

September 2025 Clerks Report

Full Council – 1st September 2025

Meetings and training attended (excluding weekly staff and management meetings and monthly team meetings):

- 8th July – DALC LGR Steering Group
- 10th July – Larger Council Clerks
- 14th July – Meeting GH Cottage
- 14th July – Council Matters
- 15th July – SH Town Mayors and Clerks pre-meet
- 15th July – Community Working Group
- 16th July – Totnes Town Team
- 17th July – Meeting Comms Audit applicant
- 21st July – Bank Safeguarding team
- 22nd July – Cllr Birch and members
- 23rd July – SHDC Mayors and Clerks
- 24th July – Local police
- 24th July – SLCC Webinar professional development
- 28th July – DALC/SLCC
- 29th July – Meeting Laura Campbell re tourism
- 29th July – final CEP event
- 30th July – meeting Caring Town
- 30th July – meeting Gemma Bristow re CatBikes
- 30th July – meeting with English Heritage
- 31st July – staff interviews
- 5th August – SLCC webinar – writing engagement
- 5th August – Police
- 6th August – staff interviews
- 7th August – DALC networking
- 11th August – Full Council Recess Committee
- 13th August – Clerk Cluster
- 14th August – Totnes Town Team
- 21st August – DALC LGR Steering Group
- 26th August – GH Cottage with SHDC Conservation Officer

Clerk General updates not covered elsewhere:

- Lisa has been doing an excellent job of working with our IT company to transfer from Google to Microsoft calendars. This has been complex and time-consuming, and once finalised Councillors will be sent new links to meeting diaries. The next step will be a transition from Zoom to using Teams for all meetings but that is a while off.
- Usual juggle in August regarding leave but no staffing concerns or problems.
- The external audit is complete with no issues.
- The garage ownership issue is running on – an independent valuation has taken place.
- The planning for Christmas Late Night markets continues – the traders list has just been finalised and the quality is even better again this year. We have had multiple meetings and emails around vehicle mitigation and have added additional accredited personnel to the event to make it as safe as possible, possible minor budget implications as a result.
- The Councillor Away Day is now set for Saturday 20th September. Details of location will come out in due course, please keep the day free.
- I have been working with the museum on remedial works required, including the potential commissioning of a heritage survey of the building to better inform project and budget planning.
- Our new Marketing and Communications Officer is starting on 7th October
- Our new Assistant Town Maintenance Officer is starting on 1st September

- Community Economic Plan (CEP) provisional results summary is out – further information to follow (see Economic Support Officer update)
- Some irresponsible behaviour at Castle Meadow in the middle of the dry season – the maintenance team have it in hand but this is one of the reasons the grass needs some management in terms of length
- The installation of the mosaics has been very popular, and the Mayor now has a fan club....



- The BA! maps are up and the TMO has done an uplift of the shelters as well.



- The Heritage Festival programme is now complete, printed and out.



Saturday 27th September

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Governance and Projects Manager:

- Public Realm:
 - 'Town Team' collaborative working meetings with South Hams District Council (SHDC) and Devon Highways are continuing on a monthly basis. DCC have responded to TTC reports of overgrown vegetation from private residences by issuing notices and a meeting was held on 20th August to view the standard of work in replacing the pavement slabs on The Plains following recent utilities work. The hazards of mobility scooter use on the narrow pavements around Eastgate were discussed but there is no official signage to warn users that there isn't a dropped kerb to use at the pinch points – TTC officer ideas will go to the Town Matters Committee for consideration. At SHDC there will be a change in street cleaning operative/barrowman this year following a retirement, the twilight litter collections are underway, and there is a mini-sweeper in use around Totnes (based at the Totnes depot). TTC and the new SHDC localities officer have met to confirm Town Council owned or maintained benches and XL heritage bins in the town.

- Mosaics – all panels installed in the two Coronation Road bus shelters which have been positively received by the public. Information plaques have been ordered to provide details of the project, artist, schools involvement and The Art Council's funding.
- Bus Shelters – refurbishment of back (Higher Westonfields) and end panels (Coronation Road) of the TTC bus shelters along with general maintenance has begun and the installation of the Bridgetown Alive! Maps took place during the week of 18th August.
- XL Heritage Bins – following a site meeting with South Hams District Council (SHDC) officers on 15 August to agree locations to ensure the emptying of the bins, installation commenced on 19th August (Civic Square x 2, Heath Gardens x 1, pavement outside St Mary's Church x 1 are in place).
- Environment and Public Realm Working Group – Site Visits (and notes produced) have taken place at Borough Park, Castle Meadow, and Rotherfold & Civic Square to inform discussion at future meetings. Cemetery visit planned for September.
- Castle Meadow – cut carried out early July. There has been an incident of a fire being lit in the meadow but fortunately no spread of fire or extended scorching on the ground given the tinder dry conditions.
- Meeting with Cllrs to discuss the Council Grants process and ad hoc requests.
- Planning Applications – as agreed by Full Council in July, planning and tree works applications, traffic measures and pavement licences have been circulated for comment out of Committee, with the Clerk approving the TTC response to SHDC.
- 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 – Contract with new installer signed. Solar lights (designed for UK conditions) have been purchased for TTC installation on the three largest trees on the Morrisons roundabout (in consultation with Totnes Gardens who maintain this space).
- Cemetery
 - The number of interments is much lower than last year from 1st January to 31st August: in 2024 there were 15 interments; in 2025 only 6. In July and August: one interment (in July); two memorial applications processed and two outstanding chasing correct deed holder permissions; two deed of grant transfer letters sent; one pre-purchased burial plot; three enquiries (various – purchase, ownership, memorial). Letters have been sent to plot owners requesting the removal of items placed and planting on a number of graves which is hampering grounds maintenance - if no action is taken by mid-September, TTC officers will action.
 - Tree works to fell dead trees/branches and cut back of the overgrown laurel hedge is planned for mid-September.
 - Parklife – meeting on 4th August with Cllr Hodgson to discuss recent works, clearing up of cut grass, ideas and costings for future planting, and a potential long-term plan for the wild areas which will go to the Environment and Public Realm Working Group for consideration.

Town Maintenance Officer:

- Mosaics now all fitted and proving to be very popular. Might be a good to put a plaque in each bus stop as people are asking about the artist.
- Bridgetown Alive animal map and info signs now installed in both Higher Westonfields and the Plains bus stops. The full refurb of the bus stops is hoping to be complete in the next few weeks.
- Councillors now have a new tap in the Mayors kitchen so that you can actually fill a kettle or water jug.

- Met with Richard Gage yesterday 26/08/25. He has given permission for work to remove numerous additions to the walls to be undertaken. We are also engaging a roof company to look at the two chimney stacks and roof generally.
- Work to start making the courtyard wall safe will start shortly using Riviera Stone. They are going repair all the cappings and take down and rebuild the gate pillar that is preventing the new doors from being fitted.
- Another 6 yard skip load of waste has now been disposed of. We will now ensure waste is disposed of in a more timely manner and not left tucked away somewhere and forgotten about.
- By the time of reading this the last of the agreed locations will have a large capacity bin supplied by TTC. We will relocate the black smaller bins to replace the green waste bins and suggest to SHDC that the green bins go to Borough Park to replace the metal ones that are badly corroded.
- We are still winning the time game for now with the squirrels, although I think they will be hatching a plan for a winter stay.

Economic Support Officer:

CEP survey has now closed, and the participation breaks down as:

- 972 visitors to the website
- 101 total respondents
- 114 business/organisation surveys completed:
 - 87 businesses
 - 27 community/charity groups

Top Emerging Themes

1. Parking and Transport

- Frequent concerns about lack of parking for customers and residents
- Desire for improved infrastructure (e.g., cycle lanes, pedestrian zones)
- Support for sustainable travel: e-bikes, walkability

2. Business Infrastructure

- Requests for better signage, digital connectivity, and safe pavements
- Rising energy and tax costs highlighted as barriers
- Interest in popup retail and better use of riverside areas

3. Business Support Services

- Most requested support areas:
 - Marketing training (28%)
 - Fundraising (17%)
 - Business planning (14%)
- Popular suggestions:
 - Business networking fairs (38%)
 - Training workshops (33%)

4. Environment & Climate

- Concerns about sewage in the River Dart and need for water quality improvements
- Calls for improved recycling and composting (18%)
- Desire for government-backed climate adaptation measures

5. Community and Identity

- Support for local events, markets, and arts
- Emphasis on Totnes' unique independent identity and community spirit
- Balanced visions for growth while preserving local character

We have a CEP meeting next week where we will find out a bit more info on the data and what the priorities may be moving forward.

TTC now has access to the South West Visitor Economy Hub, providing us with valuable data to help inform future discussions. We can now track things such as visitor numbers in Totnes on any given day, monitor accommodation occupancy rates, and compare trends year on year. In the future, we'll also be able to access car parking data.

Civic Hall and Guildhall Activities:

Civic Hall – Activity Overview

July was an exceptionally busy month for the Civic Hall, with a broad range of events taking place. These included artisan markets, dance performances, a community choir, live theatre (hosted by a travelling company), and two major events: the South Devon Beer & Cider Festival and the highly successful Totnes Fringe. Both of these have already rebooked for 2026, demonstrating strong confidence in the venue.

Despite some operational challenges, particularly around caretaking due to the volume of events, these were effectively managed thanks to excellent teamwork.

August, as expected, has been quiet with regular hirers taking a summer break. However, bookings for September through December are looking strong, with a packed calendar anticipated.

Civic Hall – Essential Maintenance

The maintenance team has completed repairs to the Gents' toilets, enhancing their suitability for large-scale events. In addition, the electronic mechanism for the accessible toilet has been replaced with a universal manual handle, in line with those used across South Hams public toilets.

Due to the increase in bookings over the past year, the hall floor has seen significant wear. To maintain the quality of the space, the flooring company is scheduled to sand and resurface both the hall and stage floors at the end of August.

Guildhall Updates

Thanks to the wonderful volunteers, visitor numbers at the Guildhall remain consistently strong, with a slight increase over the same period last year. The "Find the Mice" activity has

been particularly popular with families and could serve as a model for similar interactive features during school holidays.

Wedding Season

The wedding season has been very positive. A total of 16 weddings have already been booked for 2025, with 5 more confirmed for 2026 – indicating sustained interest in the Guildhall as a ceremony venue.

Sector updates:

Please note: As Clerk's Reports are produced bi-monthly, sector and government updates will now be shared weekly via the Friday Members Bulletin as they come in.

National Association of Local Councils (NALC)

- Published its Annual Report 2024–25 highlighting high membership engagement and achievements such as support for neighbourhood planning and exemption from precept referenda.
- Called for direct access to central government funding and an end to double taxation for parish councils.
- Welcomed government confirmation that councils are exempt from council tax referendum principles for 2025–26.
- Confirmed the Section 137 expenditure limit for 2025–26 at £11.10 per elector.
- Advocated for greater inclusion of parish councils in local government reorganisation guidance.
- Published an updated digital edition of 'Local Councils Explained'.

Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)

- Acknowledged progress on LGR while expressing concern about parish councils being overlooked in proposals.

Local Government Association (LGA)

- Supported the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill launched in July 2025.
- Released a councillor workbook on engaging with town and parish councils.
- Published guidance on workforce planning for Local Government Reorganisation.
- Hosted webinars on supporting new councillors and reflecting on LGR experiences.
- Released an engagement toolkit for councils undergoing reorganisation.

Rural Services Network (RSN)

- Announced the National Rural Conference 2025 and continued to provide rural-focused insights for parish councils.
- Promotes sounding boards and evidence submissions from rural authorities.

Central Government

- Confirmed Local Government Reorganisation is progressing, with interim plans reviewed and £7.6 million allocated to development funding.

- All two-tier areas invited to submit reorganisation proposals with deadlines set for end of November 2025.
- Hosted webinars and published guidance for councils navigating LGR stages.
- Issued a ministerial statement reaffirming commitment to devolution and restructuring.

Correspondence Log – July to August 2025 (Redacted):

| Date | Issue Reported |
|------------|---|
| 01/07/2025 | Report of overgrown vegetation in the space between the garage, roundabout and Priory Drive. |
| 02/07/2025 | Reported fly tipping on Ramparts Walk. |
| 03/07/2025 | Report of flooding and blocked drains on Weston Lane. |
| 03/07/2025 | Cemetery Enquiry - ownership and interment of ashes request. |
| 03/07/2025 | Images of ADHC Coronation Rd Bus Shelter wall before mosaics were installed. |
| 05/07/2025 | Following two failed attempts to visit Totnes due to lack of parking, can you please let me know if you plan to create more parking, also it would be helpful not to close the main car park on a Saturday in July ! Hopefully one day I will get to visit. |
| 07/07/2025 | Looking for walking stick |
| 08/07/2025 | Following failed attempts to visit Totnes due to lack of parking, can you please let me know if you plan to create more parking also it would be helpful not to close the main car park on a Saturday in July. Hopefully one day I will get to visit. |
| 07/07/2025 | Letter of support to join '1% for the Planet' |
| 09/07/2025 | Report of amplified busker in shady garden who won't move on. |
| 09/07/2025 | <p>Hello, I work in REDACTED opposite the church on the High Street. Every single afternoon the same busker sets up and plays amplified music and sings loudly over this. Can I ask if he is permitted to do this every single day? with amplification? its too loud to work and it is every single afternoon. I would like to suggest that this level of volume and repetition is a nuisance, other buskers come and go but this person persists, every day. Is there anything you can do to help?</p> |
| 11/07/2025 | <p>I am a resident on the high street of Totnes and in the past few months it is becoming increasingly difficult with daily and sometimes even before 9am buskers setting up and playing with amplified speakers.</p> <p>As much as I enjoy and appreciate the vibrance of the high street these buskers have made it somewhat their residence to setup and play for hours almost every day of the week.</p> <p>Not only that but also occupy significant business parking space which causes accessibility issues.</p> <p>Please, can you look into this as it is becoming unbearable for us living and working from home.</p> <p>I am not trying to stop the beauty of the high street with vibrant color and music but we can't have two buskers taking over and making it difficult for residence, business and for those working from home who have to shut windows trying to block out the sound.</p> |

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| 11/07/2025 | Food security and resilience. |
| 20/07/2025 | <p>I enjoyed an amazing day in town on Saturday. All kinds of music and creativity, like the Brutus celebrations and the wandering mummers and morris sides, and felt the sense of community I love about living here. It was marred, as things usually are, by the onslaught of traffic barging through the pedestrians. It was hideous and scary and stressful for all who wanted to enjoy the flavour of the high street. It feels such a bad oversight for an apparently 'green' and progressive town.</p> <p>I know the issue is ongoing and hard to resolve but I wanted to raise it again. The high street is not safe, especially on a Friday and Saturday. We're not even in full summer season and yet the pavements are four deep with pedestrians...</p> <p>The traders are surely able to see business would be multiplied by pedestrianising for at least on a Saturdays.....</p> <p>Would it be possible to point me in the direction of an update on the situation, and/or raise it in the council meeting?</p> |
| 21/07/2025 | Report of graffiti on the wall at the Eastgate and Church Close. |
| 21/07/2025 | Request for Vehicle activated signs telling drivers the speed they are travelling at. |
| 21/07/2025 | Author Enquiry about events in the areas where he can promote his book. |
| 21/07/2025 | Report of pigeon poo regularly building up on Church Close causing a slip hazard. |
| 22/07/2025 | <p>Appreciations for your work in the good town of Totnes.</p> <p>I'm wondering whether Totnes is a Pesticidefree town in accord with the Pesticide Action Network . I got to wondering when I recently read of the increased use of "Round up " in this country despite increasing research findings of it's carcinogenic properties.</p> <p>And the other sign up I'm wondering about is to the Plant Based Treaty ... which I understand cities like Edinburgh have endorsed. I'm looking to whatever we can collectively do to move towards ways of living that are sustainable and seek a healthy future.</p> |
| 22/07/2025 | cemetery enquiry - location of grave |
| 23/07/2025 | <p>I am writing as a concerned resident of Totnes, to request the installation of a zebra crossing on the road by Health nursery car park specifically on the part of the road that is needed to be crossed to walk between the town centre to get to Leechwell Gardens, very close to The Grove Primary School.</p> <p>This road is frequently used by families, schoolchildren, and park visitors, making it a particularly busy thoroughfare—especially during school drop-off and pick-up times. Currently, there is no safe designated crossing point, which makes it challenging for children and parents to cross safely. I have witnessed on several occasions children and families struggling to cross, and I am increasingly concerned for our safety.</p> <p>A zebra crossing would provide a much safer route for all pedestrians, encourage walking to school and the park, and help calm traffic in the area. I believe this addition would be a significant benefit to the whole community.</p> <p>Please see attached the picture indicated the area of road that requires a zebra crossing and also a screenshot of google maps showing the locaition.</p> <p>My understanding from the Devon Council Council website (https://www.devon.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/safe-travel/road-</p> |

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| | <p>safety/safer-people/pedestrians/) is that "request for Crossings are generally made by organisations such as Parish, Town or City Councils, Councillors or Schools". This is why I am asking for your support in this. I have spoken to many families about this and many people share this view (if we needed to organise a petition for this, I'm sure we would be able to get a large number of signatures).</p> <p>I kindly ask the council to carry out a safety assessment of this location and to request that Devon Council install a zebra crossing as soon as practicable. Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I look forward to your response.</p> |
| 24/07/2025 | <p>Yesterday I caught Gold bus in the afternoon with my daughter Catherine white to go to Green life for medical purposes and Mountain warehouse so we walked up from Elmhirst flats So many cars dogs I felt not at ease at all We walked down priory avenue then I started with a bad flash light migraine could not walk straight scary Fortunately I took take refuge in our hospital lying on the stretcher by the sunflower mural inside twenty minutes until I felt rather better</p> <p>Where are the no smoking signs in the bus shelters which our mayor Cllr Tim Bennet promised?</p> <p>Litter bins have Bern removed on the Manor House side? Litter unhygienic over the place Please can we have proper litter bins as on opposite side two benches Asp Now I cannot go into our town alone until September as there are too many cars allowed up the street Too many visitors Sadly Totnes has become the most hazardous town for disabled people in summer months South Brent and Ashburton are safer Sad sad Not Joyful</p> |
| 25/07/2025 | Enquiry by a busker to see if they need a licence to busk in town. |
| 25/07/2025 | Request via email on the 2nd July from new businesses owner REDACTED who has a REDACTED in the Narrows, to fit a sign or banner somewhere around the Barrelhouse directing people to the Narrows. REDACTED and the other independent business owners feel that people are not aware of them up there and turn around before getting to their area of town. |
| 26/07/2025 | <p>VT Facebook post - It was all sunny skies and bunting this morning</p> <p>Comment - The road is too narrow for any traffic anc most of the visitors are old people. They should ban all vehicles traffit to High Street on Friday and Saturday from morning to afternoon.</p> |
| 28/07/2025 | ASB in the Tennis Club garden maintained by Lifeworks - plant damage and theft, graffiti on tables, small fires |
| 28/07/2025 | Litter |
| 28/07/2025 | Calls (2) about donating a metal fireman's helmet to the Museum and opening times for the museum |
| 28/07/2025 | Litter |
| 28/07/2025 | Email re Local Plan Review and dates, TTC inputs. |
| 29/07/2025 | Email to DHA about fees collected from cruise ship visits to fund local projects. |
| 29/07/2025 | Litter and Bin Arson |
| 30/07/2025 | Im writing to express my disappointment at the state of the play park at Pavillions in Totnes. We visit on many occasions when visiting the rate breeds farm and its not great. However today the see saw is broken and left in a |

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| | dangerous state. trips hazards on the floor can cause children and adults to fall on to the metal uprights. The hazard tape does not mitigate the hazard. |
| 30/07/2025 | Request for advice on signage to warn mobility scooter users of hazards of narrow pavements nr Eastgate. |
| 31/07/2025 | Discussion about request for extension to Fishcheater's Lane on the DWT land. |
| 01/08/2025 | |
| 04/08/2025 | There's a dangerous building opposite where I live at REDACTED. It's the malt mill that presently has a plank of wood hanging off it that'll fall at any moment. I reported it to the police and building control. I have had no response from building control |
| 04/08/2025 | Concern over the orchard space in Dartington which has had some tree cutting take place. Additional concern over the amount of traffic now using the shop at Dartington. |
| 04/08/2025 | Request for patch of land at Moorashes to be mown |
| 04/08/2025 | Request for additional mowing at Castle Meadow due to brambles and weeds near the boundary which is growing over people's fences. Additional request to reinstate the water trough due to it being a habitat for newts. |
| 04/08/2025 | I am writing to let you know I used toilets in totnes by the crossing to main road to Morrisons on sat 2nd when I came out there were lots of people traffic so I turned right and tripped on tiny pavement as I thought fell onto loose gravel hurt my hands and my breast lots of people saw this and someone tried to help me stand |
| 05/08/2025 | Concern over planning permission for Palestinian flag flying unofficially in the High Street. |
| 05/08/2025 | Request to purchase small parcel of land behind their house. |
| 05/08/2025 | Confirmation of Change of name from Food For Children Totnes CIC to Food For Children Devon CIC |
| 05/08/2025 | Myself and a friend who owns a shop in The Narrows have been thinking of organising a late night shopping event on a couple of Thursdays in November to highlight the businesses in The Narrows, as well as running a market to bring in other small local businesses. So far we have spoken to 6 other shop owners who are all very enthusiastic about the idea, as they feel they don't benefit quite so much from the Tuesday late nights as businesses further down the high street. We were wondering if there would be any possibility of closing the section of road from The Barrell House so we would be able to have sellers in the road. |
| 06/08/2025 | I am writing to report my concerns over the use of longmarsh intertidal saltmarsh. I have noticed alot of damage recently since the duckboard was fixed (brilliant job by the way) from dog walkers allowing dogs to roam freely through the sedges causing significant damage to the rare plant species which are found. I would also like to raise concern as today (06/08/2025) there was a large commercial photo shoot of around 10 people using the salt marsh for a clothing photo shoot, they were stepping off the duckboard and causing a large amount of damage to the vegetarian and rare plants. Signage at the minimum is required to educate these people as it would be sad to close it off but maybe fencing is required too as it would be such a shame to loose what is a severely important but rare habitat due to public misuse. |

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| 06/08/2025 | As the curatorial team of an international exhibition on urban climate transformation, we are writing to request your support for our research project on climate activities in Totnes. |
| 08/08/2025 | email to concillors regarding concerns over the lack of busses in the Bridgetown area. |
| 11/08/2025 | Please could I suggest making Totnes highstreet traffic free between say 10am and 4pm, to make it a more pleasant space for pedestrians and cyclists. I think this would enable a more enjoyable and healthy town centre. |
| 11/08/2025 | Report of broken bench on Vire Island |
| 14/08/2025 | Filming in Totnes |
| 14/08/2025 | TTC response to proposed Civic Square works |
| 15/08/2025 | ASB in the Tennis Club garden maintained by Lifeworks - N2O packaging left on table covered in graffiti |
| 15/08/2025 | Report of antisocial behaviour and loud noise on KEVICC field. |
| 18/08/2025 | Enquiry about event at Civic Hall |
| 18/08/2025 | needed a phone number for a taxi firm |
| 18/08/2025 | There is a Palestinian flag flying on a pole in South Street. This is extremely offensive to Jews and anyone who opposes Islamic terrorists. Please ensure that it is removed. |
| 19/08/2025 | Request for Household support fund information. |
| 21/08/2025 | The current Big Issue seller is busking with an amplifier at the Fore St end of Bank Lane. Personally I hate buskers using amplification to dominate the street and grab attention, and he in particular is painfully loud. |
| 21/08/2025 | Cemetery Enquiry |
| 22/08/2025 | Housing benefit enquiry |

Summary of Recurring Correspondence Themes (July–August 2025)

| Theme | Frequency | Typical Issues Reported |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|---|
| Environmental Maintenance | High | Overgrown vegetation, uncut grass, encroaching brambles, dead trees |
| Waste & Cleansing | High | Overflowing bins, missed collections, dog fouling, graffiti |
| Highways and Infrastructure | Moderate | Blocked drains, damaged pavements, unlit lights, signage problems, potholes |
| Parking | Moderate | Concerns over on-street parking, misuse of disabled bays, lack of enforcement |
| Bus Shelter / Public Furniture | Moderate | Damage, graffiti, cleaning needs on shelters and benches |
| Anti-social Behaviour | Moderate | Drinking in parks, drug litter, fire risk in green spaces, noise complaints |
| Cemetery and Burial Enquiries | Low | Plot location, maintenance concerns, ownership clarification |