



DRAFT MINUTES FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING OF TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL

THURSDAY 15TH MAY 2025 AT 6.00PM IN THE GUILDHALL

Present: Councillors T Bennett (Chair), L Auletta, C Beavis, J Chinnock, T Cooper, J Cummings, J Hodgson, A Presswell, E Price and M Trant.

In Attendance: Members of the public, C Marlton (Town Clerk), L Ferrier (Communications and Marketing Manager) and S Halliday (Governance and Projects Manager).

1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME FROM THE MAYOR OF TOTNES

The Mayor welcomed those present and explained how the meeting would run.

2. TO AGREE THE MINUTES FROM THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD ON 29TH MAY 2024.

The minutes were accepted as a true record of proceedings.

3. MAYOR'S REPORT ON COUNCIL BUSINESS

Cllr Bennett set out how the Council has been taking forward work on its strategic plan through three working groups. The Council has continued to provide community support through grant funding to local groups, and cross-parish work through the Totnes and District Traffic and Transport Forum is ongoing. Change lies ahead with local government reorganisation and the Council has been proactive in assessing potential asset transfers and core service provision in advance of what the new structure might look like without the district council level of local government. Cllr Bennett concluded that the year ahead brings new opportunities and challenges but that he believes the town as a whole will work together.

4. CLERK REPORT

The Clerk set out that it has been another busy 12 months as mentioned by the Mayor, with collaboration between the Town Council and community groups and neighbouring parishes. For example, the Town Council has been working with Devon County Council and South Hams District Council (SHDC) on public realm cleanliness, although the Town Council's Maintenance Team is carrying out a number of these tasks to get the worst areas cleaned up and ensure that it happens. Partnering with SHDC on the Community Economic Plan is ongoing, and the Council continues to work to support our local economy and business community through Visit Totnes, the Christmas Markets and lights. The Civic Hall is busy as a venue that brings community and commercial events into the town for residents and visitors to enjoy.

5. STRATEGY DELIVERY WORKING GROUP REPORTS

The chairs of the three Strategy Delivery Working Groups gave a quick overview of their work.

Environment and Public Realm Working Group – Cllr Hodgson explained that this group looks at the wider environment and biodiversity issues for the town alongside the condition of the public realm. On public realm the Council has: lobbied for the cutting back of vegetation alongside pavements; committed to installing larger litter bins in key areas to reduce litter and hopefully the problems caused by seagulls; and reviewed the planters and reduced them in number. On the environment the Council supports the work of the Climate Hub and their projects, including the proposed community composting scheme.

Economy Working Group – Cllr Auletta updated that the main focus over the past year has been working with SHDC on the Community Economic Plan consultation and shaping the questions. This is now live and

businesses are encouraged to respond. It's felt that the information from this consultation will help inform the Town Council's understanding of how it can best support businesses in the town. Event and festivals are also being supported as they provide activities for the local community as well as bringing visitors into the town. The Council has continued to lobby SHDC for improvements to the Market Square.

Community Working Group – Cllr Bennett set out that a mapping exercise has been commissioned to identify health and wellbeing organisations/resources in the town to identify where there are gaps or overlaps in the provision of services. Council funding has supported community groups including helping those who are vulnerable, have mental health issues, in providing community transport, and youth provision, as well as assisting cultural and arts events in the town like the heritage festival and the lantern procession.

6. COMMUNITY AWARDS PRESENTATION

The Mayor announced the awards. The joint winners of the 2025 Totnes Community Individual Award went to:

- Alan Blake for his voluntary work over many years with Totnes and Dartington Football Club; and
- Dee Cunnison for her involvement with Transition Town Totnes, ShareShed, Transition Homes, Resilient Lives and other community groups in the town.

Other nominees for the award were: Lynne Birch for her work organising the Heritage Festival and Sally Studd for her regular litter picking in Totnes over a number of years.

There were joint winners of the 2025 Community Group Award:

- Totnes Rugby Football Club for their intergenerational work both on and off the pitch and their fund raising for local charities.
- Totnes Young Farmers Club for the work of these young people in helping the community through harvesting vegetables for food banks, their work at Totnes Show, and raising money for local charities.

Other nominees for the award were: St John's Church Café, Stepping Stones Food Bank and Totnes Gardens.

The lifetime achievement award, this year renamed the Judy Westacott Award, was awarded to Carole Whitty for her role as a co-founder and CEO of Caring Town, and continuing work in building, co-ordinating and maintaining its structural network of local community charities.

7. OPEN FORUM

The following questions and points were made in the open forum.

A question had been received about traffic in Fore and High Street. The Mayor explained that some schemes are being looked at to try and improve driver behaviours such as vehicle activated signage and the '20s Plenty' scheme. However, there is no easy solution and we have to balance access and business need as well as pedestrians. It's hoped that the Community Economic Plan work might help inform this.

A question was asked about any low-cost venues for use by the lantern festival. The Clerk said that she would get in touch to discuss options.

The meeting closed at 18.50.

Cllr Tim Bennett
Mayor