



## MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL

MONDAY 5<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2026 IN THE GUILDHALL

Present: Councillors T Bennett (Chair), L Auletta, C Beavis, S Collinson, T Cooper, J Cummings, J Hodgson, D Peters, A Presswell, N Roberts, T Robshaw, L Smallridge and M Trant.

Apologies: Cllrs Chinnock, Hannam and Price, and District Cllr Allen.

In Attendance: District Councillor Birch, C Marlton (Town Clerk) and P Bethel (Town Sergeant).

1. WELCOME TO ALL ATTENDING AND OBSERVING

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

**To receive apologies and to confirm that any absence has the approval of the Council. The Mayor will request confirmation that all Members have completed or made any necessary amendments to their Declaration of Interests.**

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the apologies. There were no amendments to Declarations of Interest. Cllr Bennett declared an interest reference item 10 as one of the creators of the Pegasus sculpture is his employer.

***The Committee will adjourn for the following items:***

**Reports from County and District Councillors.**

- a. County Cllr Hodgson
- b. District Cllr Allen
- c. District Cllr Birch
- d. District Cllr Presswell

*It was **RESOLVED** to suspend standing orders.*

a. County Cllr (C Cllr) Hodgson had not submitted a report and gave a verbal update on: an update on Local Government Reform is expected in March 2026; pedestrian safety in icy weather including snow wardens and a proposal for Devon County Council (DCC) to inspect grit bins in October; promotion of fostering; and the financial settlement at DCC.

b. District Cllr Allen had not submitted a report and was not present.

c. District Cllr Birch (DCllr) had submitted a report. Cllrs asked questions on: the upgrade to the public toilets, specifically arrangements during the Civic Square toilets closure; the former Dairy Crest site; the Pavilion leisure centre; the caravan on the verge near the roundabout; and the Climate National Emergency Briefing motion at South Hams District Council (SHDC) set out in DCllr Birch's

report which Cllrs ask goes to the Town Matters Committee for consideration.

d. District Cllr Presswell had not submitted a report and gave a verbal update on: an extension to the Longmarsh boardwalk to make it wheelchair accessible; working with Bridgetown Alive! on Cat Bike locations at the top of Bridgetown; and a GWR grant opportunity. Cllrs asked about the effectiveness of the SHDC process for out of hours assistance for homeless people in extreme cold weather, which DCllr Presswell will investigate and update with the necessary information for the Town Council to share publicly.

*The Council reconvened.*

### 3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

**To approve and sign the minutes of the following Meeting:**

***(Please note confidential minutes can be agreed but any discussion must be held in the Confidential session)***

#### a. Full Council 1<sup>st</sup> December 2025.

It was **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve and sign the minutes.

**To note the following minutes:**

#### b. Council Matters Committee 8<sup>th</sup> December 2025.

Noted.

#### c. Planning Committee 15<sup>th</sup> December 2025.

Noted.

### 4. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTERS ARISING

**To consider any matters arising from the Minutes and to approve any recommendations from Committees:**

***(Please note confidential minutes can be agreed but any discussion must be held in the Confidential session)***

#### a. Full Council 1<sup>st</sup> December 2025.

No matters arising.

#### b. Council Matters Committee 8<sup>th</sup> December 2025

Item 5. Draft 2026/27 Budget. These were considered under items 8 and 9 on the agenda.

Item 6. Payments to Councillors Policy. It was **RESOLVED** that the revised Payments to Councillors Policy is adopted.

#### c. Planning Committee 15<sup>th</sup> December 2025

Item 6. Torbay Local Plan 2025-2045 – Regulation 18 Draft Plan Consultation. It was **RESOLVED** that the Council responds to the Torbay Local Plan 2025-45 Regulation 18 Draft Plan Consultation with the following comments:

- Policy TA2. No reference is made about the impact of traffic and congestion caused by vehicles coming out of Torbay through adjoining settlements. Whilst the route northwards towards Newton Abbot and Exeter has had significant investment to improve capacity, this is not the case with the southern route towards Plymouth. The impact on Totnes is already substantial with

junctions beyond capacity during rush hours. Altered driver behaviour results in vehicles increasingly taking routes through the town to avoid congestion on the A385. Investment in this route is required to mitigate these effects and to improve economic outcomes for Torbay.

- Page 173 paragraph 6.7 – there is no mention of improvements beyond the Torbay boundary, but the impact of traffic will extend beyond the bay area.
- Acknowledge that Torbay is an employment hub for the area.
- Torbay has important wildlife corridors that link to the River Dart and Totnes which the plan should be mindful of retaining to best preserve biodiversity in the region.
- Would refer you to the 2018 South Hams District Council Landscape Character Assessment and the importance of green spaces between communities on the outer regions of the bay area.

Item 8. Totnes Neighbourhood Plan Review. It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a. The Council proceeds with the commissioning of the health check; and
- b. A named consultant is used (Intelligent Plans and Examinations) rather than going to tender and as such seeks Full Council approval for this appointment as a provider of a specialist service and as an agreed exemption to Financial Regulations.
- c. As well as the health check, advice on these specific questions is included: principle residence policy; licencing of holiday rental properties; feed in of potential site allocations from South Hams District Council Local Plan; and extension of the national landscape area up the River Dart to include Totnes (proposed to Buckfastleigh).
- d. The Landscape Character Assessment and Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan are provided to be viewed alongside the Totnes Neighbourhood Plan.

## 5. STRATEGY DELIVERY WORKING GROUP UPDATES

**To receive an update from the Chairs of the Strategy Delivery Working Group Chairs.**

Informal updates were given by the Chairs which were noted. In summary:

Community Working Group – Cllr Bennett outlined the positive feedback from the community to the from the Christmas events (lights switch on, Tuesday late night markets and the lantern procession).  
Economy Working Group – Cllr Roberts reminded Councillors of the Business Forum event on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2026.

Environment and Public Realm Working Group – no updates.

## 6. COMMUNITY AUDIT

**To consider a revised cost for the Community Audit exercise.**

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the increase in cost to £6500 for the Community Audit.

## 7. TAX BASE FOR 2026/27

**To note the tax base for financial year 2026/27.**

Noted.

## 8. BUDGET SETTING FOR 2026/27

**To consider the Council Matters Committee recommendations for the budget for financial year 2026/27.**

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the 2026/27 budget as presented.

## 9. PRECEPT SETTING

**To consider the Council Matters Committee recommendation for the precept for financial year 2026/27.**

The Clerk spoke to the detail in the budget report and recommended an increase of 7.5 percent on the precept (4.55 percent per band D property), with a view to reviewing ear marked reserves to protect minimum general reserve levels as needed in the future.

It was **RESOLVED** by majority to request an increase of 10 percent to the precept (£744541) which equates to 6.98 percent per band D property, an increase of £15.63 per annum or £0.30p per week.

10. TOTNES LANTERN PARADE - TOWN COUNCIL LANTERN

**To consider whether to retire the Town Council's current lantern, Pegasus, after three years of it featuring in the Lantern Procession in December.**

It was **RESOLVED** to: retire the Town Council's current lantern, Pegasus; and to give the Community Working Group delegated authority to discuss where Pegasus should go and the Town Council's role in the lantern procession from 2026 onwards.

11. LIST OF MEETING DATES AND COMMUNICATIONS POINTS

**To note a list of upcoming meeting dates and annual meetings calendar, Council communications points and link Councillor/ Councillor representatives on outside bodies updates.**

Noted.

12. NEXT MEETING

**To note the next meeting dates of Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2026 for Full Council, 6.30pm public session, 7.00pm formal meeting in the Guildhall.**

Noted.

*The Council **RESOLVED** 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)*

13. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE (Standing Item)

**To consider any recommendations or matters arising that are considered confidential in nature.**

None.

14. GUILDHALL COTTAGE SURVEY

**To consider a building survey of the Guildhall Cottage (commercial).**

It was **RESOLVED** to proceed with the conditions survey for the Guildhall Cottage. Given the specialist nature of the heritage service needed, and work already completed on the Elizabethan House, it was **AGREED** that a single quote was acceptable as an exception to usual financial regulation.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Cllr Tim Bennett  
Chair