



AGENDA FOR THE TOWN MATTERS COMMITTEE

MONDAY 24TH MARCH 2025 IN THE GUILDHALL

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

You are hereby **SUMMONED** to attend the **Town Matters Committee** on **Monday 24th March 2025** at **6.30pm** for a maximum of 90 minutes in the Guildhall for the purpose of transacting the following business:

Committee Members: Councillors S Collinson (Chair), L Auletta, C Beavis, J Chinnock, J Cummings, D Peters, A Presswell, E Price, N Roberts and T Robshaw.

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair will read out the following statement:

Welcome to everyone attending and observing the meeting.

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

This meeting is limited to 90 minutes and therefore members are asked to raise their points succinctly and not repeat the same view expressed by colleagues if it does not add to the debate.

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

The Committee will adjourn for the following items:

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

The Committee will convene to consider the following items:

2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

To approve the minutes of 27th January 2025 and update on any matters arising. Document attached [page 3].

3. STRATEGY DELIVERY GROUP AND WORKING GROUPS

To consider the notes and any recommendations from the following (documents attached):

- a. Community Working Group, 11th February 2025 [page 5].
- b. Economy Working Group, 12th February 2025 [page 7].
- c. Environment and Public Realm Working Group, 29th January 2025 [page 10].

4. DEVON WILDLIFE TRUST – BOWDEN PILLARS FARM PROJECT

To consider (document attached, page 12):

- a. the inclusion of the Devon Wildlife Trust (DWT) Atlantic rainforest project at Bowden Pillars Farm for inclusion in the Open Spaces, Sports, Recreation and Wellbeing Plan; and
 - b. in principle support for any signage about the project which DWT may wish to erect in the future.
5. **OPEN SPACES, SPORTS, RECREATION AND WELLBEING PLAN UPDATE**
To update on any general matters linked to the Open Spaces, Sport Recreation and Wellbeing Plan (standing item). No document.
6. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**
To note the date of the next meeting of the Town Matters Committee – Monday 23rd June 2025 at 6.30pm.

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

7. **COMMUNITY AWARD SCHEME**
To consider the nominations for the Community Award scheme individual and group categories, and the Judy Westacott award and make a recommendation to Full Council (personal information).
Document attached.

Sara Halliday
Governance and Projects Manager
19th March 2025

USE OF SOUND RECORDINGS AT COUNCIL & COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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

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



DRAFT MINUTES FOR THE TOWN MATTERS COMMITTEE

MONDAY 27TH JANUARY 2025 IN THE GUILDHALL

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

Apologies: Cllrs Peters, Presswell and Robshaw.

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

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

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

The apologies were accepted.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present.

2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

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

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

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

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

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

3. STRATEGY DELIVERY GROUP AND WORKING GROUPS

To consider the notes and any actions from:

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

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

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

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

Noted.

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

Noted.

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

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

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

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

5. COVID-19 DAY OF REFLECTION

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

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

6. COMMUNITY AWARDS TIMELINE

To note the timeline for the 2025 Community Awards.

Noted.

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

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

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

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

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

Noted.

The meeting closed at 7.45pm.

Sara Halliday
Governance and Projects Manager

ITEM 3 – STRATEGY DELIVERY GROUP AND WORKING GROUPS

3a. Community Working Group 11 February 2025. No recommendations for the Town Matters Committee to consider.

Notes - Community Working Group – Tuesday 11th February at 6pm in the Guildhall Offices Meeting Room

Attendees – Cllrs Bennett (Chair), Presswell, Chinnock and Collinson

Not present – Cllrs Hannam, Cooper and Robshaw

Officer: Town Clerk

1. Notes of the last meeting and matters arising (below)

Noted.

2. To review the current budget for Community (as of 04.02.25) – includes some estimates on expected/committed due to unknowns

Community 24/25	Budgeted	Committed	Funds remaining
Christmas Light Switch On		2724	
Christmas Late Nights		11392	
Christmas Tree and lights		19323	
Newsletter, publicity, Annual meeting		2159	
Defibrillators		500	
Community mapping		5000	
Misc		2865	
TOTAL	50500	43962	6538

Noted.

3. To review the proposed budget for Community 25/26 (as agreed by Full Council 03.02.25) and confirm to Council Matters committee

Community 25/26	
Christmas Light Switch On	3000
Christmas Late Nights	15000
Christmas Tree and lights	15000
Newsletter, publicity, Annual meeting	3000
Defibrillator Pads and batteries	500
New Town Lighting	5000
Caring Town/Community Facilitation	9000
Bunting	2500
Community Grants	0
TOTAL	53000

£30k separate budget line

It was **AGREED** that the listing is accurate.

4. To consider the draft brief for the 2025 Christmas Lighting (ref CD5.G)

The brief was **AGREED**, subject to minor amendments to confirm the priority for additional lighting is initially Fore Street but that there are aspirations in future years to consider the large 'Morrisons' roundabout, the Old Bridge, the Castle and the Council were open to new ideas such as using projection to enhance the festive light display.

5. To consider a request for financial support from Totnes Carnival and Lantern Group for 2025 (ref CD2)

To **RECOMMEND** to Council Matters that a sum of £3,000 be awarded as requested to ensure the continuation of the 2025 Odd Object competition and the Christmas Lantern Procession.

To **RECOMMEND** to the Environment and Public Realm Working Group that the large 'Morrisons' roundabout is a possible site for a public art project.

6. To receive feedback from the Caring Town session on Friday 31st January and to consider making a recommendation to Council Matters on 2025/26 support (ref CD4).

To **RECOMMEND** to Council Matters that a sum of £9,000 be paid to Caring Town from the 2025/26 budget to secure the organisation for a minimum of 12 months. This is subject to engagement in the Council's planning Community Mapping work happening later in 2025.

7. To consider what to do with the current bunting (ref CD2.A).

It was **AGREED** to keep the existing bunting up and use the savings to replace and repair areas as needed.

8. To consider the idea of a Community Coordinator/Community Fundraiser role (ref CD4).

It was **AGREED** to cover this at the Away Day as part of a wider discussion.

9. To consider any updates on the Totnes Leisure Centre (Pavilions) (ref EPR01).

Noted.

10. To note the timeline for the 2025/26 Community Grants Process (ref CD4.A).

The slightly earlier closing date suggested by Council Matters was noted.

11. To note the feedback to the Galleon move (ref EPR01).

Noted.

12. To note the dissolution of Community In Action (ref CD4.B).

Noted.

13. To note Kingsbridge Inn ACV - 6 month moratorium triggered.

Noted. Cllr Presswell is attending a meeting this week on this matter.

14. Date of the next meeting – Tuesday 1st April at 6pm in the meetings room.

Confirmed

3b. Economy Working Group 12th February 2025. No recommendations for the Town Matters Committee to consider.

Notes– Economy Working Group Meeting – Wednesday 12th February at 1pm

WG members: Cllr Roberts (Chair), Cllr Auletta, Cllr Beavis, Cllr Chinnock (Virtual), Cllr Peters

Other attendees: JT and H – REconomy, G – Transition Town Totnes (TTT) (Left after item 2)

Officers: Town Clerk and Economic Support Officer

Not present: Cllr Trant

1. Notes of the last meeting and matters arising (those not already on the agenda)

Noted.

2. To consider input from REconomy Centre Representative.

Representative discussed the history and future of the REconomy Centre, a community-led project that has been operating since 2013. They highlighted the need for shifts in the project, including potential support from the Council and improvements to the office space and mentioned the possibility of rebranding and marketing the REconomy more effectively. The group discussed the potential for more networking and collaboration with other organisations and the need for better infrastructure, such as a keyless entry system. The conversation ended with the need for more financial backing to support the project's growth and potential for more workshops and events.

3. To review the current budget for Economy (as of 04.02.25).

Economy	Budgeted	Committed	Funds remaining
Mid Summer event		3000	
Dartmouth/Totnes project		500	
Transport feasibility phase 1		10000	
Xmas window display competition		675	
TOTAL	15000	14175	825

AGREED at Council Matters 10 2 25 some flexibility to reallocate to other if underspent.

AGREED at Council Matters 10 2 25

Noted.

4. To review the proposed budget for Economy 25/26 (as agreed by Full Council 03.02.25) and confirm to Council Matters committee.

Economy	
Community Economic Plan match funding	20000
Christmas window display competition and promotion	1000
Business Forum/events	5000
Transport Feasibility Phase 2	10000
Active Travel	12000
Town Centre enhancements and Safety Sinking Fund	20000
Local/members discount Scheme	2000
TOTAL	70000

Noted. The group were content this list of proposals is currently accurate.

5. **To note any updates or actions from the Community Economic Plan (CEP) (ref EC01 & ED1.A).**
Noted.

6. **To consider the Dartington CROP project.**

The verbal update from Cllr Roberts was noted. The WG agreed to continue supporting this project.

7. **To consider an update on the e-bike scheme and the possibility of allocating support for an earlier launch (ref PRD08).**

No further detail given on timings or support requests, verbal updated noted.

8. **To consider how to support events in town and if funding may be required (ref ED2):**

- a. MidSummer Fest 20-22 June– the Transition Town 20 year celebrations. Some uncertainty now on the e-bike launch timings. The idea of developing the food market on the Sunday into something bigger with the help of the Bull is great - but what level of resource will it need from us? Do we need to pay for some entertainment etc? close the road and have music in the street that Saturday? Cllrs are engaging with TTT and fusion on the event programme and how to integrate Fusion / TTT / E-bike launch (as required). It was noted that requests for budget spend on this project would need to be considered by the WG members following the approval of Council Matters.
- b. Morris Dancing events
1. Legend of Brutus (June or July) – Dartington Morris – might be tricky to hold with the area outside the church out of action – is there anything we can do to help?
2. Totnes Day of Dance (Morris Dancers) 13 Sept – this might not be able to go ahead in Totnes unless there is a road closure, which they can't afford. Need to let them know asap if we might be doing a road closure that they could take advantage of before they arrange to do the event somewhere else! Members did not support allocating additional funds to these events given the high cost of administering road closures and other budget pressures.
- c. Totnes Fringe 11-12 July – awaiting more details for what's planned and the financial ask of us
It is **RECOMMENDED** that this moves across to the Community Working Group for consideration.
- d. Eat Festival 31 August at Longmarsh/Steamer Quay – Not sponsored by Riverford in 2025 but they are still looking to hold it, we are trying to ascertain the background on this. They are seeking sponsorship.
Members were not supportive of Visit Totnes being the main sponsor following Riverford stepping away. This is because the producers at the event are not local and it is difficult to use an event on Longmarsh to drive visitors into the town centre. With that said it is a popular event and brings visitors in, but it was not felt appropriate to be the main supporter given other budget pressures.
- e. South Hams Way – a 100 mile circular walk with Totnes highlighted as the 'gateway' which will be launched this summer by the Ramblers. Already allocated £500 from the Visit Totnes budget to sponsor this in return for increased brand awareness (our logo/website to feature prominently on their website/maps/promo materials etc and for links to our website for local places to eat and stay). This was noted. There were no further links to other events suggested.

- f. Heritage Festival – end Sept. No financial ask yet but potentially resource of time (in return for the Visit Totnes Logo being used) to promote as last year ... or maybe we need to put in some money for example for a banner across the street at 7stars – comes under Community WG
- g. Lantern Festival; Dec – financial support request going to Community WG
Noted – for discussion via the Community Working Group.
- 9. To note the agreed statement on the SHDC Car Parking Fee proposals and feedback from business groups**
Noted.
- 10. To note the winter closure of the Totnes Castle by English Heritage (ED3).**
Clerk to write to EH asking about the potential for partnership working opportunities.
- 11. To note the ‘Support for Tourism’ project headed by SHDC (ref ED3).**
Noted.
- 12. To consider the benefit of a ‘Locals Card’.**
DEFERRED.
- 13. To note any update on the Market Square improvements (ref EC04).**
Clerk to chase SHDC about a timeline for the set replacement and a site meeting to review how they look.
- 14. To consider any updates on the feasibility report/town centre improvements (ref EC04).**
Noted
- 15. Date of the next meeting – Wednesday 19th March at 6pm.**
Noted

The meeting closed at 14.31

3c. Environment and Public Realm Working Group 29th January 2025. No recommendations for the Town Matters Committee to consider.

DRAFT ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC REALM WORKING GROUP NOTES FROM 29TH JANUARY 2025 MEETING

Present: Cllrs Hodgson (Chair), Auletta and Peters.

Apologies: Cllr Cummings.

1. To agree the notes of the last Working Group.

The notes were **AGREED**. All recommendations to Committee and Full Council had been resolved. It was **AGREED** to bring the next review of planters to the March meeting.

2. Safer Cleaner Totnes (EPR04).

a. To discuss the locations in the town for larger heritage style bins (PRD2.f).

It was **AGREED** that the street scene would be improved if all bins were of the same colour to provide continuity throughout the town.

To **RECOMMEND** to the Council Matters Committee that the seven new extra-large heritage style litter bins replace existing bins in the following locations (see attached image):

- 1 at front of Civic Square (removing two existing black bins).
- 1 by Birdwood House/end of Civic Hall ramp (removing one existing black metal bin).
- 1 on pavement outside St Mary's Church on the High Street (removing one existing black bin).
- 1 at Heath Gardens (removing one existing black bin)
- 1 on The Plains near Fone Shop/Curator (removing one black bin).
- 1 on Vire Island, bottom of the ramp (removing one black bin).
- 1 held in reserve for placement.

and

To **RECOMMEND** that the Town Council:

- Relocates the removed black bins to replace the green bins on High Street up from Birdwood House, Happy Apple and near the corner of Castle Street. [Post-meeting note: the TMO suggests that the bin is located further away from the Butterwalk – it is currently very close to a pillar and presents a fire risk.]
- Removes one of the two existing green metal bins near the Dartmouth Inn and replace with a black bin near the posts on The Plains where there has previously been a bin.
- Relocates the metal bin from the Civic Square (or Dartmouth Inn) to the bus shelter on Coronation Road to increase capacity from the post-mounted bin currently in place.

b. To discuss a South Hams District Council proposal for street cleaning in Totnes and populate the attached table with priority areas/tasks.

It was **AGREED** that Councillors would meet after the meeting on 3rd February to populate a form following the discussions, and that it would be helpful to have details of the barrowman's daily tasks and routes that they cover to inform this work.

3. Bus Shelters (PRD2). To consider a request from Bridgetown Alive to fund the placing of maps in Totnes, including in the TTC shelter on Higher Westonfields.

It was **AGREED** that the request was supported for use of the Coronation Road and Higher Westonfields Bus Shelters, which is **RECOMMENDED** to the Council Matters Committee. However, more information is required in terms of costs, fabric for the sign which will last (for example printing on metal) and consideration of additional points, for example at Steamer Quay (near the Galleon, by the public toilets, under the flag pole), outside Seymour Court in the flowerbed.

4. Castle Meadow (PRD4.c). To note the following requests from residents for Castle Meadow (Clerk's advice attached):

- a. Resident access via a back gate from their garden directly into the meadow.
- b. Planting of a memorial tree.

It was **AGREED** that further discussion is required on the future use of Castle Meadow and that at such a time no decision can be made on these requests.

5. To note the budget position for the Environment and Public Realm work (including recent ratifications by Council Matters). Review the budget

a. 2024/25 (current year).

Noted. The Vehicle Activated Signage could be more expensive than the £6K budgeted – there will be an update following the Traffic and Transport Forum.

b. 2025/26 (next year).

Noted. This will be discussed in more detail at the next meeting and the proposed allocations are supported at this time.

6. Delivery Plan – any comments, including:

- a. Totnes Climate & Ecological Emergency project meetings (PRD7);
- b. Totnes Community Composting Scheme (PRD7.C); and
- c. Consider dates for the future discussion of: EPR01 Vision and improvement strategy for open and blue spaces (for example Castle Meadow, Borough Park, Vire Island, the river); PRD4.E – Cemetery Chapel. Document attached.

There was not time to discuss this item and it will return to the next meeting.

7. Note the date of the next meeting TBC – proposed 4.30pm on Wednesday 26th March 2025 in the Guildhall.

Noted for date and time proposed.

Meeting ended at 6.15pm.

S Halliday
Governance and Projects Manager

ITEM 4 – DEVON WILDLIFE TRUST BOWDEN PILLARS FARM PROJECT

Information taken from the Devon Wildlife Trust website (see <https://www.devonwildlifetrust.org/rainforest-creation-bowden-pillars>)

Devon Wildlife Trust is creating an Atlantic rainforest, also known as temperate rainforest, at a new site called Bowden Pillars Farm thanks to a long-term partnership with Aviva.

The 30-hectare (75 acre) site is located close to the market town of Totnes. Its position on the edges of the Dart river valley provides wonderful views of South Devon and Dartmoor. Devon Wildlife Trust has secured a 105-year lease which will allow it to plant two-thirds of the land with native species trees to create a new rainforest.

Tree planting at Bowden Pillars Farm is the first project in the South West of England to receive support from the Aviva fund. Devon Wildlife Trust will create new rainforest close to existing examples of the ancient, wooded landscapes in the Dart Valley and on the southern edges of Dartmoor.

Devon Wildlife Trust will involve communities in and around Totnes in the rainforest recovery project, who will benefit from increased access to nature, volunteering, educational and employment opportunities. Rainforest restoration will also provide cleaner air and water and reduced risk from flooding.

Devon Wildlife Trust's rainforest creation is part of a wider partnership centred on Bowden Pillars Farm. Other aspects to the project include establishing a regenerative farm. The reforested landscape will sit perfectly alongside these other features, creating a truly holistic community based on the principles of living in balance with the natural environment.

Tree species in Atlantic rainforests include sessile oak, birch, rowan, holly, alder, willow and hazel. They are home to stoats and pine martens, and threatened birds like wood warblers, redstarts, and pied flycatchers. Wet conditions support an abundance of mosses, liverworts, lichens, and ferns – many of which grow on the trees or cover boulders and ravines. The dampness is ideal for fungi, including globally rare species like hazel gloves fungus.