, it should also be down to the owners / managers to keep their pavements clean. They displayed a Tidy Totnes sticker and we recognised their work with a full page in the Times.
		Maintaining the town	Social media Enews Website	TMO to take photos of any maintenance, building works, upkeep or cleaning he does for the relevant officers to post.
To drive the economic regeneration of the town	Local residents & business owners, schools	A place to learn, work and stay	Social media Posters Website Collab with schools	Raise awareness of local employment opportunities to try and retain young people in the area. Raise awareness of new housing areas & the quality of life here.

	Local residents, potential visitors	Shop local	Social media Posters Enews Ads VT website	Raise awareness of the local, independent shops to encourage people to 'shop local' from Totnes, surrounding areas & when visiting.
Improving people's lives	Local residents & schools	Fun for all	Social media Posters Enews Website Leaflets	Raise awareness of all of the great community events and arts workshops we have planned for the area (when it's safe to do so).
	Local residents & schools	Stay healthy	Social media Posters Ads Website	Encourage people to stay healthy - cycle to work, eat healthily, don't smoke etc. Potentially in collaboration with SHams.
Protecting climate change	Local residents & business owners, local organisations & schools	Recycle, upcycle or reuse Plastic free Switch it off	Social media Posters Ads Enews Website Leaflets	We want to try and become a plastic free town with the help of various local organisations & businesses & we want to highlight important environmental messages in a snappy way.
To promote Totnes as an attractive destination for visitors	Potential & existing visitors	Visit Totnes	Social media Website Enews Ads	Promote the quality events, independent businesses, attractions and accommodation to highlight why people should visit Totnes in a variety of creative ways - SB will develop a series of campaigns for the year.

Media Relations

The media sits within an evolving landscape. Traditional news from papers has expanded vastly and a lot of people digest their news through digital channels now including news websites, Twitter and Facebook.

This presents opportunities and threats - opportunities as there are more channels available to spread news offering a wider reach, however sharing news via social media presents it's own

problems with people being able to freely comment in a positive or negative way sparking online arguments or debates.

It's important for the Council to respond to direct questions on social media however we shouldn't engage in local gossip - see the section on negative comments.

Press Releases

All press releases should be written by Council Officers and checked by either the Clerk, Marketing & Communications Manager or Governance & Projects Manager to ensure consistency and to check the facts.

All Officers and Councillors should be aware of all news stories and information in case they are asked questions by the public or through social media. The Marketing & Communications Manager will keep a log of press releases and associated coverage on the server for people to check - see Appendix A.

The releases should be submitted to the local news, used on the Council website and shared via social media to further the potential reach.

As outlined in the Communications & Media Protocol there are 2 types of press release – Official Council Press Releases and Councillor Press Releases.

Councillor Press Releases should not include the TTC Crest or TTC contact details and therefore all communications should be fed directly through the Cllr who issues the release. As again outlined in the Communications & Media Protocol, it says that it would be beneficial for the Clerk or Marketing & Communications Manager to see a copy of the release before they're sent out so that Officers are kept aware of all potential news stories and to measure success.

Joint Communications

There is the potential to join forces with local partners, organisations or businesses to communicate to the local residents and stakeholders about joint initiatives or projects to try and create a bigger voice and wider reach. This should be more proactive to give us longer to think about the key messages.

We already work closely with the Chamber of Commerce and other various organisations particularly around matters to do with the high street however it is possible for the Marketing & Communications Manager to build a better relationship with the Communications Team at Shams. A meeting will be arranged as soon as it's safe.

Internal communications

As a small council we don't have a staff intranet therefore all communications are channeled through email, face to face meetings, letters and handbooks. Communications from staff to Councillors are channeled through email, face to face and papers in pigeon holes.

It is important to have a strong two way communication process to ensure staff feel valued and motivated.

Staff should have an understanding of and commitment to the Town's values and aims and should all feel comfortable with the Communications Strategy.

Action Plan

Here are the communication actions for April 2021 / end March 2022 if agreed by Councillors based on the recommendations in the overall document:

Action	Responsibility	Deadline
All staff to update their email signatures to include the new website & social media channels to try and boost the number of followers	All officers	April 2021
Set up an Instagram account for TTC - this has to be done through a mobile phone however posts can be loaded through a computer with the use of the Later app	SB to set up with ongoing responsibility for posting from SB and Mairead Phipps – images to be fed through to SB & MP by all Officers but in particular the TMO	May 2021
Produce a communications checklist	SB	May 2021
Update the Green Travel logo to bring it in line with the TTC for the Community logo for consistency	SB & Left Bridge	Summer 2021
Create a content calendar & timeline with a series of proactive stories to push via all communication channels.	SB	May 2021

Pre schedule as many social media posts as possible to include tweeting to the likes of Devon Hour	SB & MP	On-going
Set up Google Analytics for the new website to monitor, evaluate & report on the success of the new website	Web design agency to set up with on-going responsibility for reporting by SB & MP	On-going
Sam Branch to meet with the Comms team at SHDC to see if we can work together	SB	Summer 2021
Measure success of important news stories & social media campaigns to determine engagement levels & coverage for important stories	SB & MP	On-going
Sponsorship - build the reputation of the Council & brand awareness and promote the social media channels / new website through sponsoring key local events	SB, MP & the Clerk	After summer 2021 (when safe after coronavirus)
Communications & Marketing Manager to meet with the key editors / local media to start building these relationships	SB & MP	After summer 2021 (as soon as it's safe to meet face-face)

Appendix A

Media Log - examples

Story	How was the story released?	Date released	Coverage / engagement	Media enquiries?	Lessons learnt
Road closures	Press release, TTC FB & Twitter	11th Sept 2020	A column in Totnes Times 10 likes on FB	No	n/a
Cancellation of Xmas markets	Press release, TTC FB & Twitter, e-news, leaflets	1st December 2020	A page in Totnes Times 50 likes on FB 2 negative comments	Yes	To email all local businesses as well - building a database

MEMO.

PAY POLICY



TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL

March 2021

For review March 2022

This Policy helps the Council to make best use of its Council Resources.

Councillors and staff must be committed to the policy in order for it to succeed, so they must be aware of its aims and objectives and their role within it.

POLICY STATEMENT

It is the aim of the Council to ensure that all employees or job applicants are assessed fairly and remunerated according to the skills required to undertake the role and the level of responsibility associated with the post.

All working practices and recruitment procedures will be reviewed at least annually to ensure that individuals are paid on the basis of their merits and abilities.

The Council undertakes to pay at least the Living Wage to all employees.

PRINCIPLES

- a. To make full use of the talents and abilities of all staff.
- b. To attract and retain good quality staff.
- c. To provide training and development for all the staff.
- d. To maintain an equality of pay scale differentials.

ASSESSMENT OF PAY SCALE

The Council will: -

- undertake an Appraisal in line with the Council's Appraisal Policy
- follow the pay scales agreed and laid down by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services – National Agreement on Salaries and Conditions of Service (amended to accommodate the change in hours weekly from 37 hour working week to 35 hour working week).
- assess and compare similar jobs within the sector to ensure that the pay rates set are in line with other Councils

EVALUATION

The Council has set a base line of job descriptions and pay scales for its current employees:

The Council evaluation process will use the following guidelines and rules:

- Any re-evaluation exercise will be undertaken with a clear and systematic approach.
- An assessment will be undertaken to ascertain whether significant aspects of an employee's work has changed

The concomitant factors arising are that the employee may:

- No longer be adequately remunerated for the skills they are required to deploy
- Require new skills
- Require an assessment of work/life balance and that:
- there may be the possibility of additional staff having to be employed and with specialist skills as well

- the current post holder is leaving and a new and accurate person specification has to be designed for interview and contractual purposes

In assessing the Pay Scale criteria the Council will be mindful of the following:

Jobs as defined by Job Descriptions need to be taken into account.

- A framework needs to be established, but it must be reviewed in the light of structural changes in the work of the Council.
- Only objective criteria can be used.
- Sound judgement must be exercised in the process of analysing information and making comparisons against benchmarks established.

Methodology

The evaluation will cover the entire staff

- The key points to be used in the evaluation will be identified
- The job and the role will be analysed
- The relative value of the jobs and roles will be established on a weighted scale
- Development needs will be identified and programmed
- Staffing levels will be projected
- The appropriate reward levels decided

Framework

The Council will use the Profiles drawn up by the Society of Local Council Clerks and the National Association of Local Councils in the National Agreement on Salaries and Conditions of Service. These profiles will be used as a framework for assessing all posts, including the Town Clerk.

There can be a right of appeal against any decisions which will be undertaken through the Grievance Procedure of the Council.

TRAINING/DEVELOPMENT

All staff will have access to training and development opportunities, which will be taken into account when assessing pay scales. This will be assessed on the level of achievement and the relevance of the qualification to the role being undertaken.

OVERTIME

Overtime is time worked beyond the contracted hours. It is preferable for TOIL (time in lieu) to be used but where this is not practical all overtime will be authorized in advance by the Town Clerk. Overtime is paid at standard hourly rate unless the hours are before 7am or after 10pm (with the exclusion of the Town Clerk), and on Sunday or public bank holidays where a double rate is payable (all staff).

PAY STRUCTURE

The Council uses the NALC and SLCC recommended salary scales (amended to accommodate the change in hours weekly from 37 hour working week to 35 hour working week). In exceptional circumstances, for example for retention reasons, employees may be awarded accelerated salary progression at the discretion of the Council. Each member of staff will receive a salary increment annually assuming the successful completion of their appraisal, back dated to 1st April of that year, until the top of their salary scale is reached.

THE LAW

The policy will be implemented within the framework of the relevant legislation, which includes:

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995

ITEM 12 – RECRUITMENT

ADMINISTRATOR 2 (JOB SHARE) RECRUITMENT TIMELINE

Monday 8th March 2021 Council Matters – timeline and interview panel agreed.

Thursday 18th March 2021 – Interviews

Friday 19th March 2021 – job offer made to successful candidate subject to the usual checks.

Monday 12th April 2021 – appointment ratified by Full Council

Tuesday 13th April 2021 – proposed start date

ADMINISTRATOR 1 RECRUITMENT TIMELINE

Monday 8th March 2021 Council Matters – timeline, job advert, job description and interview panel agreed.

Tuesday 16th March – job advert opened

Wednesday 7th April – closing date

Thursday 8th April – shortlisting and invitations to interview made

Thursday 22nd April – Interviews

Friday 23rd April - job offer made to successful candidate subject to the usual checks.

Monday 10th May – appointment ratified by Full Council

Monday 17th May – proposed start date

ITEM 13 – PROTOCOL ON THE DEATH OF A SENIOR NATIONAL FIGURE

Totnes Town Council has protocol that will be followed in the event of a death of a senior member of the Royal Family. There is a box of basic equipment (black arm bands, condolence book, etc) in Cell 3 labelled 'Operation London Bridge'. The basic points in the protocol are:

- No actions will be taken until there is a formal announcement of the deaths (therefore any 'breaking news' reports will be ignored).
- The Town Council will await guidance on the type of mourning to be observed - National Mourning or Royal mourning (the latter of which has no implication for the Town Council).
- Council Business – in the current pandemic environment it is not thought that there are any Council meetings or events that would be affected.
- Flag Flying - if National Mourning is to be observed then the flag on the Civic Hall will be raised and lowered to half-mast and flown until the day after the funeral.
- Books of Condolence – in the current pandemic the Council will explore setting up a book of condolence online rather than managing one for in person callers. Alternatively the Council could signpost the community to any national books of remembrance that are set up by the Royal household.
- Marking a Silence – an announcement will be made by Buckingham Palace should a national silence be observed. The protocol sets out steps that will be taken should a silence be observed and this will be reviewed in line with the latest Government social distancing advice at the time.