

JULY 2025 CLERKS REPORT – covering May and June

Meetings and Training attended (excluding weekly staff and management meetings)

- 1st May – Parish Cluster meeting
- 6th May – all Staff meeting
- 8th May – VE Day Beacon
- 12th May – Mayor/Clerk meeting
- 12th May – Full Council
- 14th May – Meeting with SHDC (South Hams Festival)
- 15th May – Totnes Town Team
- 15th May – Annual Town Meeting
- 19th May – HR Seminar
- 19th May – Mayor Making rehearsal
- 19th May – Council Matters Committee
- 21st May – Mayor Making Ceremony
- 22nd May – SLCC meeting
- 29th May – 8th June *ANNUAL LEAVE*
- 8th June – Council Matters Committee
- 11th June – all Staff meeting
- 11th June – Asset Transfer webinar
- 11th June – DALC LGR Steering Group
- 16th – 18th June – *SICK LEAVE*
- 23rd June – NALC PowerShift Conference
- 24th June – 30th June – *SICK LEAVE*

General updates Clerk

- I'm working on drafting the Heritage Festival Programme with Lynne Birch – watch this space.
- The Beacon Lighting for VE day was successful, if not well attended. The health and safety of the event was excellent given our Town Maintenance Officers experience!
- We are busy advertising for two vacancies, Assistant Town Maintenance Officer and Marketing and Communications Officer. We have had a healthy amount of applications in to date for shortlisting in due course
- Mayor Making was another lovely event, with the addition of some young Macebearers from local schools
- We submitted an Expression of Interest to MEND for the remedial works required internally and externally to the Museum. The bid went in from the Town Council but a huge thanks to Musuem trustees for undertaking all the detailed work. We were not invited to bid when we applied last time but are hopeful to progress this time around.
- The office team will be in touch about a suitable date for a September Member/Clerk Away Day. Members are keen to meet off site so the Seven Stars is being considered.
- We are still waiting to hear from KEVICC in terms of when and what areas of the KEVICC site are to be sold.
- I am still pursuing SHDC about the Garage ownership dispute.
- The discussions with English Heritage continue and have been broadened to Heritage groups locally – if you have any interest in attending future meetings please let me know.
- The internal audit has been completed with no concerns – huge thank you to our Finance Manager for her due diligence on this.
- The NALC PowerShift conference was interesting in places – I have circulated a relevant presentation to members. It was worthwhile representing the sector views pretty strongly to Baroness Taylor MP (Parliamentary under-secretary for Housing, Communities and Local Government). Some Councils in earlier tranches of LGR were very underwhelmed by the engagement from higher tier authorities and spoke about the financial and operational challenges they are facing. There was a strong contingent from Devon representing how difficult it is to plan and engage when there is still uncertainty and speculation on how the

unitary will shape up. That was accepted and it is understood that Devon has a particular challenge in coming to a consensus view.

- I have lost significant time this last month due to a holiday and then illness – a big thank you to the team for covering in my absence.

General updates Governance and Projects Manager

- Council Grants – this has taken up a lot of officer time in checking that the correct documents were submitted with applications (the minority), chasing up the missing documents (often multipole emails) and collation of the information in the applications.
- Annual Town Meeting – material collated for display boards and awards presented. Reasonable attendance given the change of venue to the Guildhall this year.
- Public Realm:
 - Town Team' collaborative working meetings with South Hams District Council (SHDC) and Devon Highways have continued on a monthly basis. DCC updated on: that the Morrisons roundabout work is remedial prior to patching and then resurfacing later in the year (after September) as it will cause disruption to the traffic; reports of growth of vegetation over footways have soared given the rapid growth in recent weeks and DCC are working to address the most urgent cases, including issuing notices to residents where applicable. At SHDC there have been further changes of personnel, twilight litter collections will soon begin (including in Totnes), there is a mini-sweeper dedicated to Totnes and Dartmouth (based at the Totnes depot).
 - Mosaics – first stage installed. Plaques to be ordered. Mosaic artist will put a protective coat on the panels once they are in place.
 - Judy Westacott Memorial Bench – installed on The Plains by the Town Maintenance Team on 9th June, has received positive comments on social media and is in regular use.
 - XL Heritage Bins – delivered 19th June. Installation in due course – on hold following recent arson of bins.
 - Environment and Public Realm Working Group – Site Visits have been arranged in July (Borough Park 2nd, Castle Meadow 16th and Rotherfold & Civic Square 30th) and September (cemetery 4th) to inform discussion at future meetings.
- Remembrance Sunday – meeting with local Royal British Legion representatives to confirm roles for TTC and RBL, along with the requirement for St Mary's church to confirm access given the building works.
- Castle Meadow – cut delayed from June until 2nd July to accommodate the meadow biodiversity count being organised by The Climate Hub. The Allotment Association have been informed of the works to be carried out.
- VE Day Beacon was lit on Kingsbridge Hill on 8th May 2025.
- Christmas
 - Christmas market and late-night shopping event management brief for 2026-2028 was posted onto the website and social media on 29th June. Deadline for submissions is 31st August.
 - Lights - New installer met for a site meeting on 18th June to confirm locations for the existing lights, explain the problems experienced on The Plains and to see the lights/requirements in advance of the installation. An overnight road closure will be applied for by the contractor to enable safe installation (they will arrange and cost forms part of the quote). The problem with the lights on The Plains have been inspected again with the installer used in 2024 due to reseal and install breakers to overcome the problems experienced in previous years.
- Cemetery

- In May and June: two interments (in June); one memorial application processed and two outstanding chasing correct deed holder permissions; one deed of grant transfers completed; six enquiries (various – purchase, ownership, interments of ashes, memorial maintenance). Letters will be sent in early July about removal of items placed and planting on a number of graves which is hampering grounds maintenance.
- New contractor met 20th June to review first couple of months work and identify any hazards from low branches and items placed on graves.
- Parklife were emailed on 10th June to say that the Council had approved funding for June and Oct wild area cuts are quoted. Dates for the work in June have been requested to avoid interments at the cemetery.

Economy, Marketing and Communications

- The Community Economic Plan consultation continues, with a positive number of attendees at open events.
- The CatBikes Scheme has launched and members are encouraged to promote residents and visitors to use the SHDC scheme. It is important to note that the app requires pre-registration before bikes can be hired. Full information is available on the SHDC website.
- Social media and websites are being covered by various members of the team while we recruit for the part time Marketing and Communications Officer. The latest statistics are below:

WEBSITE

Users on our sites between 1st April – 30th June:

Visit Totnes: 34,000

Totnes Town Council: 6,500

SOCIAL MEDIA

Visit Totnes

Overall followers

Facebook: 6824

Instagram: 8762

New Followers between 1st April – 30th June:

VT Facebook: 369

VT Instagram: 1282 (Huge spike of new followers on the 11th of April due to a competition that ran through England's Coast with Dartmouth)

Totnes Town Council

Overall followers

Facebook: 1908

Instagram: 1006

New followers between 1st April – 30th June

TTC Facebook: 46

TTC Instagram: 60

- The Economic Support Officer has met with Explore Dartmouth to discuss existing and potential new joint ventures, an overview of the meeting is below:

Visit Totnes pays £100 per year to display leaflets and posters at the Dartmouth Visitor Centre, which welcomes around 50,000 visitors annually. Volunteers there offer travel advice and

actively promote Totnes when people come in, specifically trying to utilise the River Dart. During discussions with Explore Dartmouth, opportunities for collaboration were explored, including joint blogs, cross-promotion of events in both towns, and incorporating Visit Totnes content into Explore Dartmouth's visitor app.

Explore Dartmouth supports local business networking through the Dartmouth Chamber and "The Dartmouth Collective," which is a branch out of the chamber that focuses solely on young entrepreneurs, business owners and those in managerial positions aged 20-45. This collective are coming up with various ideas on how Dartmouth can be promoted as a good place to live, work and bring up a family.

The overall vision of the partnership between Totnes and Dartmouth is to foster collaboration that highlights each town's unique appeal and enhances the visitor experience, and not to be in competition with each other.

Civic Hall & Guildhall Update Report

Civic Hall Updates

The Civic Hall has experienced an exceptionally busy period over the past couple of months, hosting a wide variety of community events and activities. While this has been a positive reflection of the hall's importance as a central community space, it has also presented challenges around caretaking and cleaning due to the high turnover of bookings.

Events hosted recently include:

- Numerous dance events
- Artisan markets
- Choir rehearsals and concerts
- Devon Ukulele Festival
- Transition Town Totnes 20th Anniversary celebration
- Dartington Playgoers performances
- Energy Show / Climate Hub
- TAODS live theatre performances
- Antiques Fair
- National Diabetic Prevention Programme sessions
- Elections (local/national)

The upcoming month is also shaping up to be diverse and vibrant, beginning with the **South Devon CAMRA Beer & Cider Festival 2025**, followed by a full programme for the **Totnes Fringe Festival**, which will feature a wide range of acts throughout the weekend.

Maintenance & Operations:

While minor maintenance has been carried out in between bookings, there are some larger tasks that need attention. It is proposed that the Civic Hall may close for a few days in **August**,

a typically quieter period, to allow for more extensive maintenance work to be completed efficiently and safely.

Guildhall Updates

Since reopening to the public at the beginning of April, the Guildhall has welcomed a steady and encouraging number of visitors from both the UK and overseas. While visitor numbers remain comparable to last year, donation levels have dipped slightly.

Key Highlights:

- Volunteers continue to play a vital role in the smooth operation and visitor experience at the Guildhall. Their contribution remains invaluable.
- Weddings are currently booked through to **September**, with some months hosting up to **two ceremonies**.
- We are already receiving enquiries and have confirmed **bookings for 2026**, indicating sustained interest in the venue for future events.

Town Maintenance updates

- New GM contract starting to bed in and the contractor is carrying out the work to a very good standard.
- Continuing to chip away at the Civic Hall fire safety works. Although we are exposing other issues which have to be repaired such as rotten and woodworm infested support timbers.
- Stone wall repairs are scheduled in for September
- Mosaics now installed into the bus shelters in town and have received very positive comments on how lovely they are.
- Met with new lighting company and look forward to a very much brighter Christmas this year.
- Working closely with SHDC and have been involved with the revamping of the steps at the Civic Hall.
- Will be aiming to install 6 large capacity street litter bins imminently.
- Worked with SHDC to donate numerous planters to the Grove School including delivering them for the children to enjoy.
- Continuing to do battle with the local squirrel community in the Guildhall roof. We appear to have the upper hand at present, but we are not sitting back on our laurels.
- Still reporting anti social behaviour and working with the police have noticed a downward turn currently in those behaviours.

May and June General Correspondence

Date		Request	Response
06/05/2025	email	Enquiry about finding some premises to set up a business.	Directed to SHDC
06/05/2025	email	Request from an individual for funding to support them on a 1 year post graduate acting course.	Referred to funding opportunities page on the website.

07/05/2025	email	Enquiry about nominating people for community awards	Informed that this year's awards have just taken place but given details of when and how to nominate next year.
08/05/2025	email	Response from DfE re KEVICC Site.	
08/05/2025	email	Expression of concern over the state of the town as it is approached due to rusting railway bridge, graffiti, dirt, potholes. Suggestions that those on community service could help or local artists could be commissioned to paint a mural.	TTC is limited as neither the bridge nor the roads fall under our ownership or jurisdiction. Various suggestions have been considered. for public art. DCC is responsible for maintaining the roads. Graffiti is reported promptly when it occurs to police and SHDC.
09/05/2025	email	Request to report overflowing dog poo bin at the beginning of the cycle trail to Sharpham.	Reported to SHDC and shared the link for the online reporting page with the MoP.
10/05/2025	Phone	Request to sign up for to the Buskers code of practice.	Informed that this is just a set of guidelines to ensure any busking is not too loud or not in one area for too long. Directed to the website to view the Code of Practice in full.
11/05/2025	email	High Street Traffic	Responded to say this is a DCC issue.
14/05/2025	email	Cemetery Enquiry - Placing headstone on grave.	Replied with advice and given application form.
19/05/2025	email	TTC letter re moving planters back to create a wider footway.	
19/05/2025	email	Report of a sharp nail at top of the climbing rope, on the Galleon on Steamer Quay.	Reported to SHDC and asked MoP to do the same via online reporting tool. UPDATE: SHDC fixed the problem. Mop contacted to inform them it is now safe.
20/05/2025	email	MoP requesting help due to not receiving guarantee documentation following the installation of a new roof.	Recommendation to get in touch with Trading Standards. Details given.
21/05/2025	email	Expression of concern about the graffiti in the Market Square area and walk through from car parks. Request for it to be removed.	Informed that this was reported immediately to the police and SHDC. Any graffiti on TTC property was removed straight away but we don't have the authority to remove graffiti from property that doesn't belong to the Town Council.

22/05/2025	letter	Concern over weeds on pavements on Plymouth Road area. Broken fence near the allotment Request for a new supermarket at the Dairy Crest Site	No return address to send reply.
26/05/2025	email	Cemetery Enquiry - Grave location and CR interment	Replied with location and ownership confirmation.
27/05/2025	email	Totnes Castle Winter Closure	Reply from Clerk
29/05/2025	Phone	Cemetery Enquiry - Grave location	
02/06/2025	email		Reply to say no TTC land available.
02/06/2025	Report on 101	Reported vandalised finger post in the Market Square	DP-2310-25-5050-01
03/06/2025	email	Following Full Council - Sent info of TTC support for re-opening a pharmacy at Leatside.	
03/06/2025	email	Cemetery Enquiry - Grave Location	Replied
04/06/2025	email	Reply to SHDC re cycle storage	
04/06/2025	email	Reply to SHDC re skate park funding and contract	
04/06/2025	email	The Grove School Consultation	
05/06/2025	phone	Concern over the water trough in Castle Meadow which has now been emptied. The MoP mentioned that this has been used by newts and frogs.	Informed that the trough has been emptied due to potential legionella and Weil's disease. It isn't safe so will be removed.
06/06/2025	phone	Request for the contact details for the Totnes Gospel Hall	Found on the Gospel Hall website and passed on.
09/06/2025	email	Concern over parking on blind bend on Blackpost Lane causing drivers to go on to the wrong side of the road without visibility.	Informed that this is an issue for DCC Highways department. Email forwarded to Cllr Hodgson as Town, District and County Councillor.
09/06/2025	email	Letter from Clerk re parking disc for emergency first responders and firefighters (Full Council action)	
09/06/2025	email	Letter from Clerk re parking disc for emergency first responders and firefighters (Full Council action)	
10/06/2025	email	Thanks for the streets being cleaned by the road sweeper.	Informed that this was by SHDC.
10/06/2025	email	Cemetery - Complaint about grounds maintenance	Replied and again after check of cemetery.

11/06/2025	email	Letter from clerk re support for Friends of Kingsbridge Inn Community Group.	
11/06/2025	email	Cemetery enquiry.	Not at Follaton Cemetery - directed to St John's
12/06/2025	email	Maintenance in Totnes Cemetery	Thanked for comments and informed that cut of wild areas due in June.
16/06/2025	email	Request for repair of a private track which is used as a passing bay on Totnes Down Hill.	Informed that TTC is unable to help because it is on private land.
17/06/2025	email	Report of broken fence at Atmos site.	Reported to police and SHDC. Police followed up with the member of public to inform them of the current situation at the Atmos site.
17/06/2025	Report on 101	Report of graffiti at Castle Meadow on the benches.	Police contacted to say they will start to patrol there regularly over the summer months when antisocial behaviour can escalate.
18/06/2025	Phone	Report of wobbly paving slab near Ticklemore Cheese shop which has caused an injured toe.	Directed to DCC report a problem page.
19/06/2025	In person	Housing Enquiry	Directed to SHDC.
26/06/2025	email	Request for details about when a planning matter will be discussed.	Given links to calendar and directed to where agenda will be found when it is prepared.
26/06/2025	phone	Report of overgrown bushes and stinging nettles on Western Bypass. The overgrown vegetation caused MoP to step into the road with a double buggy and the child in her care was stung by the nettles.	Informed that overgrown vegetation on the pavements should be reported to DCC highways. Given details of how to do so. Also reported from TTC Devon Highways - Report - W251871057
30/06/2025	email	Enquiry about who to contact regarding parking and speed limit at Westonfields. Concerns over excessive parking on roads preventing residents from parking near their homes. Additional concern over the speed at which people drive down the road. This has caused damage to cars and a wall.	Sent concerns to Traffic and Transport group and Cllr Hodgson as County Councillor. Advised to report on the DCC report a problem page. Asked if I can share the contact details with the neighbourhood policing team with regards to the speeding.

30/06/2025	email	Report of overflowing litter bin near bus stop. Request for no smoking signs to be placed in the bus shelters. Request for additional benches near the bus shelters.	Informed that issues with litter should be reported to SHDC. No Smoking signs will be re-fitted.
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NALC/DALC/SLCC UPDATES

DALC 11th June

Update on LGR:

Local government minister Jim McMahon MP made a [statement on local government reorganisation](#) on 2 June 2025. All 21 two-tier areas had submitted interim plans to the government and would receive funding to further develop their proposals.

The statement also noted that reorganisation should facilitate better and sustained community engagement by new unitary authorities, including through Neighbourhood Area Committees which could include parish and town councils.

Alongside this statement, the government also published a [summary of feedback on interim plans for local government reorganisation](#) which provides some further information on Neighbourhood Area Committees including noting that: *"They can also include other service providers, such as town or parish councillors, when applicable, along with co-opted members from local community organisations. Areas considering new town or parish councils should think carefully about how they might be funded to avoid putting further pressure on local authority finances and/or new burdens on the taxpayer. We recognise the value that town and parish councils offer to their local communities, but they are independent institutions and are not a substitute for meaningful community engagement and neighbourhood working by a local authority"*.

Positive Climate News:

In their June newsletter, **Devon Climate Emergency** talk about some of the positive action on climate change that local organisations and communities are taking.

You can read about: Green project funding for NHS sites; global recognition for Plymouth's exceptional tree planting; Torridge District Council's transition to electric vehicles; and Devon libraries becoming community sustainability hubs.

You can also find out about talks and events to get involved with this month and as well as funding opportunities for green projects. [Read the DCE June newsletter here.](#)

DALC 25th June

Chair's Blog 25th June 2026

At the DALC AGM in October 2023, we asked delegates to tell us about their challenges, their opportunities, how DALC could help and what services were most needed. We asked because we wanted to know the answers and we wanted to be able to act on them. You told us about the difficulties with working with the other tiers of local government. You confirmed that advice, information and training are the valued core services – and someone mentioned the restrictions of a Monday-Thursday advice line.



That was 20 months ago. Since then, we've signed a Civic Agreement with the County Council to work collaboratively; we have advised on district/local council co-working; we've invested in staffing our advice and information service with the result that . . . see a bit further below.

The voice of the membership is essential to DALC. It guides our future planning as you can see from our staff investment. We need your input into our next phase of planning. Look out for a survey coming over the next few weeks – you say, we do. We can't do it without you.

You asked...we've listened

We have had a number of requests from member councils to expand our opening hours to include Friday opening. DALC is a small team of part-time staff, so has not been in a position to deliver this up till now.

Last year, we hired a Member Services Assistant, Karen Chapman. We are absolutely delighted to announce that Karen has now progressed to hold the post of Member Services Officer. She is an invaluable member of the DALC team and many of you will have already met Karen through our Advice Service or at a DALC event.

This means we are now able to trial Friday opening hours. From next week, our opening hours will now be **Monday to Friday 9am - 2pm**. We will be trialling this for 6 months and will then review the impact on our team and services.

We hope this change makes it easier for our member councils to reach DALC

throughout the week, [whether by phone or email](#). If we're unable to take your call, please leave a voicemail — we'll get back to you as soon as we can.

Our Service Level Agreement says that we aim to acknowledge all queries within 3 working days. In 2024/25, **52% of queries received a same-day response** and 94% of queries received a response within 3 working days. While we do make every effort to provide a quick response, we do encourage member councils to make contact with us as early as possible to help avoid delays.

We very much welcome feedback from our members, and with the addition of this extra Member Services post, we are delighted that we are now able to trial expanding our service provision.

Future dates

- 14th July at 6.30pm – Council Matters
- 15th July at 5.30pm – *provisional date*
Community Working Group
- 16th July at 2.30pm – Totnes Town Team
- 16th July at 4.30pm – Environment and Public Realm Site Visit
- 21st July at 6.30pm – Planning Committee
- 22nd July at 12.30pm – Meeting with D Cllrs
- 22nd July at 6pm – Community Economic Plan Steering Group
- 23rd July at 2pm – SHDC Mayor/Clerks
- 23rd July at 6.30pm – Traffic and Transport Forum
- 28th July at 6.30pm – Town Matters Committee
- 30th July at 3pm – meeting with English Heritage
- 30th July at 4pm – Environment and Public Realm Working Group
- 31st July – Assistant Town Maintenance Officer interviews
- 6th August – Marketing and Communications Officer interviews
- 11th August at 6.45pm *provisional date*
Recess Committee.

Councillor Sharepoint

You can access the Councillor Sharepoint to view documents here:

<https://totnescouncil.sharepoint.com/sites/Councillors/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx>

Funding Opportunities

Don't forget that the funding opportunities page on the Town Council Website is updated every Friday with grants for a range of different needs. You can view them here:

<https://www.totnestowncouncil.gov.uk/your-community/funding-opportunities/>