



## AGENDA FOR THE MEETING OF TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL

MONDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2021 IN THE CIVIC HALL

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

You are hereby **SUMMONED** to attend a Meeting of the Council, on **Monday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2021 at 6.30pm** for a maximum of 120 minutes the purpose of transacting the following business:

1. WELCOME TO ALL ATTENDING AND OBSERVING

The Chair will read out the following statement:

Welcome to everyone attending and observing the meeting.

A reminder that open proceedings of this meeting will be video recorded 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 attendees are also consenting to being recorded.

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

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

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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

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*The Committee will adjourn for the following items:*

Reports from County and District Councillors.

- a. County Cllr Hodgson – no document.
- b. District Cllr Birch – document enclosed.
- c. District Cllr Rose – no document.
- d. District Cllr Sweett – no document.

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*The Council will convene to consider the following items:*

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

To approve and sign the minutes of the following Meeting:

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

- a. Full Council 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021 – document attached.

To note the following minutes:

- b. Council Matters 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021 – document attached.
- c. Planning Committee 24<sup>th</sup> May 2021 – document attached.

4. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTERS ARISING REQUIRING A DECISION

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

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

- a. Full Council 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021.
- b. Council Matters 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021.
- c. Planning Committee 24<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

5. SPEND FROM THE GENERAL RESERVE

To consider funding four projects that came through the Community Grant process through the general reserve. Document attached.

6. TOWN FUND GRANT

To consider giving the Clerk delegated authority to submit an application to South Hams District Council under the Town Fund grant which would see various business renewal initiatives match funded up to £50000. Verbal update.

7. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

To consider and approve the Internal Audit Report for 2020/21 and action plan. Document attached.

8. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

To consider and approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2020/21 [Chair to sign the hardcopy]. Document attached.

9. ACCOUNTING STATEMENT

To consider and approve the Accounting Statement for 2020/21 [Chair to sign the hardcopy]. Document attached.

10. VISIT TOTNES REPORT

To consider a Visit Totnes report covering January-April 2021. Document attached.

11. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

To note an update on the Neighbourhood Plan. Document attached.

12. LIST OF MEETING DATES

To note a list of upcoming meeting dates. Document attached.

13. NEXT MEETING

To note the next meeting date of Monday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2021, 6.30pm public session, 7.00pm formal meeting – venue to be confirmed (dependent on social distancing advice).

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

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14. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE (Standing Item)

To consider any recommendations or matters arising that are considered confidential in nature. No documents.

15. COMMERCIAL MATTER

To consider a request from the Seachange Festival 2022. Verbal update.

Agenda produced by:

Catherine Marlton

Town Clerk

2<sup>nd</sup> June 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.

**John Birch**  
**SHDC Member for Totnes**

Report to the Totnes Town Council  
meeting to be held on Monday 7 June 2021

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I report on the following matters.

**SHDC Waste Crisis**

I am sorry to report we have a waste collection crisis in South Hams. There are widespread problems across the district with the new recycling collection service and councillors have been inundated with complaints of non-collection. It has been reported that 4,000 properties have not had their bins collected. I have receiving many calls and emails notifying me of missed collections throughout Totnes as well as other parts of the district.

The crisis is brought about by the failure by the Council's waste collection contractor, FCC, to manage and run the service in a proper manner. FCC is in breach of its contract with the Council and I am pressing for recovery of damages resulting from the inconvenience suffered by residents and the reputational damage suffered by the council.

But most important of all I am calling for action to be taken to ensure the residents have a waste collection that runs smoothly and without missed collections. I am pressing hard for this to be achieved and I have been asking the Council to come clean and explain all the problems being caused by FCC and what action is being taken to ensure it complies with its contractual obligations.

It is not sufficient to offer apologies for the inconvenience caused by this unsatisfactory recycling system. On 13 May, after lots of pressure, SHDC did issue councillors with a position statement. Rather shamefully they said the statement should be kept confidential. I took a different view and I asked that the issue be taken as an urgent item at the Full Council meeting held on 20 May 2021. My request was refused and it appeared that SHDC did not wish the problem to be discussed in public. When I attempted to raise the waste crisis at the Full Council meeting I was prevented from doing so and not allowed to question the administration.

Not to be defeated I along with four other councillors called for an extraordinary full council meeting to force the issue out into the open. In response the Council fixed a meeting to be held on 17 June, which in my opinion, was not soon enough.

To overcome this delay and in my capacity as chair of SHDC Overview & Scrutiny Panel I have called an Extraordinary Meeting of the Panel to be held on 10 June at which Members will be given the opportunity to question both officers and FCC on the reasons for the 4,000 missed collections and the steps being taken to resolve this problem. This meeting will be broadcast live to the public.

The most disappointing thing is the residents of the South Hams have always supported recycling. We did have some of the highest rates in the Country. Now with the latest fiasco some residents are just giving up.

Queries have been raised as to the need for the new waste system. The new system brings South Hams into line with most of the other local authorities in Devon. That is how it was put to Members and I am informed it works smoothly elsewhere. The problem we have in South Hams is the operator, FCC, whose failure to fulfil its contractual obligations is resulting in widespread criticism of the new system.

#### **SHDC and Baker Estates Ltd**

I set out below the email I have sent to the Executive Member responsible for planning matters at SHDC.

*Concerns have been raised as to the lack of propriety shown by the Council in it advertising properties being developed by Baker Estates Ltd in Dartmouth. I share these concerns as it perceived by the public as evidence of an unhealthy relationship between the Council as the planning authority and a local developer who has several development interests across the district. I am of the view that the advertisement of Baker Estates' houses for sale on SHDC's Facebook site is a mistake and is likely to cause the Council reputational damage.*

*The advertisement coupled with the following is leading to the public losing confidence in the Council impartiality in dealing with planning applications submitted by Baker Estates Ltd.*

- 1. The designation of a planning officer to deal specifically with Baker's planning applications and whose fees are partially funded by Baker.*
- 2. The use of Follaton by Baker in the sale of its properties at Great Court Farm, Totnes.*
- 3. The lack of enforcement action by the Council in dealing with the planning breaches by Baker at its Great Court Farm development in Totnes.*
- 4. The concerns raised by the public in respect of the Baker planning applications at Dartington.*

*Please can you let me know who authorised the Facebook advertisement. For the reasons mentioned above I would respectfully suggest that steps be taken to delete the post. I would also request an assurance that such an advertisement will not be repeated in any form*

Cllr John Birch  
SHDC Member for Totnes  
2 June 2021





**DRAFT MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL**  
**WEDNESDAY 5<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2021 HELD REMOTELY USING ZOOM**

Present: Councillors B Piper (Chair), M Adams, G Allen, S Collinson (left the meeting at 7.15pm), A Galvin, R Hendriksen, J Hodgson, C Luker, D Matthews, E Price, S Skinner, V Trow and L Webberley.

Apologies: Cllrs C Allford, P Allford, S Collinson and P Paine.

In Attendance: C Marlton (Town Clerk), Town Sergeant and members of the public.

**1. WELCOME TO ALL ATTENDING AND OBSERVING**

**2. ELECTION OF MAYOR AND TO CONSIDER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- a. To elect a Mayor for 2021 (until May 2022). The retiring Mayor will call for nominations and put them to the vote by show of hands. Those standing must have a proposer and seconder.
- b. Declaration of Acceptance of Office by the newly elected Mayor – signing of the book.
- c. New Mayor's Acceptance Speech. Please note it is in the power of the Mayor to appoint a Deputy without election.
- d. To consider rolling over the current committee, working group and link Councillor roles agreed in January 2021 for the 2021/22 Municipal year.
- e. To consider an approximate date for a ceremonial Mayor Making to do presentations and exchange of chains.

- a. Cllr Allen proposed and Cllr Trow seconded the nomination of Cllr Piper as Mayor. There were no other nominations. Cllr Piper was duly elected as Mayor by a majority.
- b. Cllr Piper signed the meeting papers to indicate his acceptance of office and the official Declaration of Office will be signed in the next week.
- c. Cllr Piper deferred making an acceptance speech at this time, and appointed Cllr Hodgson as his Deputy.
- d. It was unanimously **AGREED** to roll forward the current committee, working group and link Councillor roles.
- e. It was **AGREED** that the official Mayor Making would be held no earlier than July, and that dates would need to be reviewed in line with Covid-regulations around social distancing after 21 June 2021.

**3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

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

Apologies were received from Councillors C Allford, P Allford, S Collinson (for the remainder of the meeting) and P Paine and were accepted by the Council.

***The Committee will adjourn for the following items:***

**Reports from County and District Councillors.**

- e. County Cllr Hodgson
- f. District Cllr Birch
- g. District Cllr Rose
- h. District Cllr Sweett

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

- a. County Cllr (C Cllr) Hodgson had circulated an updated report to that included in the papers. C Cllr Hodgson updated that Devon County Council has passed a resolution to support the proposed Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) Bill and is encouraging Devon MPs to support it. Cllrs asked questions about the CEE Bill, 'life on the verge' (the planting of wildflowers on road verges) and the closure of The Connection Hub.
- b. Noted – Cllr Birch was not present to present his report or for Cllrs to raise questions. It was noted that the expansion of high street permitted development covered in Cllr Birch's report is a cause for concern.
- c. Noted - Cllr Rose was not present to present his report or for Cllrs to raise questions.
- d. Noted - Cllr Sweett was not present to present her report or for Cllrs to raise questions

*The Council reconvened.*

#### **4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

**To approve and sign the minutes of the following Meetings:**

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

- d. Extraordinary Full Council 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021

The following minutes were considered:

- a. Full Council 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021. It was **RESOLVED** by all Councillors to approve and sign the Minutes.

**To note the following minutes:**

- b. Council Matters Committee 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021.
- c. Town Matters Committee 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021.
- d. Planning Committee 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021.
- e. Council Matters Committee 29<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

The following minutes were noted:

- e. Council Matters Committee 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021.
- f. Town Matters Committee 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021.
- g. Planning Committee 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021.
- h. Council Matters Committee 29<sup>th</sup> April 2021.



## 5. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTERS ARISING

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

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

- a. Extraordinary Full Council 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021.
- b. Council Matters Committee 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021.
- c. Town Matters Committee 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021.
- d. Planning Committee 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021.
- e. Council Matters Committee 29<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

- a. Full Council 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

No matters arising.

- b. Council Matters Committee 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

Item 3 Public Realm and Cemetery Working Group - it was **RESOLVED** to accept an amendment to the recommendation that the Full Council expressed that they are open to the idea of allocating more land for allotments in Castle Meadow but they would like to see further information for future consideration from the Totnes Allotment Association.

Item 8 Financial Regulations – It was **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendation.

Item 9 Communications Strategy - It was **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendation.

Item 10 Pay Policy - It was **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendation.

- c. Town Matters Committee 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021.

Item 5 - It was **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendation.

Item 7 Traffic Regulation Order - It was **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendation.

Item 8 Right to Food Campaign - It was **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendation. To reduce the workload on officers, Cllr Webberley will draft a letter for the Clerk to send to the local MP asking him to support this campaign.

- d. Planning Committee 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

Item 5 Torbay Local Plan – It was **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendation.

Item 6 Community Risk Management Plan - It was **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendation.

- e. Council Matters Committee 29<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

Item 7 Arts and Community Outreach - It was **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendation.

Item 8 Vision and Strategy – It was **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendation.

Item 12 Communications and Media Protocol – It was **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendation.

Item 14 Financial Risk Management - It was **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendation.

## 6. COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

To consider adoption of the Communications Strategy

The Clerk explained that the Communications Strategy sets out how the Town Council and Visit Totnes engages with the public through various methods. It was **AGREED** that the strategy should be adopted.

#### **7. OVERNIGHT PARKING AT LONGMARSH CAR PARK**

**To consider the proposal for a variation to the Off-Street Parking Places Order to allow overnight sleeping within designated car parks – Longmarsh in Totnes - at £10 per night.**

Cllrs raised concerns about the toilet facilities not being open overnight and the lack of drinking water, plus the additional refuse that will be created meaning that additional bins or more frequent emptying will be required.

It was **AGREED** that the Council welcomes this initiative with the proviso that it is properly facilitated, that existing toilet and shower facilities are made available for use and adequate bin provision is made for rubbish and dog waste.

#### **8. TEMPORARY PAVEMENT LICENCE APPLICATION**

**To consider a temporary pavement licence application from The Curator Café to South Hams District Council Estates Team.**

It was **AGREED** that the Town Council supports the temporary placement of tables and chairs outside The Curator Cafe. However, the Council objects to the planters on the grounds expressed by the Planning Committee with concerns about the permanency of the planters and the visibility issues that these would present.

#### **9. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

**To note an update on the Neighbourhood Plan.**

Noted.

#### **10. COMMUNITY COORDINATOR**

**To note an update from the Community Coordinator.**

Noted.

#### **11. LIST OF MEETING DATES**

**To note a list of upcoming meeting dates.**

Noted.

#### **12. NEXT MEETING**

**To note the next meeting date of Monday 7th June 2021, 6.30pm public session, 7.00pm formal meeting. Current proposed location – Civic Hall.**

Noted.

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

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#### **13. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE (Standing Item)**

**To consider any recommendations or matters arising that are considered confidential in nature.**

No matters arising.

Ben Piper  
Mayor



## **DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL MATTERS MONDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2021 AT 6.30PM IN THE CIVIC HALL**

**Present:** Councillors E Price (Chair), M Adams, C Allford, C Luker, P Paine, and B Piper.

**Apologies:** Cllrs Hodgson and Trow.

**In Attendance:** A member of the public, Cllr 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.**

Cllr Price read out a statement about how the meeting would be conducted, recorded and live streamed on social media.

The apologies were accepted.

*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 member of the public wished to speak to the TRESOC proposal of installing solar panels on the Pavilion roof. They were informed that there was not enough notice for this to be included as an agenda item at this Committee and that it will be on the Town Matters Committee agenda on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021.

*The Committee reconvened.*

### **2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

**To approve the minutes of 29th April 2021 and update on any matters arising**

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of proceedings. Cllr Adams raised the legal matter. The Clerk updated that following advice received, as the matter does not require council debate or a decision it does not need to come to committee and that an email has been sent to all Councillors updating them on the matter.

### **3. BUDGET MONITOR**

**To consider the Budget Monitor.**

The Clerk updated that at the end of financial year 2020/21 there is an underspend due to grant funding received and capital project delay. This was noted by the Committee.

#### 4. SUPPORTING OUR TOWN FUND

To consider the South Hams District Council Supporting Our Towns Fund and any amendments required to the Town Council budget.

South Hams District Council has made up to £50,000 available to be match funded for projects to assist business recovery in Totnes (funding will need to be spent by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022). To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that the proposed ideas are supported and shared with the local business community to gauge and evidence support for the various schemes to take forward.

#### 5. COMMUNITY GRANT SCHEME APPLICATIONS

To consider the applications for the community grant scheme.

Personal interests were declared on the following applications: Cllr Price - Totnes Heritage Trust; Cllr Allford – Totnes Library. Discussion was had to ensure that the applications will be spent in the interests of the area of its inhabitants and will benefit them in a manner commensurate with expenditure, as per the spending powers under section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

It was **AGREED** to allocated £25011 from S137 as outlined in the table below (in italics). The Council Matters Committee had previously been given authority to determine and award the Community Grants from S137 up to the £50,000 outlined in the annual budget.

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council the awards (in bold) totalling £8475 are allocated from the general reserve as follow below:

Applicant	Project	Amount Request	Project Cost	Grant Awarded
<i>Totnes Caring</i>	<i>Transport services coordination</i>	<i>£4000</i>	<i>£17354</i>	<i>£4000</i>
<b>Totnes Heritage trust</b>	<b>St Mary's churchyard design &amp; consultation</b>	<b>£4000</b>	<b>£4000</b>	<b>£4000 funded through the general reserve</b>
<i>TRAYE</i>	<i>Youth can make a difference forum</i>	<i>£3881</i>	<i>£3881</i>	<i>£1940.50</i>
<b>Sea Scouts</b>	<b>Building refurb for reopening</b>	<b>£2000</b>	<b>£20000</b>	<b>£2000 funded through the general reserve</b>
<b>Totnes Bike Hub</b>	<b>Dr Bike workshops</b>	<b>£1950</b>	<b>£1950</b>	<b>£975 funded through general reserve</b>
<b>Warmheart Community Projects</b>	<b>A Totnes Tale</b>	<b>£2000</b>	<b>£16400</b>	<b>£1500 funding through the general reserve</b>
<i>Parklife</i>	<i>Cemetery wildflower area maintenance</i>	<i>£1000</i>	<i>£1500</i>	<i>£750</i>
<i>Youth Mental Health Foundation</i>	<i>What's your genius workshops</i>	<i>£1979.40</i>	<i>£1979.40</i>	<i>£1979.40</i>
<i>Lifeworks</i>	<i>Get involved youth club</i>	<i>£5000</i>	<i>£53476</i>	<i>£2500</i>
<i>Totnes Library</i>	<i>Revamping children's library</i>	<i>£3846.36</i>	<i>£3846.36</i>	<i>£2884.77</i>

Transition Town Totnes	Relaunch Transition Streets	£6389	£12778	£0
Church of St Johns & St Mary	Connecting communities – upgrade AV equipment	£2500	£17500	£1250
South Hams Citizens Advice	Outreach at The Mansion	£6444	£7999	£6444
Network of Wellbeing Shareshed	News top in Bridgetown	£4350	£24991	£3262.50

#### 6. VISIT TOTNES REPORT

**To consider a Visit Totnes report covering January-April 2021.**

The Committee noted their thanks for this update.

#### 7. COUNCIL MEETING VENUE

**To consider the venue of where council meetings are held as we come out of the stages of lockdown**

The Clerk explained that at present Council meetings are due to be held in the Civic Hall until 21<sup>st</sup> June before the planned return to the Guildhall either in the Chamber (for committees) or downstairs (for Full Council) however, this will be dependent on social distancing advice. Continuing meetings in the Civic Hall would have an impact on a regular hirer and financial impact on the Paige Adams Trust.

**To RECOMMEND** to Full Council that meetings return to the Guildhall as of 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021 (subject to social distancing advice).

#### 8. COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

**To review the Council's Complaints Policy and Procedure.**

The policy was reviewed and **AGREED**.

#### 9. CODE OF CONDUCT

**To review the Councillor's Code of Conduct.**

The policy was reviewed and it is **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council for adoption. The content of this policy will be included in the Councillor training session.

#### 10. OFFICE MANAGEMENT DURING STAFF LEAVE

**To review the office management during staff leave policy.**

The policy was reviewed and **AGREED**.

#### 11. EMPLOYEE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT LOAN

**To consider the introduction of an employee personal development loan policy.**

The draft policy was considered and was **AGREED** by a majority.

#### 12. COUNCIL PROJECTS

**To note the ongoing projects that Totnes Town Council are progressing.**

Noted.

#### 13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

**To note the date of the next meeting of the Council Matters Committee – Monday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2021 at 6.30pm.**

Noted.

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*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)*

14. STAFFING UPDATE (Standing Item)

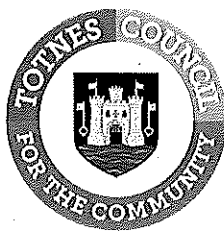
**For any general or urgent updates that required confidential sharing with Councillors.**

- a) It was **AGREED** to give the Clerk delegated authority to increase the Town Maintenance Officer hours to 35 hours a week from 20<sup>th</sup> June, subject to it being achievable in the existing annual staffing budget. The Clerk was confident this was possible due to the delay in recruiting a Civic Hall/Finance Administrator.
- b) A recruitment update was noted.
- c) A confidential staff update was noted – no decisions or actions required.

15. STAFF ATTENDANCE

**To note sickness and overtime balances.**

These were noted.



## **DRAFT MINUTES FOR THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MONDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2021 IN THE CIVIC HALL**

Present: Councillors G Allen (Chair), P Allford, S Collinson, R Hendriksen, J Hodgson, C Luker and P Paine.

Apologies: Councillor V Trow.

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

### **1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

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

Cllr Allen read out a statement about how the meeting would be conducted, recorded and live streamed on social media.

The apologies from Cllr Trow were accepted.

*The Committee will adjourn for the following items:*

### **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no members of the public present.

*The Committee reconvened.*

### **2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

**To approve the minutes of 26th April 2021 and update on any matters arising.**

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of proceedings.

Item 5 – resolved by Full Council and comments have been submitted as part of the Torbay Local Plan consultation.

Item 6 – resolved by Full Council and comments have been submitted as part of the Community Risk management Plan consultation.

### **3. TREE WORKS APPLICATIONS**

**To make recommendations on the following tree works applications:**

3a. 1502/21/TCA - T1-T11: Western Red Cedar - Dismantle to ground level. T12: Lawson Cypress - Dismantle to ground level. T13-T19: Thuja and Leyland Cypress - Dismantle to ground level. T20: Cherry - Crown height reduction by 3m. T21: Leyland Cypress - Dismantle to ground level. T22: Elm - Crown height reduction by 3m. T23: Portuguese Laurel - Crown height reduction by 2m. Heversham, Rhine Villas, Bridgetown, Totnes, TQ9 5BD.

The Committee has no objection to the proposed crown reductions but has concerns about the proposed felling of so many trees, particularly the 11 x western red cedar and would request that the South Hams District Council Tree Officer advises on the health and condition of the trees listed for dismantling to ground level. Councillors plan a site visit on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

3b. 1513/21/TCA - T1: Eucalyptus - Fell due to growing excessively large. 3 Baring Cottages, Weston Lane, Totnes, TQ9 5AP.  
Support.

#### 4. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

**To make recommendations on the following planning applications:**

*Note: Cllr Hodgson observes and does not vote on any applications which would potentially be discussed at a Development Management Committee meeting at SHDC.*

4a. 1221/21/FUL - Demolition of existing garage block and erection of a block of 6 No. garages. Garages to the rear of 37 Fore Street, Totnes, TQ9 5HN.  
Support.

4b. 1297/21/VAR - Variation of condition 2 of planning approval 56/1032/07/F to allow use of garage as ancillary accommodation. 1 Riverside, Totnes, TQ9 5JB.  
Support.

4c. 1514/21/LBC – Listed Building Consent for repairs and alterations (Retrospective). 6 Plymouth Road, Totnes, TQ9 5PH.  
Support.

4d. 1309/21/HHO & 1310/21/LBC – Householder and listed building consent application for conservatory. Silver Birch, Bowden House, Totnes, TQ9 7PW.  
Support.

4e. 1327/21/HHO - Householder application for removal of conservatory, amendments to fenestration and existing balcony, and internal alterations. 26 Bridgetown, Totnes, TQ9 5AD.  
Support.

4f. 1016/21/VAR - Application for variation of condition 4 (samples and colour of materials, including fencing, surfacing and gates) of planning consent 3824/19/FUL. 1 Steamer Quay Wharf, Steamer Quay Road, Totnes, TQ9 5AL.  
Support.

4g. 1150/21/LBC - Listed Building consent for routing of new internal soil pipe connecting to existing first floor bathroom and connection to vent tack fixed to South East elevation. Seymour Cottage, Seymour Road, Totnes, TQ9 5BT.  
Support.

#### 5. TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT FORUM

**To note the record of the Traffic and Transport Forum Green Travel Steering Group held on Wednesday 28th April 2021.**

Noted. It was confirmed that actions coming to the Planning Committee for consideration (in this case items 5 and 6) need to be supported by additional material and/or the draft wording of the proposal for the Committee to consider to make its recommendation to Full Council.



Cllr Hodgson will speak to South Hams District Council about progressing the active travel route by the Lamb as this would be used by children on their way to The Grove School.

**6. EVENTS ON SOUTH HAMS DISTRICT COUNCIL LAND**

**To note the following event requests received by South Hams District Council:**

6a. Totnes Elizabethan Craft and Charity Market, Tuesdays from 6th July until 28th September from 0800-1400hrs in the Market Square.

Noted.

6b. Totnes Rotary Club Raft Race on Sunday 10th October 2021 from 0600-1800hrs in Longmarsh Car Park.

Noted.

**7. HIGHWAYS NEWSLETTER**

**To note the Devon County Council Highways 'Roadmap' newsletter.**

Noted. Cllr Hodgson is liaising with Devon Highways about the installation of a pedestrian crossing on the lower side of the Plymouth Road traffic lights whilst the overnight road closures are ongoing.

**8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**To note the date of the next meeting of the Planning Committee – Monday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021 at 6.30pm.**

Noted. It is hoped that the meeting will be held in the Guildhall but this will be dependent on the latest social distancing restrictions.

Sara Halliday

Governance and Projects Manager

## ITEM 4 – RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEE

Council Matters Committee 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021

### 4. SUPPORTING OUR TOWN FUND [ITEM 6 ON FULL COUNCIL AGENDA]

**To consider the South Hams District Council Supporting Our Towns Fund and any amendments required to the Town Council budget.**

South Hams District Council has made up to £50,000 available to be match funded for projects to assist business recovery in Totnes (funding will need to be spent by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022). To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that the proposed ideas are supported and shared with the local business community to gauge and evidence support for the various schemes to take forward.

### 5. COMMUNITY GRANT SCHEME APPLICATIONS [ITEM 5 ON FULL COUNCIL AGENDA]

**To consider the applications for the community grant scheme.**

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council the awards (in bold) totalling £8475 are allocated from the general reserve as follow below:

Applicant	Project	Amount Request	Project Cost	Grant Awarded
Totnes Heritage trust	St Mary's churchyard design & consultation	£4000	£4000	£4000 - general reserve
Sea Scouts	Building refurb for reopening	£2000	£20000	£2000 - general reserve
Totnes Bike Hub	Dr Bike workshops	£1950	£1950	£975 – general reserve
Warmheart Community Projects	A Totnes Tale	£2000	£16400	£1500 - general reserve

### 7. COUNCIL MEETING VENUE

**To consider the venue of where council meetings are held as we come out of the stages of lockdown**

The Clerk explained that at present Council meetings are due to be held in the Civic Hall until 21<sup>st</sup> June before the planned return to the Guildhall either in the Chamber (for committees) or downstairs (for Full Council) however, this will be dependent on social distancing advice. Continuing meetings in the Civic Hall would have an impact on a regular hirer and financial impact on the Paige Adams Trust. To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that meetings return to the Guildhall as of 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021 (subject to social distancing advice).

### 9. CODE OF CONDUCT

**To review the Councillor's Code of Conduct.**

The policy was reviewed and it is **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council for adoption. The content of this policy will be included in the Councillor training session.

Planning Committee 24<sup>th</sup> May 2021

None.

Full Council June 2021				18/19 YEAR END	19/20 YEAR END	2020/21 BUDGETED VERUS ACTUAL YEAR END		2021/22 ONWARDS		Comments in relation to year end 2020/21, NOT 2021/22	
				Actual 31st March 2019 YEAR END	Actual 31st March 2020 YEAR END	YEAR END ACTUAL	Original Budget	Current Agreed budget			
1	Administration				190666	224062	246894	306500	327000	327000	Underspend on staffing projected in 2020/21 due to delayed recruitment and restructure of team. New Staffing structure considered and in place for 2021. Includes a budgeted 2% cost of living increase despite potential pay freeze nationally. Includes Green Travel Coordinator and Civic Hall roles which are externally funded.
2	Salaries and pensions for all staff										Underspend due to delayed recruitment and all training being online webinars
3	Staff Training and Travel AND expenses				2633	3296	2287	4000	4500	4500	
4	Deleted - Staff Eye Tests				99	50	0	500	0	0	
5	NEW - Subscriptions						0		3500	3500	
6	NEW - Professional Fees						0		6250	6250	
7	NEW - Website and IT						0		5000	5000	
8	Staff Recruitment				789	1558	2575	500	1250	1250	Overspent due to restructure and leavers/starters
9	Phone and Broadband				2525	2870	2343	2600	2700	2700	
10	Office Supplies				2034	545	1564	1750	1750	1750	
11	Photocopier				1549	1592	1496	2000	1600	1600	
12	Insurance				5536	7365	7431	7431	8000	8000	
13	Office Equipment				2012	864	5082	1500	10000	10000	Overspend expected due to new phone system, extra workstations and COVID safety measures.
14	NEW - Van Maintenance						0		750	750	MOT/Serviceing/Repairs
15	NEW - TMO Tools and Consumables						0		1500	1500	Tools and screws etc
16	Car park permits income and green socks				-408	-40	0	0	0	0	no longer required
17	SUB TOTAL				207435	242162	269672	326781	373800	373800	UNDERSPEND FOR PREVIOUS FINANCIAL YEAR
18	Civic and Democratic				Actual 31st March 2019 YEAR END	Actual 31st March 2020 YEAR END	YEAR END ACTUAL		Original Budget	Current Agreed budget	
19	Mayoral Allowance				379	394	0	400	410	410	This replaces the previous Mayoral Allowance, which can no longer be paid. Travel and certain expenses can be claimed back by the Mayor.
20	Civic and Mayoral Events (expenditure)				5902	4196	743	5750	5750	5750	Underspent in current year as civic events cancelled. Added £162 from general events and venues expenditure previously under Administration.
21	Civic Events (income)				-2123	-1127	0	0	0	0	Income from events is usually donated to a mayoral charity.
22	Civic Regalia				24	344	0	400	200	200	Nil cost due to COVID and limited events.
23	Mayoral Travel and Expenses				401	146	0	400	400	400	Nil cost due to COVID and limited events.
24	Councillor Allowances				3788	2623	3152	6400	6560	6560	Will be underspent due to reduced numbers of Councillors claiming.
25	Councillor Training and Travel				948	352	1085	2000	1000	1000	Underspent due to training options being limited and mainly web based due to COVID
26	Councillor IT equipment				0	1281	2069	1500	1500	1500	Not all Councillors took up the option of IT equipment but this may change as remote working is continued. Overspend projected.
27	MOVED TO ADMIN Professional Fees				3123	3908	11032	6250	0	0	Professional advice taken on HR, leases and community assets as agreed by Full Council. Overspend agreed at the outset by Council.
28	Elections				0	161	0	6000	6000	6000	
29	MOVED TO ADMIN Subscriptions				2179	2558	3009	2150	0	0	Overspend projected to cover Zoom/Canva and Adobe fees.

30	Community Outreach/Christmas	1349	4133	2436	2000	6000	6900	Includes increased christmas lights, Christmas Tree cost, christmas electricity, lighting.
31	MOVED TO ADMIN Website and IT	1049	11312	293	2500	0	0	Credit showing as final payment due when website is live.
32	SUB TOTAL	17019	30281	23819	35750	27820	28720	UNDERSPEND FOR PREVIOUS FINANCIAL YEAR
33	Tourism	Actual 31st March 2019 YEAR END	Actual 31st March 2020 YEAR END	YEAR END ACTUAL		Original Budget	Current Agreed budget	
34	Visit Totnes Marketing	2390	4710	6108	5000	20000	20000	
35	Pension costs	12636	12636	0	12636	0	0	Pension strain payments are completed earlier than expected.
36	Totnes Guide	14737	14219	3135	15000	5800	5800	Agreed at Full Council to offer free advertising to support local businesses. Some savings made on not printing a new guide as previously planned.
37	Totnes Guide and Website Income	-18260	-16844	-468	-15000	-500	-500	
38	Bank Charges / Paypal	172	20	0	210	200	200	
39	Other TIC expenditure (Post/Phone/Uniform/Utilities etc)	172	553	275	600	300	300	Underspent due to reduced usage with COVID closure.
40	SUB TOTAL	11847	15294	9050	18446	25800	25800	UNDERSPEND FOR PREVIOUS FINANCIAL YEAR
41	Guildhall	Actual 31st March 2019 YEAR END	Actual 31st March 2020 YEAR END	YEAR END ACTUAL		Original Budget	Current Agreed budget	
42	Cleaning	2738	1545	2456	3000	2000	2000	Underspent due to reduced usage
43	Building Maintenance	27453	4160	191	5000	5000	5000	Roof, plastering, boiler, alarm system all repaired/maintained recently so not large costs anticipated. Reserves would cover unexpected costs.
44	Business Rates	5880	6015	6113	7000	6500	6500	
45	Water	111	120	333	200	200	200	
46	Utilities	3783	3046	3894	3500	3500	3500	
47	Equipment Maintenance	2599	1281	1291	2000	1000	1000	Underspent due to reduced usage
48	Wedding Licence renewals and marketing	2044	71	0	500	2500	2500	Underspent due to delay in marketing plans
49	Admissions Income	-3357	-2994	0	-3000	-3000	-3000	Income depends on being able to open. Plans in place for marketing and increased income.
50	Retail Sales	0	0	0	0	0	0	No longer required
51	Hire Income WEDDINGS	-2233	-2566	-832	-2750	-2750	-2750	Income depends on being able to open. Plans in place for marketing and increased income.
52	SUB TOTAL	39018	10678	13446	15450	14950	14950	UNDERSPEND FOR PREVIOUS FINANCIAL YEAR
53	Civic Hall	Actual 31st March 2019 YEAR END	Actual 31st March 2020 YEAR END	YEAR END ACTUAL		Original Budget	Current Agreed budget	
54	Cleaning and supplies - STAFFING EXCLUDED FROM 2019/20 and moved to core budget	9776	4362	1226	5500	5500	5500	Underspent due to reduced use during Covid. Excludes any staffing costs which have been agreed with the main staffing budget. Based on previous actuals. Will depend on how much we can open.
55	Feed in Tariff	3102	2156	2762	3000	2000	2000	
56	Water	453	1389	1361	2000	2000	2000	Underspent due to reduced use
57	Utilities	4855	3617	1762	4600	4500	4500	Underspent due to reduced use
58	Building Maintenance	11784	10771	2969	175000	175000	175000	Birdwood/Civic Hall Annex project delayed to 2021/22
59	Licences	70	70	70	250	250	250	Underspent due to reduced use
60	Marketing Civic Hall	28	515	0	1000	1000	1000	Underspent in current year
61	Equipment Maintenance	4320	6433	3320	4000	5000	5000	
62	Paige Adams Grant towards Caretaking, Cleaning and Management costs	-27723	-31500	-7500	-31500	-30000	-30000	Estimated figures. Grant from Paige Adams based on actual costs which have reduced due to Civic Hall closure in 2020/21.
63	Feed in tariff income and Water refund income	-7808	-4899	-6728	-5700	-5200	-5200	based on estimates and previous usage. Water from Civic Hall shop moved from property maintenance from 2021/22
64	SUB TOTAL	-1143	-7086	-758	158150	160050	160050	UNDERSPEND FOR PREVIOUS FINANCIAL YEAR

	Property Maintenance	Actual 31st March 2019 YEAR END	Actual 31st March 2020 YEAR END	YEAR END ACTUAL		Original Budget	Current Agreed budget	
55								
56	Guildhall Cottage Maintenance	636	65	361	2000	2000	2000	Underspend in current year but roof maintenance likely required when possible.
57	Property Management Fees	1561	1962	2089	2000	2000	2000	New company and service recommended
58	Town Clocks amalgamated Rent and Utilities and maintenance	2443	1543	3127	2250	2250	2250	Survey shows worked needed to St Mary's clock when non essential work is allowed.
59	Fiat 5a Loan repay	9148	9148	9148	9150	9150	9150	Ongoing loan repayment
60	Fiat 5a Maintenance	110	9	275	2000	2000	2000	Current underspend but chimney/gutter maintenance likely required when lockdown restrictions are eased.
61	Guildhall Office Maintenance	0	579	309	5000	5000	5000	Underspend due to limited office use and home working.
62	Museum Maintenance	3588	6122	3230	5000	5000	5000	Roof repairs and fire safety work still needed but delayed due to COVID.
63	Museum Rent Income	-2	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	
64	Eastgate Clock Rental	0	-1	-3	-3	-3	-3	
65	MOVED TO CIVIC HALL - Civic Water Supply to shop	0	-200	0	0	0	0	Moved to Civic Hall budget from 2021/22
66	Guildhall Cottage Income (£850 a month)	-10750	-10200	-10200	-9350	-10200	-10200	
67	Guildhall Office Income (£250 per month) COMMUNITY/NON PROFIT GROUP	0	0	0	0	0	0	Difficult to know timescales but a decision on the purpose of the building needs to be considered before income can be budgeted. It might be income is low and the occupants are a community or charitable group or series of groups
68	Fiat 5a Rental Income (£695 per month)	-8340	-8340	-8340	-7645	-8340	-8340	
69	SUB TOTAL	-1606	686	-6465	10397	8856	8856	UNDERSPEND FOR PREVIOUS FINANCIAL YEAR
70	Cemetery							
71	Actual 31st March 2019 YEAR END	3616	4069	4441	4750	4750	4750	
72	Business Rates	143	127	144	150	150	150	
73	NEW Waste collection				450	450	450	
74	Grounds Maintenance (Grass cutting and tree work)	21795	21179	18009	23000	23000	23000	
75	Works and Maintenance (Memorials, Paths, Fences, Refuse collection)	34099	1495	1357	2000	2000	2000	Underspend projected.
76	Chapel	244	0	150	10000	10000	10000	
77	Cemetery Fees Income Amalgamated	-8495	-11375	-11435	-8000	-8000	-8000	Increase in usage
78	Memorials	0		0	0	0	0	
79	Grant of rights	0		0	0	0	0	
80	War Bonds	0		0	0	0	0	
81	SUB TOTAL	51402	15495	12666	32350	32350	32350	UNDERSPEND FOR PREVIOUS FINANCIAL YEAR
82	Open Spaces							
83	Actual 31st March 2019 YEAR END	163	0	80	500	500	500	
84	GENERAL MAINTENANCE (changed from Ramparts Walk regular cuts and tidying)	390	414	322	500	500	500	
85	St Marys Churchyard (Walls and trees)	160	57	800	250	250	250	Gate repair and water repair invoice awaited.
86	Castle Meadow Maintenance and Water	-210	-210	-208	0	0	0	Castle Meadow lease finishes 31st March 2021.
87	SUB TOTAL	503	261	994	1250	1250	1250	UNDERSPEND FOR PREVIOUS FINANCIAL YEAR
88	Precept and Income							
89	Actual 31st March 2019 YEAR END	156	150	98	300	300	300	Bank charges less than anticipated.
90	Bank Charges							

99	<b>Precept and Income</b>	-355640	-494000	-535280	-535280	-545986	-545986	-545986	
100	Council Tax Grant (only guaranteed until 19/20)	-22230	-20040	-10020	-10020	0	0	0	Council Tax support grant no longer exists.
101	Charity of Paige Adams RATE ABATEMENT	0	0	0	0	-105000	-105000	-105000	THIS PAYMENT WAS PREVIOUSLY AGREED BY PAIGE ADAMS BUT WILL BE PAID IN 2021/22 BECAUSE OF DELAYS TO PROJECTS
102	<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	-377714	-513890	-545202	-545202	-650686	-650686	-650686	<b>UNDERSPEND FOR PREVIOUS FINANCIAL YEAR</b>
103	Community Development	Actual/31st March 2019 YEAR END	Actual/31st March 2020 YEAR END	YEAR END ACTUAL		Current/Agreed budget			
104	Skate Park	0	0	0	13200	13200	13200	13200	Previously agreed. Further funds might be required for completion of project
105	Public Toilets	0	SEE COMMUNITY PROJE	17600	17600	20000	20000	20000	Final contribution for loss of income required from SHDC.
106	Caring Town/Totnes Caring services	SEE COMMUNITY PROJE	SEE COMMUNITY PROJE			0	0	0	£35k s137 Expenditure. Will depend on requests for fund and restructure of organisations. High need expected following the CV19 pandemic.
107	Citizens Advice Service	SEE COMMUNITY PROJE	SEE COMMUNITY PROJE			1000	1000	1000	Delay due to covid and referendum restrictions
108	Neighbourhood Plan/Planning	11586	9252	71413	135000	188000	188000	188000	Continuation of public realm and Shared Space improvements
109	Community projects SHARED SPACE and public realm	35412	76024		0	0	0	0	Moved to S137
110	Community Grants Scheme/COVID 19	0	0		5000	10000	10000	13100	Extension of community arts and events programme potentially implemented as part of the economic recovery plan. Overspend ratified by Full Council May 2021
111	Arts and Culture and Events	2183	6185		8015	7500	7500	7500	Heritage action work to buildings of creating partnerships
112	Heritage Support	0	0	0	44168	50000	50000	50000	Includes expected £28000 for reopening high street fund.
113	S137 FUNDING (Grants and Misc)	-4736	-1845	-84500	0	0	-28303	-28303	For climate change and green travel proposals agreed through committee, possible match funding.
114	GRANT FUNDING/PROJECT INCOME	0	0	3986	5000	10000	10000	10000	As outlined in the minutes of the Council Matters meeting of 17th May 2021.
115	Climate Change/Green Travel	0	0			0	0	8475	
116	ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURE FROM GENERAL RESERVE	£44,445	£89,616	£35,067	£209,815	£299,700	£282,972	£282,972	<b>UNDERSPEND FOR PREVIOUS FINANCIAL YEAR</b>
117	<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	-£8,794	-£116,501	-£187,710		£293,890	£293,890	£278,062	
118	<b>TOTAL</b>								

Reserves impact		
Assuming additional grants are allocated	Assuming additional grants are declined	
£657,323	£657,323	
£379,261	£363,433	
Based on the current projected 2021/22 budget, year end reserve estimate. Please note additional spend from reserve may be required for market square improvements.		
Either option allows for a healthy reserve remaining after all proposed expenditure in the budget, including significant investment in capital projects. The reserves policy states 6 months operational costs (core costs not the total budget).		



**AUDITING SOLUTIONS LTD**

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## **Totnes Town Council**

*Internal Audit Report: 2020-21*

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*Consultant*

*For and on behalf of  
Auditing Solutions Ltd*

## Background

Statute requires all town and parish councils to arrange for an independent internal audit examination of their accounting records and system of internal control and for the conclusions to be reported each year in the AGAR.

This report sets out the work undertaken in relation to the 2020-21 financial year. Due to the continuing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, we have again undertaken our review for the year remotely: we wish to thank the Clerk and Deputy Clerk for assisting the process, providing all necessary documentation in electronic format to facilitate completion of our review for the year and sign off of the Internal Audit Certificate in the year's AGAR. We have, obviously in the circumstances, reduced the volume of transactions examined, whilst still ensuring governance and financial controls remain effective.

## Internal Audit Approach

In conducting our review for the year, we have again had regard to the materiality of transactions and their susceptibility to potential misrecording or misrepresentation in the year-end Statement of Accounts / AGAR.

## Overall Conclusion

We are again pleased to report that, on the basis of the work undertaken this year and the inherent assurance drawn from previous years, we can give a reasonable assurance to the Council that it continues to operate generally effective financial control systems.

Consequently, we have signed off the Internal Audit Certificate in the AGAR assigning positive assurances in all relevant categories.

We have, however, repeated two of our 2019-20 recommendations in this report, where we still have significant concerns which we would ask Council to reconsider. A risk score has been placed against each recommendation, based on the following assessment:

- **Low** as representing Best Practice, or minor infringements of legislation;
- **Medium** as representing a small but easily manageable risk with minimal changes to procedures;
- **High** as serious issues requiring immediate action (there are no recommendations in this category).

This report has been prepared for the sole use of Totnes Town Council. To the fullest extent permitted by law, no responsibility or liability is accepted by Auditing Solutions Ltd to any third party who purports to use or rely on, for any reason whatsoever, this report, its content or conclusions.



## Detailed Report

### Maintenance of Accounting Records & Bank Reconciliations

Our objective here is to ensure that the accounting records are being maintained accurately and currently and that no anomalous entries appear in cashbooks or financial ledgers. The Council uses the RBS Rialtas Omega accounting software to maintain its financial and management accounting records, and we have analysed that system to agree the totals reported on the 2020-21 AGAR.

We note that all financial management issues, including checking bank reconciliations, are delegated to the Council Matters Committee for detailed scrutiny, with the Minutes of that Committee subsequently being approved by Full Council. Independent checks by Councillors have been evidenced by emails given the current restrictions.

We again note that, apart from minor Petty Cash holdings, all of the Council's funds are currently held in a single Current Account with HSBC, on which no interest is earned. The closing balance at 31 March 2021 stands at £684,427.

We understand that funds are still being retained against expected capital payments on the New Town Hall, which has yet to be put out to competitive tender.

We still feel that the Council is facing an unnecessary risk in holding such a large amount in a single institution, as well as losing out on interest receipts. While recognising the policy of the Council, we would recommend that excess sums held with HSBC (ie. those not required for normal expenditure) are at least placed in an HSBC Deposit Account, allowing for instant access with at least some return on investment.

#### *Conclusions and recommendation (Medium Risk)*

*R1. The Council should monitor its current policy of holding large amounts in a single Current Account, and make reasonable efforts to optimise interest earnings without curtailing its desire for quick access to funds for proposed capital expenditure.*

### Review of Corporate Governance

Our objective is to ensure that the Council has a robust series of corporate governance documentation in place; that Council and Committee meetings are conducted in accordance with the adopted Standing Orders and that, as far as we are reasonably able to ascertain, no actions of a potentially unlawful nature have been or are being considered for implementation. We have:

- Reviewed the minutes of the Full Council and its Standing Committees for the financial year to identify whether any issues exist that may have an adverse effect on the Council's future financial stability, either in the short, medium or longer term;
- Noted that the Council re-affirmed its Standing Orders at the January 2021 meeting. Financial Regulations were reviewed and proposed at the March 2021 meeting of the Council Matters Committee, and confirmed by Council in May 2021.

We note that a good level of compliance with the Transparency Code, which came into effect in 2015, has been maintained.

### ***Conclusions***

*No issues arise in this area warranting formal comment or recommendation.*

## **Review of Expenditure**

Our aim here is to ensure that: -

- Council resources are released in accordance with the Council's approved procedures and budgets;
- Payments are supported by appropriate documentation, either in the form of an original trade invoice or other appropriate form of document confirming the payment as due and/or an acknowledgement of receipt, where no other form of invoice is available;
- The correct expense codes have been applied to invoices when processed; and
- VAT has been appropriately identified and coded to the control account for periodic recovery.

We have undertaken a test-check of payments in order to ensure compliance with the above criteria, and note evidence of clear coding and authorisation for payment by the Deputy Clerk, with evidence of Councillor approval via email.

We have also reviewed the VAT nominal ledger account in the Omega software, noting that reclaim is made on a quarterly basis.

### ***Conclusions***

*No issues arise in this area warranting formal comment or recommendation.*

## **Assessment and Management of Risk**

Our aim here is to ensure that the Council has put in place appropriate arrangements to identify all potential areas of risk of both a financial and health and safety nature, whilst also ensuring that appropriate arrangements exist to monitor and manage those risks in order to minimise the opportunity for their coming to fruition.

We are pleased to note that the Council formally approves its Risk Assessments at each April meeting.

We note that the Council's insurance cover continues to be provided by Aviva (via WPS Councilguard) and have examined the current policy schedule to ensure that appropriate cover remains in place: we note that Public Liability cover is set at £15 Million and Employer's Liability cover at £10 Million. Fidelity Guarantee cover is set at £500,000, but that level is exceeded by the current balance at bank, as referred to above.

### ***Conclusions and recommendation (Low Risk)***

*R2. The level of Fidelity Guarantee insurance cover should be kept under appropriate review.*

## **Budgetary Control & Reserves**

Our objective here is to ensure that the Council has a robust procedure in place for identifying and approving its future budgetary requirements and level of precept to be drawn down from the District Council: also, that an effective reporting and monitoring process is in place. We also aim to ensure that the Council retains appropriate funds in general and earmarked reserves to finance its ongoing spending plans, whilst retaining appropriate sums to cover any unplanned expenditure that might arise.

The ongoing monitoring of budgets has been delegated to the Council Matters Committee, and there is clear evidence that this is regularly undertaken on behalf of the Council.

A 2021-22 Budget and Precept totalling £545,986 was approved by the Council at its January 2021 meeting.

We note that total reserves at 31 March 2021 are the bank balance referred to above, plus a small Petty Cash holding (see below). No earmarked reserves have been set, such as the estimated build costs of the New Town Hall. Therefore the General Reserve, which should only be around 50% (6 months) of normal expenditure, has been significantly exceeded. This position needs to be reviewed once true build costs are known.

### ***Conclusions***

*Other than the above comments, no issues have been identified to warrant formal recommendation in this area.*

## **Review of Income**

We note that the Council has a number of income streams in addition to the Precept, most notably Cemetery income. We have tested-checked a range of transactions within the Omega accounting software, and have found no anomalies. We note that cemetery fees were reviewed in February 2021, but will not be increased until 2022.

### ***Conclusions***

*No issues arise in this area warranting formal comment or recommendation.*

## Petty Cash Account

As part of the AGAR internal audit certification process, we are required to express a view on the operation of petty cash accounts.

A limited petty cash account is in use at the Council's Administrative Office with a holding of approximately £100 "topped up" with round sums as and when required. The balance at the year-end was £50.75.

### *Conclusions*

*No issues arise in this area warranting formal comment or recommendation.*

## Review of Staff Salaries

In examining the Council's payroll function, we aim to confirm that extant legislation is being appropriately observed as regards adherence to the Employee Rights Act 1998 and the requirements of HMRC legislation as regards the deduction and payment over of income tax and NI contributions, together with meeting the requirements of the local government pension scheme.

We note that the Council continues to run its own payroll system, using SAGE. We have test-checked the system, and found no anomalies.

### *Conclusions*

*No issues arise in this area warranting formal comment or recommendation.*

## Asset Register / Inventory

The "Governance and Accountability Manual – The Practitioner's Guide", requires all councils to maintain a detailed register of their assets. We aim in examining this aspect of the Council's documentation to ensure that the Council has complied with that legislation; that an appropriate and comprehensive register is being maintained and that it is subject to periodic review and update.

We note that a clear register is kept using a spreadsheet, the total of which agrees to the AGAR. The recorded asset value has not changed in some years, with some items correctly listed at a notional £1 where the original cost cannot be determined.

### *Conclusions*

*No issues arise in this area warranting formal comment or recommendation.*

## **Investments and Loans**

We note the existence of one PWLB loan which is being repaid half-yearly and have verified the repayments by reference to the PWLB demands as part of our aforementioned payment examination. We have also verified the accurate disclosure of the residual year-end loan liability in the AGAR by reference to the PWLB website detail of all council balances as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

We have already made comments above on the safe investment of, and the lack of interest earnings from, the Council's funds.

### ***Conclusions***

*No issues arise in this area warranting formal comment or recommendation.*

## **Statement of Account and AGAR**

The AGAR now incorporates the Council's Annual Accounts subject to external audit scrutiny and verification.

### ***Conclusions***

*There are no matters in this area of our review process and we have duly signed off the Internal Audit Certificate at Page 3 of the AGAR, assigning positive assurances in all relevant categories.*

Rec No.	Recommendation	Response
R1	( <i>Accounting Records and Bank Reconciliations</i> ) The Council should monitor its current policy of holding large amounts in a single Current Account, and make reasonable efforts to optimise interest earnings without curtailing its desire for quick access to funds for proposed capital expenditure. ( <b>Medium Risk</b> )	
R2	( <i>Management of Risk</i> ) The level of Fidelity Guarantee insurance cover should be kept under appropriate review. ( <b>Low Risk</b> )	

Rec No.	Recommendation	Response
R1	( <i>Accounting Records and Bank Reconciliations</i> ) The Council should monitor its current policy of holding large amounts in a single Current Account, and make reasonable efforts to optimise interest earnings without curtailing its desire for quick access to funds for proposed capital expenditure. ( <b>Medium Risk</b> )	This will be monitored. Investment options will be considered after the Civic Hall Annexe renovation has been completed.
R2	( <i>Management of Risk</i> ) The level of Fidelity Guarantee insurance cover should be kept under appropriate review. ( <b>Low Risk</b> )	To be kept under review.





## 7. Signing and approval of the AGAR Parts 2 and 3

The latest date for the period for the exercise of public rights to commence is 1 July 2021, hence the latest date by which the 2020/21 AGAR will need to be approved is 30 June 2021. Accordingly, our default submission date has been set as 2 July 2021 – if you need to agree an alternative submission deadline please contact us.

Following the introduction of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (the Regulations); the changes that occurred in 2015/16 remain in force.

The smaller authority must carry out a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and prepare the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1 of the AGAR Parts 2 & 3). At the approval meeting, following the review, the smaller authority must:

- a. consider the findings of the review by the members meeting as a whole; and
- b. approve the Annual Governance Statement by resolution **in advance** of approving the Accounting Statements.

The Annual Governance Statement **must** be approved prior to the Accounting Statements, either at separate meetings or in the same meeting but with the correct order of business on the agenda and **this must be evidenced by the meeting minute references and/or dates. This change to the requirements in 2015/16 is still not being carried out correctly by many smaller authorities hence it continues to give rise to 'except for' matters being raised, please refer to the detail provided for guidance.**

The responsible financial officer (RFO) must sign and date 'Section 2 - Accounting statements' of the AGAR Part 2 or 3, whichever is relevant to your smaller authority, **before** it is presented to the smaller authority. At the approval meeting, the smaller authority must, **in the following order**:

- a. consider the Accounting Statements by the members meeting as a whole;
- b. approve the Accounting Statements by resolution; and
- c. ensure the Accounting Statements are signed and dated by the person presiding at the meeting at which that approval is given.

**For parish meetings please also see chapter 5 of these instructions.**



# Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2020/21 Part 3

To be completed by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities\*:

- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £6.5 million; or
- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:
  - are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or
  - have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)

## Guidance notes on completing Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2020/21

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices*.
2. The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:
  - The Annual Internal Audit Report must be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
  - Sections 1 and 2 must be completed and approved by the authority.
  - Section 3 is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage before 1 July 2021.
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2021. Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
  - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
  - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2021
  - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
  - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
  - Annual Internal Audit Report 2020/21

Unless requested, do not send any additional documents to your external auditor. Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed.

Once the external auditor has completed the limited assurance review and is able to give an opinion, the Annual Governance and Accountability Section 1, Section 2 and Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate will be returned to the authority by email or post.

## Publication Requirements

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities must publish the following information on the authority website/webpage:

Before 1 July 2021 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2020/21, approved and signed, page 4
- Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2020/21, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2021 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of conclusion of audit
- Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate
- Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review.

It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return constitutes the annual return referred to in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Throughout, the words 'external auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

\*for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

## Guidance notes on completing Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2020/21

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide\** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty), and is properly signed and dated. If the AGAR contains unapproved or unexplained amendments, it may be returned and additional costs will be incurred.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2021.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved on the same day or before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) must certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority must in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period as soon as practical after the date of the AGAR approval.
- Do not send the external auditor any information not specifically requested. However, **you must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chairman, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements (Section 2, page 5). An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide\**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on page 5. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- If the external auditor has to review unsolicited information, or receives an incomplete bank reconciliation, or variances are not fully explained, additional costs may be incurred.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2020) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2021).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights of 30 consecutive working days which **must** include the first ten working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish on the authority website/webpage the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2021.**

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?		
	Has all additional information requested, including the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights, been provided for the external auditor?		
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?		
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?		
Section 2	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chairman of the approval meeting?		
	Has an explanation of significant variations from last year to this year been published?		
	Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2021 been reconciled to Box 8?		
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?		
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? NB: do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.		

*\*Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices, can be downloaded from [www.nalc.gov.uk](http://www.nalc.gov.uk) or from [www.ada.org.uk](http://www.ada.org.uk)*

# Annual Internal Audit Report 2020/21

Tothnes Town Council

<https://www.tothnestowncouncil.gov.uk/>

During the financial year ended 31 March 2021, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2020/21 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2019/20, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2019/20 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. If the authority has an annual turnover not exceeding £25,000, it publishes information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the Transparency code for smaller authorities.	✓		
M. The authority, during the previous year (2019-20) correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (evidenced by the notice published on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2019/20 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		
O. (For local councils only)	Yes	No	Not applicable
Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	✓		

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

12/05/2021

For Auditing Solutions Ltd

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

Date 12/05/2021

\*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

\*\*Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

## Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2020/21

We acknowledge as the members of:

TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021, that:

	Agreed		"Yes" means that this authority:
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓		has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A
			✓

\*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

and recorded as minute reference:

Signed by the Chairman and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chairman

Clerk

[www.totnestowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.totnestowncouncil.gov.uk)

## Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2020/21 for

## TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2020 £	31 March 2021 £	
1. Balances brought forward	353,112	469,613	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	494,000	535,280	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	130,575	140,234	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	236,698	246,894	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	9,148	9,148	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	262,228	231,762	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	469,613	657,323	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	480,183	684,478	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	360,905	360,905	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	52,785	46,390	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).
11. (For Local Councils Only) Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	Yes	No	The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee for and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
		✓	N.B. The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2021 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

Date

18/05/2021

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

as recorded in minute reference:

Signed by Chairman of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

## Section 3 – External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2020/21

In respect of

TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL

### 1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a limited assurance review is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is not a full statutory audit, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it does not provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/>.

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2021; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

### 2 External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2020/21

(Except for the matters reported below)\* on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. (\*delete as appropriate).

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

### 3 External auditor certificate 2020/21

We certify/do not certify\* that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2021.

\*We do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name

External Auditor Signature

Date



# visit TOTNES

Marketing Report Jan - April 2021

Samantha Branch, Marketing & Communications  
Manager

## Marketing

### Visit Devon

Visit South Devon sent an enewsletter out to their database of just under 5,000 subscribers and posted it to their blog/news pages in March with a Spotlight feature on Totnes - for free. The same enews featured The Bull Inn as well (arranged by them direct) offering good exposure for the town.

#### SPOTLIGHT ON

#### Totnes

Nestled between moorland and sea and surrounded by beautiful countryside, Totnes is a captivating, historical market town on the River Dart. Dating back to 907 AD, this quirky town is dotted with Norman, Tudor and Elizabethan architecture and has a high street full of independent shops and eateries.

The river provides a stunning backdrop for short walks, waterside eating, kayaking and canoeing, and the whole area is a paradise for cyclists and those who want to get outdoors.



Every week the town bustles with lively, local traders at the Friday and Saturday Markets where you can pick up all of your essentials, and the monthly Sunday Food Market where you can find delicious takeaways or fresh, local ingredients.

With a wide variety of places to stay from thatched inns to dog friendly cottages, historic hotels to contemporary lodges, you'll be sure to find your little piece of heaven in Devon as soon as it's safe to travel again. With some interesting attractions and a lively programme of all fresco events hopefully starting again in the summer, you can tie in some live music or a trip to a castle with your holiday.

Only 3 hours direct from London and Birmingham and 2 hours from Bristol by train, Totnes is closer than you think.

We look forward to welcoming you to Totnes as soon as the restrictions have been lifted.

[Click here to find out more about Totnes](#)

The newsletter caused a slight spike in the number of visits to the website based on our Google Analytics. In February as a whole and on the days previous to the enews being sent out at 5pm on 2nd March the daily average visitors to the site was approximately 160 a day. On 3rd March this increased to 452.

### OS / Secret Stories

We have the potential opportunity to work with Ordnance Survey as part of their new Secret Stories app where we can upload a walk from Totnes which needs to include various stories about the town. Sam Branch is currently seeking help from Councillors to gather some of the relevant information. We would need to upload the walk by the summer holidays - all for free.

## 2021 Visit Totnes Leaflet and Guide Distribution

We have just over 5,000 2020 guides left at the TIC now. This year St Mary's Church will help to distribute them for us and we can deliver them to any accommodation providers who require them when they're open so we should get through this amount easily throughout the season.

Glide Media have started distributing their batch of 10,000 2020 guides and the new DL leaflets to various locations across Devon and nationwide as well. They were due to start in January but they started later this year due to the national lockdown. We're awaiting a report from them.

The updated 2021 guide is now on the website for people to download with a new front cover and updated details - <https://www.visittotnes.co.uk/see-and-do/attractions/download/>

## Planters

I've started selling the blackboards as advertising space and have currently sold at least 10 sides with expressions of interest from some other businesses as well.

The reaction to the posts on social media were positive when we posted the photos with the plants in them with the following being posted on the TTC pages and receiving 67 likes on FB & a reach of 6856 people:

**Totnes Town Council**  
Published by Samantha Branch · 14 April at 14:22 · 🌐

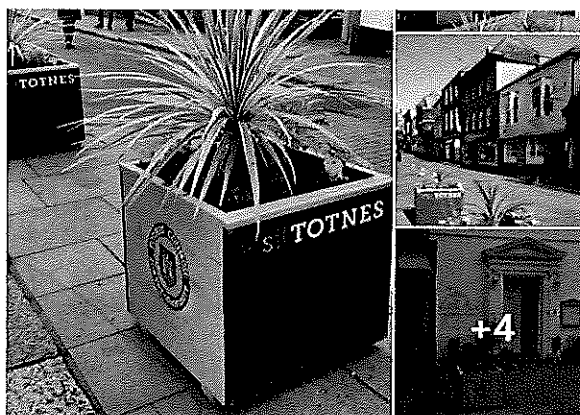
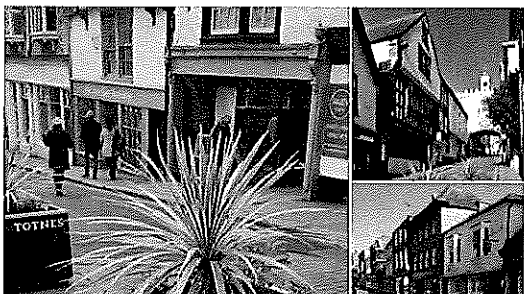
Our new planters now have a variety of evergreen and bedding plants in them which has added some greenery to the high street. These plants will continue to grow and flower throughout the season.

Tom Hussey our new Town Maintenance Officer is watering and monitoring them and will report any potential problems to a future Public Realm Working Group.

Thanks again to local charity LandWorks for producing them from sustainable timber, to The Blackboard Guy for hand painting the TTC and Visit Totnes logo on them for brand awareness, and to Longcombe Cross Garden Centre for their advice 🌱

If you have a local business near one of the prominent blackboards please email Sam Branch at [info@visittotnes.co.uk](mailto:info@visittotnes.co.uk) to find out more about having a durable hand painted logo or small advert created for a cost effective price.

#totnes #devon



Reach more people with this post

Promote your Page by boosting this post so more people can see it: "Our new planters now..."

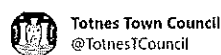
6,856  
People reached

2,758  
Engagements

Boost post

👍 67

10 shares



We now have a variety of evergreen & bedding plants adding some greenery to town. Thanks to local charity @LandWorksHQ for producing the planters from sustainable wood, @blackboardguy for hand painting the logos for brand awareness & Longcombe Garden Centre :) #Totnes



9:55 AM · Apr 14, 2021 · Twitter Web App

10 Retweets 1 Quote Tweet 19 Likes

## Website

We have given all of our existing advertisers a free page on the website this year and we have given as many shops and eateries in town a FREE basic web listing as well. We're continuing to add more as and when new places open.

## PR

### Julia Bradbury - Walks in Devon

We were really fortunate because Julia Bradbury featured Totnes and the Dart Valley Trail in her primetime ITV program on 17th February where she featured Sharpham Estate, Sharpham Cheese & Wine and Conker Shoes. She was walking part of the Dart Valley Trail from Totnes to Dartmouth.

Conker Shoes said their website crashed as a result of the number of people who visited their website during and after the show, and The Old Forge has reported that they have had a lot more bookings from people visiting for walking and cycling holidays who have cited the show as the reason. We had a lot of engagement on social media surrounding the show as well:



visittotnes

visittotnes Repost @conker\_shoes

If you missed last night's episode of 'Cornwall & Devon Walks with Julia Bradbury' where she walked from #Totnes to Dartmouth as part of the Dart Valley Trail you can catch up on ITV via the link below.

The program, which is part of a stunning series of walks across the 2 counties, features the wonderful Conker Shoes on Totnes high street, @sharphamtrust Sharpham Wine and @sharphamcheese

<https://www.itv.com/hub/cornwall-and-devon-walks-with-julia-bradbury/10a0852>

Like Comment Retweet Bookmark

Liked by leftbridge and 225 others

FEBRUARY 18

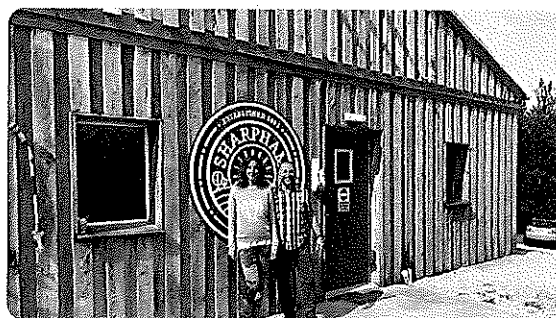
Add a comment...

#### Visit Totnes @visittotnes · Feb 18

If you missed last night's episode of #Cornwall & #Devon Walks with @JuliaBradbury where she walked from #Totnes to #Dartmouth via @SharphamTrust sampling some delicious @SharphamWines & @SharphamCheese, catch up @ITV below:

[itv.com/hub/cornwall-a...](https://www.itv.com/hub/cornwall-and-devon-walks-with-julia-bradbury/10a0852)

@VisitDevon @visitsouthdevon



1 4 17

#### Visit Totnes

Published by Samantha Branch · 12 February ·

Don't miss the next episode of 'Cornwall and #Devon Walks' with Julia Bradbury TONIGHT at 8pm on ITV

Julia will be walking the Dart Valley Trail from historic #Totnes to beautiful Dartmouth along the River Dart, stopping at Sharpham Trust along the way to sample some of the delicious Sharpham Wine and Sharpham Cheese 🍷

<https://www.radiotimes.com/.../cornwall-and-devon-walks.../>



RADIOTIMES.COM

Cornwall and Devon Walks with Julia Bradbury - S1 - Episode 7: Dart Valley Trail - Totnes to Dartmouth

3,589

People reached

891

Engagements

Boost post

59

12 comments 30 shares

Like

Comment

Share

## Digital

### Social Media Stats 2020/21

As always Facebook & Instagram are continuing to grow really well organically however Twitter has always been a lot slower, however FB and Instagram are much more valuable to the VT brand therefore it's not worth investing too much time, effort or money into Twitter.

I will do some more research into the demographics of our FB & Instagram users soon to see if we need to attract more from London and other key target areas.

Followers	July 2020	August 2020	April 2021
Instagram	2262	2347	2993
FB	2522	2596	3295
Twitter	1576	1598	1708

### Website Stats

The website stats for 2020 were down considerably due to the lockdowns and uncertainty with coronavirus and the start of 2021 looked the same.

The February stats were only saved because of the Julia Bradbury ITV program which aired on 17th which caused a huge uplift in traffic on 17th & 18th - otherwise this month would have been really down again. The month as a whole actually had a 48% increase in the number of unique visitors to the site based on last year. However the dwell time went from 2 minutes in Feb 2020 to 1 minute 4 seconds this year which is because those who were on the site during & after the program aired were only on the site for about 40 seconds which shows they were having a quick look rather than doing any serious planning at this stage.

The site has started to pick up again from March and is starting to become more in line with the normal figures rather than last March when the site took a hit because we were in lockdown.

2020	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Dec	Avg
Users	4027	4074	2402	1361	2138	3425	6881	10706		4363
yr-on-yr change	28%	19%	-50%	-80%	-66%	-46%	-14%	17.4%		-24%
Unique	3867	3902	2268	1298	2057	3315	6792	10550		4400
yr-on-yr change	31%	21%	-50%	-81%	-66%	-45%	-12%	16%		-22%
Pageviews	14419	13717	7701	4354	6234	8683	21418	34152		14131
yr-on-yr change	21%	4.9%	-54%	-80%	-73%	-60%	-25%	4.6%		-33%
Duration	2:11	2:00	2:09	2:33	1:55	1:21	1:52	2:00		1:54

2021	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Nov	Dec	Avg
Users	2579	5849	4738									4377
yr-on-yr change	-36%	44%	97%									-24%
Unique	2492	5764	4608									4256
yr-on-yr change	-35%	48%	103%									-25%
Pageviews	6516	11778	12992									13835
yr-on-yr change	-55%	-14%	69%									-35%
Duration	1:31	1:04	1:34									1:58

### Demographics – Country

Due to coronavirus we've seen another decrease in the number of visitors from overseas and more from the UK due to the lockdowns, lack of international travel and more staycations. There has been another big decline in the number of people visiting the site from America for the same reasons. In 2019 we had 5802 visit the site from America but in 2020 we only had 1551. The same trend is continuing for the first part of this year.

### Country Demographics

Country	Jan - Dec '19	Country	Jan - Dec '20	Country	Jan - Apr '21
UK	85% (58,690)	UK	91% (48,151)	UK	91% 11,816
USA	8.42% (5802)	USA	2.95% (1551)	USA	293
Germany	0.77% (533)	France	247	China	107
France	0.57% (395)	Australia	198	Germany	46
Spain	0.48% (328)	Germany	196	France	46
Australia	0.45% (307)	Canada	186	Australia	44
Netherlands	0.44% (302)	S. Korea	175	Spain	40
Canada	0.29% (203)	China	156	Canada	33
Switzerland	0.32% (176)	Spain	141	Switzerland	30

Canada	0.29% (159)	Turkey	110	India	30
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### *Demographics – City*

Historically we have always had the largest percentage of visitors from London and then the rest of the top ten are mainly from the surrounding towns and cities.

However when considering the figures of visitors who view the site from all of the surrounding areas collectively (Totnes, Newton, Torquay, Paignton, Exeter & Plymouth) it makes up the majority. Again in 2020 this number increased which would be because of the lockdowns:

2019: a minimum of 24,095 visitors from the local areas (over 35% of all visitors)

2020: a minimum of 21,701 from the local areas (over 41% of all visitors)

### **City Demographics**

City	Jan - Dec '19	City	Jan - Dec '20	City	Jan - Apr '21
London	15.5% (11,203)	London	18% (10,228)	Totnes	15% (2056)
Not set (likely Totnes)	8797	Totnes	8928	London	13% (1703)
Exeter	6162	Exeter	4655	Exeter	781
Chicago	4739	Plymouth	3085	Plymouth	530
Plymouth	3643	Bristol	2769	Torquay	452
Bristol	3612	Torquay	2223	Bristol	423
Torquay	3081	Paignton	1030	Birmingham	227
Newton Abbot	1229	Newton Abbot	905	Newton Abbot	190
Southampton	1227	Kingsbridge	875	Paignton	142
Paignton	1183	Chicago	662	Taunton	101

### **Latest Blogs**

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<https://www.visittotnes.co.uk/share-shed-mobile/>

<https://www.visittotnes.co.uk/south-devon-rail-secure-funding/>



## ITEM 11 – NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Habitats Regulations Assessment has now been received from Locality, which has been forwarded to South Hams District Council. This assessment was requested by Natural England and its finding should now allow South Hams District Council to proceed with the evaluation of the Totnes Neighbourhood Plan at the Regulation 15 stage.

The objectives of the assessment were to:

- Identify any aspects of the Neighbourhood Plan that would cause an adverse effect on the integrity of international sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs)) including, as a matter of Government policy, Ramsar sites, either in isolation or in combination with other plans and projects, and
- To advise on appropriate policy mechanisms for delivering mitigation where such effects were identified.

The HRA of the Totnes Neighbourhood Plan is required to determine if there are any realistic linking pathways present between an international site and the Neighbourhood Plan and where Likely Significant Effects cannot be screened out, an analysis to inform Appropriate Assessment to be undertaken to determine if adverse effects on the integrity of the international sites will occur as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan alone or in combination.

The assessment concludes:

All potential impact pathways could be screened out during the test of likely significant effects. This is largely due to the fact that the Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any sites for development but confines itself to shaping the form and details of development that is consented in the parish. As such, there is no potential for likely significant effects on any European sites as a result of TNP policies and allocations. No Appropriate Assessment was required. There is no need for the TNP to include further policy and/or mitigation requirements to avoid impacts on the integrity of any European sites.

## ITEM 12 – LIST OF MEETING DATES

Upcoming dates for noting. Councillors are asked to submit any suggested items for discussion well in advance of meetings and use the relevant working group or forum in the first instance.

Public Realm and Cemetery Working Group – 9<sup>th</sup> June at midday via Zoom.

Council Matters Committee – 14<sup>th</sup> June at 6.30pm in Civic Hall.

Venues and Public Assets Working Group – 16<sup>th</sup> June at midday via Zoom.

Climate Change Working Group – 15<sup>th</sup> June at 6.30pm via Zoom.

Planning Committee – 21<sup>st</sup> June at 6.30pm in Guildhall or Civic Hall (TBC).

Arts Working Group - 24<sup>th</sup> June at midday via Zoom.

Town Matters Committee – 28<sup>th</sup> June at 6.30pm in Guildhall or Civic Hall (TBC).

Traffic and Transport Forum – 30<sup>th</sup> June at 6.30pm via Zoom.

Full Council - 5<sup>th</sup> July at 6.30pm in Guildhall or Civic Hall (TBC).

Council Matters Committee – 12<sup>th</sup> July at 6.30pm in Guildhall or Civic Hall (TBC).

Totnes Future Forum – 13<sup>th</sup> July at 6.30pm via Zoom.

Venues and Public Assets Working Group – 16<sup>th</sup> June at midday via Zoom.

Planning Committee – 19<sup>th</sup> July at 6.30pm in Guildhall or Civic Hall (TBC).

Climate Change Working Group – 20<sup>th</sup> July at 6.30pm via Zoom.

Venues and Public Assets Working Group – 21<sup>st</sup> July at midday via Zoom.

Arts Working Group – 22<sup>nd</sup> July at midday via Zoom.

Town Matters Committee – 26<sup>th</sup> July at 6.30pm in Guildhall or Civic Hall (TBC).

Traffic and Transport Forum – 28<sup>th</sup> July at 6.30pm via Zoom.