

March - April 2026 Clerks Report

Full Council – 13th April 2026

Meetings and training attended (excluding weekly staff and management meetings, weekly meetings with the Mayor, and monthly team meetings):

During February and March probation review and annual appraisal meetings were held for all staff

February

2 – Totnes Cluster meeting with Parish Clerks
2 – Meeting with DCF on the Community Audit and a briefing for members
2 – Full Council
3 – Meeting with SHDC Head of Assets and Kayleigh about asset management and markets
4 – Meeting with member and SHDC on LGR and asset transfers
5 – Meeting with Museum Trust
5 – Asset Management Trainin
9 – Meeting with the Town Sargeant
9 – Council Matters
10 – Community Working Group
11 – DALC meeting and DALC LGR Steering Group Meeting
11 – Meeting ref Guildhall Cottage
13 – Meeting with Tavistock Clerk
15 – Civic Service and Reception
17 – Devon Records Office
18-19 Annual Leave
23 – Community Audit Meeting
24- Copilot Training

25 – South Hams Cluster (Kingsbridge, Ivybridge, Salcombe and Dartmouth)
25 – All Councillor evening session
26 – SLCC Larger Councils Meeting in Okehampton
26 – Meeting with Tozers, Exeter
27 – Communications Strategy briefing with all members

March

2 – Full Council
3 – Meeting with Resilient Lives
3 – SHDC Meeting on Market management
4 – Heritage Group Meeting
5 – Lantern Procession Meeting
5 – Devolution Working Group
9 – Council Matters
12 – Town Team
16 – Site meeting with contractor Christmas Lights/projection
17 – Community Audit Meeting with DCF
17 – Evening Cluster of Totnes and parishes in the Guildhall
19 – Meeting with Museum Trust
19 – SHDC Briefing Asst Transfer Policy
20 – Meeting with SHDC Garage Ownership
23 – RMTG Meeting
25 onwards – medical leave

Clerk General updates not covered elsewhere:

Apologies for the shorter than usual update. Following a surgery on 25th March I hope to be back to work on Monday 20th April. Big thank you to the team, particularly Sara and Christina for covering in my absence.

- Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)Our submission to MHCLG on the LGR response was submitted in consultation with the Devolution Working Group and then all members by email.
- Community Audit is being considered at Full Council on Monday 13th, along with a policy to cover small grants from the Economy, Environment and Community budgets as discussed by Council Matters. There is some urgency to decide how to progress larger strategic funding and a Community Working Group is scheduled for Tuesday 14th April at 6pm via Teams.
- Garage Ownership – new offer has been tabled that potentially supersedes the original decision of Full Council which will be discussed in confidential session.

- Asset management. Lots going on with Christmas taking over the overview in this from me and working closely with the Paul to move things forward due to capacity constraints. Further updates to follow.
- Upcoming meetings and training. Few things coming up. Cllr Bennett and I are presenting at a DALC connect session on the benefits and types of clustering, particularly in view of LGR. I am booked to go to the NALC Annual Conference and hope to speak to other areas that have already been through LGR to gain some insight.
- Please note that the many sector updates and future dates are now coming out via the weekly Members Bulletin and will no longer feature in the Clerk's Report.
- Please note the Clerks Report is usually every two months, with the next report due in June 2026.

Governance and Projects Manager:

Public Realm:

- 'Town Team' collaborative working meetings with South Hams District Council (SHDC) and Devon Highways are continuing on a bi-monthly basis. Recent items such as bollards (replaced in Ticklemore Street), resurfacing of potholes on The Plains and Bridgetown Hill, praise for improvements to the street cleaning in the town and regular use of the mechanical sweeper, ongoing safety issues with the Civic Square surface have been discussed.
- Vire Island – the Environment and Public Realm Working Group has suggested the removal of laurel on Vire Island. SHDC will remove the central section and replant with more wildlife-friendly species in Autumn 2026.

Environment and Public Realm Working Group – two members had a site visit to the cemetery to look at the wild areas, general maintenance and the chapel building.

Emergency Plan – a draft public-facing went to the Town Matters Committee for consideration in March. The officer attended the Devon Community Resilience Forum event on 26th March which will help inform the writing of the more detailed operational Emergency Plan for Council officer and member use.

Christmas Lights – all lights have been returned to the Town Council. Projection - two meetings on site with potential providers who have been asked to quote for the service on The Mansion and other potential locations . Quotes requested for the 2026 install and options for projection onto buildings which will go to the Community Working Group in April. Officers received training on 18 Mar on how to use the Twinkly Lights in the trees on The Plains, which has great potential for future events in the town (for example, inbound Vire visits, Remembrance Day).

Neighbourhood Plan Health Check – the report has been received from IPE, with a meeting date set for 15th April. A quote has been requested from IPE to be able to address the additional points that Cllrs have on the broader points linked to the Neighbourhood Plan.

Governance – Prior to Full Council in February, training to Councillors about information security, safe AI use, data protection and retention. Officers have completed data protection and information security training.

Council Grants – continue to chase tow community groups who received funding in 2025 who have yet to submit a report.

Cemetery - there have been three interments in Feb and Mar, with the usual enquiries about purchasing plots, deed transfers, memorial applications, and locating graves. The Town Maintenance Team have carried out: maintenance on all benches in the cemetery (with the owner contacted where know) and installed a new bench; and the removal of trees, plants and shrubs on graves following a notice period for plot owners asking them to remove any decorative items and/or planting.

Strategic Plan Delivery Objectives – updated on a monthly basis with inputs from colleagues so that these can be used by the Working Groups. A quarterly report will be produced for Full Council with the first due in June.

Staff appraisal completed.

Economy

CEP

The CEP results of the survey that were filled out by businesses in Totnes are now available for people to view. Some of the main topic that emerged from the survey were:

- Marketing and business development
- Business Forum
- Digital Connectivity
- Traffic & transport – improving access for those walking, wheeling and cycling.
- Business Waste
- Local procurememt.

Many of the projects that have been highlighted have already taken on by our working groups and forums at TTC.

Business Forum

The Totnes Business Forum is in the first stages of being set up by Dean Leybourn (Tempt Chocolate) and Steve Beety (Western Salerooms) The EWG awarded The Totnes Business Forum with £2000 to help with setting up costs including a new website, branding, and social media. The group are applying to become a CIC and hoping to hold an official launch to all businesses at the beginning of May.

The Narrows

Kayleigh hosted a coffee and pastry morning with businesses form the Narrows in March, with a good turn out from several businesses in that part of town. Topics of discussion included Christmas Lights, utilising the Rotherfold as an entertainment space and signage for the area. The businesses came across as keen to work with the town council and have since started supplying us with information to help populate the Visit Totnes website which they feel is valuable for their business.

Totnes Tourism Summary

We have received the 2024 Totnes Tourism Summary 2024, produced by the South West Research Company.

Here are the headline figures from the report:

- 29,000 staying visitor trips
- 472,000 day visits
- £33.5 million direct visitor spend
- £34.2 million total visitor related spend
- 510 actual jobs supported by visitor related spend

Town Maintenance Officer:

Continuing to chip away at the to do list and have changed the layout of that list due to the large number of more complex projects requiring to be done. The smaller 1 day urgent/ non urgent tasks remain on the jobs list and the larger projects are now listed under the tabs on the same excel page that identify each asset. These are for larger projects only so that will hopefully collate the jobs together to help with efficiencies and costs. Especially when hiring equipment.

Completed works:

- Annual PAT testing
- More waste has been cleared using another 6 yard skip. That is now all the assets cleared of waste and will allow us to now dispose of smaller quantities on a more regular basis. This will save accumulations of waste now.

Follaton Cemetery is looking good now, but still lots to do:

- All the benches are now refurbished and back in position. Neil and Carl have done a sterling job.
- We are managing the brambles in many areas but leaving many areas around to grow wild for biodiversity.
- All the highlighted trees on the last Tree Risk Assessment have now had the identified work done.
- Sara has confirmed that the SHDC mini sweeper will do a couple of sweeps annually.
- Treewise have proven to be a great, and have not only cut the grass, but have extended their work to remove and coppice the trees and trimmed the bottom hedge to start getting to a manageable height.

Planned works:

- Continuous management of the brambles. Especially where covering graves and for H and S concerns.
- Prep and painting the main gates
- Look into repairing the Chapel limestone window above the entrance door and limestone cornice around the door. This isn't imminent due to more urgent works on other assets.
- Repairing the tarmac road potholes leading down to the turning circle.
- Severing of Ivy on all the trees to allow visual Risk Inspections to be carried out.

Guildhall Wall - Listed building consent applied for and awaiting the application being granted. New quotations now required due to the significant change in the works required – waiting on specialist work specification to start this.

Planned works around the Guildhall include redecoration of the exterior of the Guildhall, Guildhall Cottage, and the Guildhall Offices. This will include any minor repairs mainly to rotten wood, cast iron gutter leaks, cast iron soil/vent pipes being repaired and the plastic one in the courtyard being changed for a cast iron one to match the rest. Advice being sought from the Conservation Officer in advance.

Guildhall Cottage- Building survey now completed and awaiting the report. Works currently on hold.

Civic Hall and Birdwood Hs:

- Cllr Peters and myself carried out a walking assessment of works required to bring parts of the building to a higher standard, prevent rain water ingress, external repairs to the gable end brickwork on the Public Toilet end of the building, window repairs in main hall, roof repairs on Birdwood and the Green room, masonry repairs, gutter repairs along the full length of building front and back, woodworm and beetle attack in Birdwood House flooring joists and stud walls, replacement of effected wood, gents toilet refurb after damp/ water ingress and increase number of cubicles, continuation of fire door upgrades. Specialist advice will be sought on the listed sections.
- Our main focus will be stopping water ingress and repair of the brickwork on the Civic Hall.
- We have received two quotations to replace the entrance doors at the top of the steps (which are rotting) to match the ramp as per previous decision of members. Planning consent runs out in May.

Castle Meadow:

- Continual repairs of the hedge row between the meadow and the castle grounds. Bramble clearance and tidy still ongoing and larger tree branches will be used fill in hedge gaps for brambles to cover and to also create bug and hedgehog hotels. The brambles lost from our clearance are being encouraged to grow in the vandalised hedges to create natural security and blackberries for birds and people to forage. The idea is to create an open visible space so any ASB will be seen and reported by residents to the police.
- Grass will be cut 1/04/26 subject to weather which is why its currently late.
- Grafitti sprayed onto a neighbours wall was cleared promptly by Carl even though it isn't ours (they asked).

Civic Square- Although not ours, we keep reporting the poor and unsafe state of the surface which is littered with trip hazards due to uneven surfaces and missing bricks. Have asked for some temporary emergency repairs to mitigate the trip hazards. We continue to chase this with SHDC.

Civic Hall and Guildhall Activities:

Civic Hall

Community Bookings

The Civic Hall continues to provide a valuable space for a range of community groups. Regular weekly bookings take place on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, with three groups scheduled on both Mondays and Wednesdays. Caretaking needs careful coordination, but the

arrangements are working well, as all groups have rebooked for the summer term. A Youth Theatre Collective meeting on Mondays is proving particularly popular with younger participants.

Commercial Bookings

The Hall recently hosted a live music event which was nearly sold out, with nearly 500 people. The band Stornoway used the venue as a dress rehearsal ahead of their performance at the Royal Albert Hall the following evening. A further seven large-scale music events are scheduled, with the next being *Hejira – Celebrating Joni Mitchell* in May.

Guildhall

Facilities Improvements

The installation of the new stair carpet, complete with brass stair rods, has now been completed and has significantly enhanced the building's appearance.

Wedding Bookings

Wedding bookings continue to show steady growth, with 17 ceremonies confirmed for 2026 and a further provisional booking awaiting confirmation. This builds on strong figures from previous years: 18 weddings in 2025, 14 in 2024, and 9 in 2023.

Volunteering and Community Engagement

A successful coffee morning was held with Guildhall volunteers, all of whom have confirmed their return for the upcoming season—an excellent outcome! There is also potential to develop partnerships with Lifeworks and Totnes Independent School, both of which have expressed interest in establishing regular volunteering opportunities for students. All student volunteers would be supported by a responsible adult.

Opening Arrangements

The Guildhall will be open from 1 April, operating between 11:00am and 3:00pm, Monday to Friday, excluding Bank Holidays and occasional closures for weddings, audits, and Mayor Making.

Marketing and Communications:

SOCIAL MEDIA – Stats last 90 days [8 Jan – 24 March 2026]

Visit Totnes

Facebook

Views - 267,285 (down 11.9% from Christmas period)

Interactions - 3,698 (up 3.5% from Christmas period)

Follows – 319 (down 14.7% from Christmas period)

Link Clicks – 231 (down 81.7% from Christmas period)

As our socials historically peak at Christmas, these are good stats as the drop isn't very low.

Compared to the stats from the same time period in 2025 Visit Totnes had 199,878 organic views – so there is a 33.7% increase in organic - but they also had 173,195 in additional *paid*

advertising views [total organic + paid views - 373,073].

If we had capacity, we could try paid to local places such as Plymouth, Dartmouth, Exeter etc, as well as targeting locations further afield such as Bournemouth, Bath, Bristol, Swindon, Edinburgh so as to gauge interest for campaigns targeting to long-stays instead of purely day-trippers.

Note the drop in link clicks – this is because (a) Less people checking the site for Christmas info (b) We have less capacity to create website articles driving people to the site and (c) The website currently needs a large investment of time to bring it up to spec – planned for later in the year.

Visit Totnes

Instagram

Organic views 86,926; 76 clicks to website links; 164 follows.

We can only view 3-month reports on Instagram. Views etc are down from the Christmas period, but this is to be expected.

Totnes Town Council

Facebook

Views 137,495 (down 43.6% from the Christmas period)

Interactions – 1109 (down 34.3% from the Christmas period)

Follows – 78 (down 56.2% from the Christmas period)

Link Clicks – 336 (down 36.4% from the Christmas period)

Although the stats are down compared to the Christmas period, when our socials peak annually, there is a marked difference compared to the same period in 2025:

Views 2025: 27,848 – **Views 2026:** 393.7% Increase; **Interactions 2025:** 257 – **Interactions 2026:** 688.3% increase; **Follows 2025:** 26 – **Follows 2026:** 200% increase; **Link clicks 2025:** 124 – **Follows 2026:** 171% increase.

Totnes Town Council

Instagram

Organic views 15,618; 14 clicks to website links; 32 follows.

As expected, views etc are down from the Christmas period, and Instagram doesn't allow us to do a year-on-year comparison.

WEBSITE VISITORS

Users on our sites between 11th October – 8th Jan

Totnes Town Council - 11,485

Visit Totnes - 101,298

SUMMARY

In conclusion, our social accounts remain in good health, with Totnes Town Council particularly benefitting from an increase in community-led news content. Negative comments

have ceased, and we even recently received praise for sharing more stories about the charitable organisations we support.

Wider activity - especially campaigns aimed at driving growth for Visit Totnes - has been limited, which may have longer-term repercussions for tourism and economic development. However, we are continuing to maintain momentum on our social channels, allowing us to hold our position for now.

Correspondence Log – (Redacted):

Date	email/phone/ in person	Details	Response
02/02/2026	email	Enquiry about the street lighting on Maudlin road which is very bright.	Referred to DCC report a problem page.
03/02/2026	email	Cemetery Enquiry - locating graves	Information provided
03/02/2026	TTC report to Police	Reported antisocial behaviour at the Guildhall	Police will increase patrols
04/02/2026	Facebook	Enquiry about whether the Town dress as Elizabethan's still.	Given times of Elizabethan market and informed shopkeepers no longer dress up.
04/02/2026	email	-	Email sent to DCllr Birch about planning application 1926/25/FUL Morrisons Garage.
05/02/2026	email	-	Full Council action - email to CCllr Hodgson re Community Protocol comments
05/02/2026	email	-	Full Council action - email to SHDC re bin and benches comments
05/02/2026	email	-	Full Council action - email to SHDC re priorities for investment in Borough Park
05/02/2026	email	-	Full Council action - response to DCC on future of Devon Libraries consultation
11/02/2026	email	Information on how to become a councillor and when the next elections will be held.	Information provided.
11/02/2026	email	Report of fallen tree on Sharpham Footpath preventing the Saturday Morning Parkruns to take place. Request for support to speed up process at DCC	Sent to Cllr Hodgson and Cllr Bennett and added TTC to the reporting tool
11/02/2026	DCC Reporting Tool	TTC reported fallen tree on Sharpham Footpath.	Devon Highways - Report - W261948294
11/02/2026	In person	Report of fire spinners playing loud music until late at the Market Square.	Informed Neighbourhood Police to ask for additional patrols.
13/02/2026	email	-	Request to The Mansion to project onto the front of the building as part of the festive lighting offer.
13/02/2026	email	Enquiry about grant funding for Hello Summer activities	reply set out that Council grants process is currently under review.
16/02/2026	email	Ancestry enquiry/research	Relevant burial records provided
17/02/2026	Phone	Report of large tree and metal debris stuck at Totnes Bridge.	Referred to the Harbour Master

19/02/2026	email	Enquiry about TTC's commitment to plant-based food system in order to promote food security and climate change.	Informed this will be taken to Town Matters
24/02/2026	email	Overcrowding of plants in the planter outside the Guildhall.	Replied to say that we are aware and options being considered.
24/02/2026	post	Concern over rubbish collection, weeds and a request to have another supermarket on the old Dairy Crest site.	No address to send reply.
24/02/2026	email	Enquiry about parking for a visitor to Totnes.	Information provided.
24/02/2026	email	Request for a list of local groups and societies.	Shared names of organisations on our VCSE list (without email addresses for GDPR reasons) and directed to Totnes Caring website with a list of all local services.
26/02/2026	email	Follow up email requesting a sign saying Dogs on Lead in Castle Meadow.	
26/02/2026	emails	Local funeral directors sent revised cemetery fees for 2026.	
26/02/2026	email	Objection to Morrisons Garage alcohol license 24 hours a day.	
02/03/2026	email	Christmas Market enquiry	Advised to keep an eye on the TTC and Miss Ivy websites.
03/03/2026	email	MoP who wanted to say thank you to the maintenance team who have done a great job refurbishing the benches in the cemetery.	
03/03/2026	phone	Enquiry about cutting back a tree overhanging a property.	Advised to contact SHDC to see if the tree has a TPO.
03/03/2026	letter	Report of pothole damage to a car. Sent to DCC with TTC copied in.	Filed
04/03/2026	email	Concern over the decline of primroses in the cemetery possibly as a result of too much cutting in the past.	Replied to say that the wildflowers are not mown over as part of the routine maintenance programme until the flowers have faded and set seed.
04/03/2026	email	Plant overcrowding in planter outside the Council Offices	Replied to suggest that the donated shrubs are returned to the member of the public, and this was actioned by Town Maintenance team.
04/03/2026	email	Objection to Morrisons Garage alcohol license	
05/03/2026	email	Copy of letter from MP regarding objection to Morrisons garage alcohol license.	
06/03/2026	email	Hedge Cutting in the cemetery	All hedges have been maintained as per contract in 2025/26.

09/03/2026	In person	Enquiry about the sound system TTC uses for voice projection particularly for those who have hearing impairments.	Informed of the type of system we use at the Guildhall and the Civic Hall.
09/03/2026	email	Enquiry about the boundary fence for Castle Meadow for a resident whose garden backs on to it.	Replied to say that the matter will be considered by Council and will go back to them after FC in April.
09/03/2026	email	Enquiry from South Brent Parish Council about Christmas lights installer options.	Details provided of options that TTC has approached and used.
10/03/2026	phone	Tourism Enquiry - Bus routes from Totnes for coastal path walking	Advice given and directed to Travel Devon Website
10/03/2026	email	Cemetery Enquiry - locating graves	Information provided.
12/03/2026	email	-	TTC LGR consultation response submitted.
12/03/2026	phone	Enquiry on halls available to rent for the Air Cadets.	Information (dated) provided.
12/03/2025	phone	Enquiry about building materials and chemical safety in Totnes Homes	Directed to Building control.
13/03/2026	Phone	Tourism Enquiry - Walking Route Options	Directed to Musgrave Trail, Dartington and Ashprington
13/03/2026	phone	Parent reporting a compost bin emptied into children's play equipment at a Bridgetown park.	Directed to the online reporting tool at SHDC
16/03/2026	email	Follow up enquiry about Traffic on the High Street	Directed to the two councillors working on the High Street Project group.
17/03/2026	email	-	TTC comments on pavement licence for 'Butterwalk'
17/03/2026	email	-	TTC comments on the Harberton Neighbourhood Plan submitted.
17/03/2026	email	Deed of Grant transfer	Information and advice provided along with template documents.
18/03/2026	phone	SHDC informing us that potholes on plains will be repaired as a high priority.	
18/03/2026	email	DCllr Birch question about bike rack co-operation with SHDC.	Email trail provided to show that we have been engaged in finding a location acceptable to both councils.
19/03/2026	phone	Enquiry about the mechanism in Town Mill.	Unable to help.
19/03/2026	email	-	Email to SHDC Neighbourhood Plan with questions following a presentation to Cllrs and officers.
19/03/2026	email	Report of Graffiti on the wall by Castle Meadow	Town Maintenance Team have removed the graffiti.

23/03/2026	email	-	Traffic and Transport Forum Chair emailed with a request for an update on the vehicle activated sign project to go to the next Steering Group
23/03/2026	phone	Report of a damaged car tyre incurred in the cemetery	Information requested to be able to consider the claim.
23/03/2026	email	Question on new public bins and lack of space for commercial bins on the High Street/Castle St corner.	Replied to say the Town Planter is due for removal. This was actioned 25/03/26.
24/03/2026	email	Resident near Castle Meadow reported loud music and fire until 10:30pm	Clerk reported to police. TMOs will check the meadow.
25/03/2026	email	Enquiry regarding luggage storage in town.	Informed this facility is not available.
27/03/2026	phone	Tourism Enquiry: Bus from Totnes to Salcombe	emailed correct timetable.
27/03/2026	email	Enquiry about Morris dancing in public spaces.	Informed the land is an SHDC asset but it might also be worth noting the busking code of practice.
30/03/2026	email	Problems with the pay by phone car park app	Referred to SHDC
31/03/2026	email	Request to use council land for a gathering of 50 people.	Referred to SHDC