



## AGENDA FOR THE TOWN MATTERS COMMITTEE

### MONDAY 23<sup>RD</sup> MARCH 2026 IN THE GUILDHALL

There are stairs to the Council Chamber but if any member of the public has mobility issues the Council can relocate to the lower Guildhall.

You are hereby **SUMMONED** to attend the **Town Matters Committee on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2026 at 6.30pm** for a maximum of 90 minutes in the Guildhall for the purpose of transacting the following business:

**Committee Members:** Councillors N Roberts (Chair), L Auletta, C Beavis, J Chinnock, S Collinson, J Cummings, D Peters, A Presswell, E Price and T Robshaw.

#### 1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair will read out the following statement:

Welcome to everyone attending and observing the meeting.

A reminder that open proceedings of this meeting will be video recorded. If members of the public make presentations, they will be deemed to have consented to being recorded. By entering the Council Chamber attendees are also consenting to being recorded.

This meeting is limited to 90 minutes and therefore members are asked to raise their points succinctly and not repeat the same view expressed by colleagues if it does not add to the debate.

To receive apologies and to confirm that any absence has the approval of the Council.

*The Committee will adjourn for the following items:*

#### PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A period of 15 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions or make comment regarding the work of the Committee or other items that affect Totnes.

*The Committee will convene to consider the following items:*

#### 2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

To approve the minutes of 26<sup>th</sup> January 2026 and update on any matters arising. Document attached [page 2].

#### 3. STRATEGY DELIVERY WORKING GROUPS

To consider any recommendations and note the minutes from the following:

- a. Community Working Group, 10<sup>th</sup> February 2026 (document attached, page 7).
- b. Economy Working Group, 4<sup>th</sup> February 2026 (document attached, page 9).
- c. Environment and Public Realm Working Group, 18<sup>th</sup> March 2026 (document to follow).

4. EMERGENCY PLAN

To consider the draft public-facing Emergency Plan and make a recommendation to Full Council. Document attached [page 13].

5. CLIMATE NATIONAL EMERGENCY – PLANT-BASED COUNCIL

To consider a request from the public to be a plant-based Council in light of its support for the climate national emergency declaration it made in February 2026. Document attached [page 19].

6. OPEN SPACES, SPORTS, RECREATION AND WELLBEING PLAN UPDATE

To update on any general matters linked to the Open Spaces, Sport Recreation and Wellbeing Plan (standing item). No document.

7. LINK COUNCILLOR REPORTS

To consider link councillor reports from Committee members. Verbal update.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note the date of the next meeting of the Town Matters Committee – Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2026 at 6.30pm.

*The Committee will be asked to **RESOLVE** 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)*

9. COMMUNITY AWARD SCHEME

To consider the nominations for the Community Award scheme individual and group categories, and any potential contenders for the Judy Westacott award and make a recommendation to Full Council (personal information). Document attached.

Sara Halliday  
Governance and Projects Manager  
18<sup>th</sup> March 2026

**USE OF SOUND RECORDINGS AT COUNCIL & COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

The open proceedings of this Meeting will be audio and video recorded. If members of the public make a representation, they will be deemed to have consented to being recorded. By entering the Council Chamber or Zoom meeting, attendees are also consenting to being recorded.

Televised, vision and sound recordings or live broadcastings by members of the press or public at Councillor Committee debates are permitted and anyone wishing to do so is asked to inform the Chairman of the respective Committee of their intention to record proceedings.



## DRAFT MINUTES FOR THE TOWN MATTERS COMMITTEE

### MONDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2026 IN THE GUILDHALL

Present: Councillors N Roberts (Chair), L Auletta, C Beavis, J Chinnock (from 1834), S Collinson (from 1834), J Cummings (from 1840), D Peters, A Presswell, E Price and T Robshaw (from 1840).  
Apologies: None.

In Attendance: Members of the public, and S Halliday (Governance and Projects Manager).

#### 1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

**To receive apologies and to confirm that any absence has the approval of the Council.**

Cllr Roberts read out a statement about how the meeting would be conducted and recorded.

The apologies were accepted.

*The Committee adjourned for the following item:*

#### PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A member of the public (who is a market trader) raised concerns about: the closure of the toilets on the Civic Square for refurbishment, the costs and the length of time that this will take; and the lack of advertising for markets, particularly the Sunday market.

A second member of the public (also a market trader) spoke about the surface of the Civic Square and concerns about the repairs that have been made and the trip hazards that remain. The Committee agreed with the concerns raised about the Civic Square surface which have been raised with the district council, but that the Civic Square surface, toilets and markets are all matters that come under the control of South Hams District Council (SHDC), not the Town Council.

Councillor Presswell spoke about bike racks and the hope to find new locations for the CAT bikes in Bridgetown. It was confirmed that the Town Council has suggested a location for an additional bike rack in Totnes (Civic Square) but that this has been rejected by SHDC.

*The Committee reconvened.*

#### 2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

**To approve the minutes of 24<sup>th</sup> November 2025 and update on any matters arising.**

The minutes were **AGREED** unanimously as an accurate record of proceedings. Matters arising:

Item 3a. Notice Board. It was **RESOLVED** unanimously that the larger notice board is installed under the Civic Hall on the wall and that the smaller notice board currently on the Civic Hall fire door is relocated to the outer red door to the Council Offices.

Item 3c. Railway Bridge. It was **RESOLVED** unanimously that Town Council officer time is allocated to obtain quotes for painting the railway bridge in two colours (framework in one colour, panels another) which will need to include a pavement/footway closure application.

Item 4. William Wills Project. It was **RESOLVED** unanimously that the Council:

- Supports the proposed update to the Burke and Wills display space, led by the Heritage Trust;
- Cllr Bennett works closely with the Heritage Trust on how the display will look and its content, updating Council to ensure that it is in keeping with the building; and
- Cllr Bennett works with the Heritage Trust to liaise with the First Nation people in Australia.

Item 5. Vire Committee President. It was **RESOLVED** unanimously that the Mayor becomes the ex officio President of the Vire Twinning Association.

### **3. STRATEGY DELIVERY GROUP AND WORKING GROUP**

**To consider any recommendations and note the minutes from the following:**

#### **a. Economy Working Group, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025.**

Noted. No recommendations to consider. Cllrs Roberts gave a quick update on the Community Economic Plan projects which will be considered by the Working Groups and be discussed at a meeting open to all Councillors to attend.

#### **b. Environment and Public Realm Working Group, 21<sup>st</sup> January 2026.**

Noted. To make the following recommendations from the 21<sup>st</sup> January 2026 meeting:

#### **Item 3a - SHDC Asset Refurbishment Plan (car parks, bins and benches) (PRD2.F & PRD2.Q).**

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that the Town Council:

- Bins - writes to South Hams District Council (SHDC) to request the return of the XL heritage style bins purchased by Totnes Town Council when the new bins are installed; and registers its concern about the proposal to remove four of the existing bins on Vire Island as it will increase littering, increasing river pollution and increase the litter picking burden for the SHDC street cleansing operative, and request the retention of two bins at least.
- Benches – writes to SHDC to request that all the replacement benches are in the same style to have conformity – Highland rather than Tivoli design - with the Town Council content to pay the difference in purchase cost; and that the Town Council funds the bench proposed for removal on Vire Island and a new bench to be installed in Heath Gardens along the footway/hedge.
- Benches – to request permission from Devon Highways to install two new benches on The Plains near the taxi rank and on Fore Street (see images below).



Item 3b - **Borough Park Vision (PRD2.I)**. To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that the Council's priority for SHDC and S106 investment in Borough Park is resurfacing and enhancement of the multi-use games area (MUGA); and that other areas to be considered for investment are: the Station Road entrances to the park; and solar lighting for the skate park and MUGA.

Item 3c - **Vire Island (PRD2.P)**. To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that it makes a request to South Hams District Council to begin a programme of laurel removal on Vire Island and planting of hazel in its place.

Item 6 – **Community Economic Plan Projects, Water Quality**. It was **AGREED** to invite the Friends of the Dart to give a report to the Committee on an annual basis. The Officer will email Friends of the Dart to determine the optimum time for such a report.

#### **4. DEVON LIBRARIES CONSULTATION**

**To consider the Devon County Council consultation on 'Shaping the Future of Devon's Library Service' and make a recommendation to Full Council on signing a joint letter with other towns or making a separate response (deadline 22nd February 2026).**

Committee members made a number of comments about the proposals set out in the consultation around possible operating practices, reduction in opening hours in Totnes and neighbouring towns, Totnes' role as a hub library, and the role of the library being broader than the basic services provided.

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that it submits its own letter to Devon County Council as part of the consultation (not as a signatory to the Dartmouth Town Council letter). It was **AGREED** that the Officer will draft a letter and email to Committee to members for their comments by midday Friday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2026 so that this can be circulated to members before Full Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2026.

#### **5. SHDC CLIMATE NATIONAL EMERGENCY BRIEFING MOTION**

**To consider the South Hams District Council Climate National Emergency Briefing motion and make any recommendation to Full Council.**

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that the points in the SHDC motion are adopted by Totnes Town Council; and that the Town Council puts out its own communications on support for the Climate National Emergency Briefing.

1. It supports the work and message of the National Emergency Briefing and calls on the government, politicians, businesses and organisations to heed its call for effective and urgent action.
2. It recognises and thanks Nick and Simon Oldridge for all the hard work they are putting into raising awareness of the real and imminent threats of climate change.

3. It will ask that all members of the UK100 network of Local Authorities consider passing similar motions that support the National Emergency Briefing initiative.
4. It reaffirms the Climate and Biodiversity Emergency it declared in 2020 and recognises that with the passage of 5 years the climate crisis has deepened and it is more important than ever to be guided by that declaration in everything the Council does

**6. EMERGENCY PLAN UPDATE**

**To consider an update on the timing for review of the Totnes Emergency Plan.**

It was **AGREED** to defer the Emergency Plan review until other meetings have concluded, and to consider setting up a Task and Finish Group to carry out the task.

**7. COMMUNITY AWARDS TIMELINE**

**To note the timeline for the 2026 Community Awards.**

Noted.

**8. OPEN SPACES, SPORTS, RECREATION AND WELLBEING PLAN UPDATE**

**To update on any general matters linked to the Open Spaces, Sport Recreation and Wellbeing Plan including an update on the greenways map (standing item).**

Cllr Auletta presented the updated greenways map and the Committee thanked her for her work.

**9. LINK COUNCILLOR REPORTS**

**To consider link councillor reports from Committee members.**

No points were raised.

**10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**To note the date of the next meeting of the Town Matters Committee – Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2026 at 6.30pm.**

Noted.

The meeting closed at 8.05pm.

Sara Halliday  
Governance and Projects Manager  
January 2026

## ITEM 3 – STRATEGY DELIVERY WORKING GROUPS

### 3a – Community Working Group 10<sup>th</sup> February 2026 - Notes

Attendees: Cllrs Bennett, Hannam, Chinnock and Presswell.

Present: Cllrs Beavis and Auletta, Dr Ian Blackwell (Devon Community Foundation (DCF)), Town Clerk

Not present: Cllr Robshaw, Collinson, Cooper, Trant

Please note – members not on the committee abstained from voting.

1. Agreeing Cllr Bennett as interim Chair  
*AGREED.*
2. **Note the last meeting minutes** (October 25)  
*NOTED.*
3. **Consider an update on the Community Audit process** – verbal update from Dr Ian Blackwell from DCF. The update was received and NOTED. Councillors were positive about the work done to date, and welcomed the opportunity to shape the Town Council support for the sector going forward. The importance of a central facilitation/coordination point for the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprises (VCSE) sector was discussed and will appear in the report.

Please note that the timeline for the Community Audit report is:

- Officer/DCF/Cllr Chinnock meeting on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb by Teams
- March Council Matters 9<sup>th</sup> March for the draft/initial report/options document. I will need the papers by 4<sup>th</sup> March for that committee.
- A recommendation (and any proposed amendments or additions) for the report will go to the Full Council Meeting in April (13<sup>th</sup> April). Prior to April Full Council there is a pre meeting for all members to attend to have an informal Q and A with DCF on the report from 5.45pm.
- Once the report has been through to Full Council we can look to share messages back into the community, including those who have helpfully engaged with this process.

Please note that currently we have tabled a new Community Grant Funding Policy to April Council Matters which would need to be ratified at May Full Council. This will delay any adoption and opening of the process (which could be a problem for some community groups). The other option is to draft that internally from 4<sup>th</sup> March when the draft Community Audit Report is available and table it at April Full Council. The current budget for 2026/27 is:

£50,000 Community Grants - potentially larger, multi year commitments.

£5,000 Community Working Group budget for grants

£5,000 Environment and Public Realm Working Group budget for grants

£2,500 Economy Working Group budget for seed funding/event sponsorship etc.

There is also the opportunity to consider reallocating from agreed budgets, general or ear marked reserves if additional funding is required, but being cautious given the other commitments we have and can foresee.

#### 4. Community Economic Plan (CEP) projects/work streams

1. It was **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council that the following project objective be added to the Strategic Plan.
  - i. Support local arts and cultural projects  
Promote cultural and community engagement through local events, markets and support for local arts.(NP)-14% (93)- Events/markets are covered under Economy working group but other issues aren't so community and cultural matters will need to go under C-CEP group, including potential provisional work on the 'Town of Culture'.
1. Decide which of the projects/work streams align with the Town Council aspirations and can logistically be delivered with current staffing levels.  
As above. It was noted that the 'Town of Culture' (future rounds) could be a time consuming and resource heavy project. While the Community Working Group could have a facilitation and coordination role for pulling together partners and meetings we would not currently have capacity to lead a bid.

#### 5. To review the current 25/26 budget and look ahead to the 26/27 budget as set.

NOTED. The 25 26 Community budget is fully committed, with the exception of £5,000 original allocation for Christmas lighting improvements. It has been previously agreed to consider year end underspend from Community be allocated to the Christmas Lighting EMR. This will be considered by Council Matters in March.

It was **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council that the remainder of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Homes Premium budget should be allocated to Totnes Rugby Club for training equipment that serves all age ranges.

#### 6. To consider a report on Christmas lighting and recommend to Council Matters/Full Council how to proceed. This includes a review of the Christmas Window Competition format and any suggestions on that would need to be considered by the Economy WG who hold that budget.

The working group concurred with the officer RECOMMENDATIONS as below:

- **Commission the existing Christmas Tree installer (redacted)** to provide a quotation for the Market Square festive lighting installation, working in partnership with the in-house team to ensure continuity and quality.
- **Carry out all lighting installation elements that can be safely completed in-house using ladders**, reducing reliance on external contractors and improving resilience (Rotherfold).
- **Obtain external contractor quotations** for the remaining lighting elements that require a cherry picker and specialist training, limiting costs while ensuring safety and compliance (cross-street sign, Shady Garden tree, Eastgate).
- **Investigate opportunities for additional lighting installations**, including the potential repurposing of lighting strands removed from previous locations and no longer required.
- **Review the Christmas Window Competition** to consider its ongoing value, format, and benefits. Officers recommend exploring whether alternative approaches could better increase festive lighting presence across the town. ACTION Clerk: This will be tabled at the April Community Working Group meeting with a draft proposal of new categories and way of running it.
- **Explore new ideas** to support businesses and residents, particularly in key areas such as Fore Street and the Narrows, to install their own exterior festive lights, helping fill current gaps.

• **Consider further supplementary lighting options**, including an expanded use of solar festoon lighting, which was successfully trialled this year. Officers are already working on possible options around:

- use of projection on the front of The Mansion. The Trust have not yet been approached for permission but a couple of potential suppliers have been identified (one of who has experience of working on listed buildings), There is an existing unmetered power source on an adjacent building which can be tested (approx. £150 valid for 6 years). If the Working Group is supportive then permissions can be sought and quotes obtained.
- possible new locations etc for further discussion, including but not limited to United Free Church, Barrell House/Narrows, Royal Seven Stars, St Mary's Church.

7. **Community buildings** – possibilities for future opportunities – verbal

NOTED. Further information and discussion to follow, currently sensitive/confidential.

8. **Christmas events feedback and next steps** (mainly the Light Switch On as a Community event, Economy will need to consider the Christmas Late Night Markets).

NOTED.

9. **Caring Town** – Trustee recruitment and the future of the organisation.

A verbal updated was NOTED. The importance and potential of Caring Town was discussed, and the support for it is demonstrable from the VCSE sector.

10. Set the date of the next meeting – Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2026 at 6pm.

AGREED. ALL - Please note

### 3b. Economy Working Group 4<sup>th</sup> February 2026 - Notes

Working Group: Cllr Roberts (Chair), Cllr Auletta, Cllr Beavis, Cllr Chinnock, Cllr Peters, Cllr Price (Apols)

Officer: Economic Support Officer (KO) Town Clerk (CM) (Apols)

1) **AP from British Cycling will join us to discuss a proposal regarding a Totnes Cycling Event in July 2027 to coincide with the British Tour de France.**

Regional Events Officer for British Cycling. They currently hold an event which celebrates the twinning of Totnes and Vire called the Totnes Vire Cycling Race which is held in three locations in Devon – Okehampton (road race), Paignton Velopark (criterium stage) and Babbacombe ( Hill climb stage)

They would like to bring the event back to Totnes in 2027 to coincide with the UK tour de France. Need to find a route in Totnes that can be closed and measure at least 1.5 miles.

They are looking for financial support for the event to help with road closures, barriers etc.

Looking to potentially do the event on a Sunday when there is not a lot of traffic or pedestrians.

Could it be made into a larger scale event that attracts people to come and watch and traders to open if they wouldn't usually.

Also discussed running the event in the evening on a Saturday once the market traders have left.

A larger scale event has been organised in Dawlish, which the Town Council invested £10,000 in to bring the event there. The chamber of commerce in Dawlish also contributed by approaching the local shops and offering sponsorship opportunities.

Although no feedback was given in regard to the Economic Benefit of this event to Dawlish, they have anecdotal evidence from accommodation providers, restaurants etc who did well with people visiting. It also gave Dawlish publicity on a wider stage and so the council were looking at it from a longer-term perspective than just the benefit of the day itself.

ACTION – Kayleigh to contact Dawlish town council to discuss their event and the benefits.

ACTION – Kayleigh to find out footfall data for the date that it was held in Dawlish.

ACTION – Cllr Roberts to talk to Cllr Robshaw and the twinning society about the proposed event.

## 2) **Notes of the last meeting and matters arising that are not already on the agenda.**

### Parking

ACTION – Kayleigh to talk to the Business Forum about the Car Parking permits and make sure that the comms from SHDC about the availability of permits is handed over to them so they are aware.

ACTION – Kayleigh to share with members any further information about car park usage that is sent from SHDC.

### Markets

No Comms has been shared with TTC from SHDC regarding the changed market days.

ACTION – Cllr Beavis to see if he is able to get the data from VW regarding the information that he mentioned in the Planning Meeting that people spend more money on the 1<sup>st</sup> and last weekend of the month.

### Freedom Saturdays

Members would like this to be brought back to the EWG. Kayleigh discussed with members the time restraints with regards to road closures and publicity if they wanted to get this ready for the summer holidays of 2026. As well as the engagement from the Business Forum.

ACTION – Kayleigh to find out if road closures must be paid for up front of if the application is payable upon agreement.

## 3) **Bridge Feasibility Update** – Cllr Auletta

No update. Add to next agenda

## 4) **Discussion of the use of the Guildhall for the Fringe Festival (9– 12 July 2026)**

EWG have provided the Fringe Festival with £2000 for this year's event. The fringe is requesting the use of the Guildhall to become part of their list of venues for performances. Members discussed the types of events that could go into the Guildhall and are keen to ensure it fits the building and is respectful.

The use of toilets was discussed and members believed that the Guildhall could work with St Mary's Church to provide the toilets if they did not have a performance on at the same time which is something that the Fringe would have to coordinate.

ACTION - Members RECOMMEND to Council Matters that the Guildhall be offered to the Fringe Festival for 2 performances on 1 date. One afternoon and one evening with a councillor present,

so no staffing resources.

## **AGREED AT COUNCIL MATTERS – 9<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY**

### **5) Project Tasks for the CEP to be discussed and agreed.**

Members discussed how the CEP meetings were progressing and the next steps. It was noted that a lot of the projects plans that were set out by SHDC were not able to be taken on by TTC as they were specialist issues or required a lot in terms of time and staff resourcing. Members were interested in whether the Employment Fayre that is happening in the Civic Hall is linked with the CEP, but it is not a direct project that has come out of the plan. Cllr Peters mentioned that businesses would be interested in a reduction in business rates and other towns have set up enterprise zones.

ACTION – Cllr Roberts to email LE to find out what SHDC are able to offer TTC in order to fulfil the projects of the plan.

ACTION – Kayleigh to print off the project plans for the next EWG meeting to discuss in greater detail once the next CEP meeting has established some finer details.

ACTION – Cllr Peters to contact District Cllr John Birch to find out more about Enterprise zones and feedback to the EWG.

### **6) Support for the Totnes Business Forum.**

Kayleigh attended a meeting with D and S from the Totnes Business Forum to discuss how their first event went and their plans for the future. They would like to set themselves up as a CIC, with a website and online presence. They will in the future be charging a membership fee to help with the running of the forum but are looking for support from TTC to help with initial costs. They supplied a breakdown of costs which amounted to £5,210. Members discussed the various items on the proposal, and that £4,500 of the allocated £5000 is currently unspent in the 2025/26 budget under Business Forum / Events. Members were very keen to get behind the Business Forum as they feel it is a movement that the council have wanted to happen for a long time.

Questions were raised regarding the line for a paid member of staff, but this was quantified as a normal procedure with not-for-profit organisations that they will run almost completely by volunteers but have someone who does minimal administrative tasks and is paid.

Members agreed that they do not wish to hand over a large amount all at once in case the Forum doesn't succeed and so would prefer to pay in instalments. An amount of £4000 was recommended with a meeting to be held with D and S to discuss how that would look over the year.

ACTION – Members RECOMMEND to Council Matters that £4000 from the Economy budget be confirmed for the setting up and support of the new Business Business Forum.

## **AGREED AT COUNCIL MATTERS – 9<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY**

ACTION – Kayleigh to organise a meeting with D and S to discuss finer details.

### **7) Town of Culture – Expression of interest application for 2026 closes on 31 March**

Members discussed the limited time for the expression of interest to be submitted and then the time between shortlisted and full bid proposal. The need to engage community groups and find out what they would be willing to do to be involved with such a project. Discussion also followed regarding the story of Totnes and how that links with Dartington so would they also like to be involved. It was noted that Exeter and Plymouth are both applying for City of Culture this year, and

it is believed that Plymouth will have a strong application. It was agreed that the Town of Culture application will wait until the next round and more preparation is done in the lead up with community liaison to ensure a strong application is able to be put forward.

#### **8) Christmas Markets**

Christmas market dates were discussed as the first three Tuesdays of December 2026 will be the 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> which Jo from Miss Ivy events feels will be too early. She has proposed that the Christmas Markets are held on the 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of December instead. This would mean that the TTC maintenance team would be required to work an extra day on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December when the office is closed.

**ACTION** - To RECOMMEND to Council Matters that the Christmas Markets start on the second Tuesday of December, finishing on 22<sup>nd</sup> December. This will require the Town Maintenance Team to work on the 23<sup>rd</sup> December which is the first day of the office Christmas closure.

**AGREED AT COUNCIL MATTERS – 9<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY**

#### **9) Signage from the Narrows – email exchanged provided.**

Signage around the Narrows was discussed but it was agreed that this had to be something that was initiated by the businesses and potentially supported by the Council. The email exchange mentioned shops being advertised on notice boards, but no other retailers in town have this advantage. It was noted that businesses in the Narrows who have had exchanges with Kayleigh were invited to the Business Forum but did not attend.

**ACTION** – Kayleigh to arrange a meeting with Narrows representatives to discuss the signage and how TTC could help.

#### **10) Littlehempston Cycle Way consideration.**

A bid is being put together for a cycle way between Totnes and Littlehempston. This would connect Totnes to further places via bicycle such as Newton Abbot. They are looking for £2000 to aid with the bid from Totnes Town Council, having received £5000 from Littlehempston Parish Council,

EWG has £12,000 in the Active Travel budget that has not been spent this year.

**ACTION** - To RECOMMEND to Council Matters that £2000 from the Active Travel allocation of the Economy Budget is confirmed for the Littlehempston cycle way.

**AGREED AT COUNCIL MATTERS – 9<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY**

#### **11) Proposal of next meeting – 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 | 12.30pm | TTC Meeting Room**

APPROVED



---

# Emergency Plan

TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL

AGREED FEBRUARY 2024

NEXT REVIEW MARCH 2026

---

*This plan sets out to members of the community: who to contact in various emergencies; how to personally be prepared; and how Totnes Town Council is likely to respond to various emergencies that the town and community might face.*

## Introduction

This Plan has been developed for community use, to help residents find who to contact in the case of an emergency, particularly outside of office hours. The Town Council is often the most accessible tier of local government and has a role as a community leader, and as such would have a key role in helping making the community aware of a problem through its website and social media channels, and helping the Town deal with and recover from a major emergency.

However, the statutory responsibility lies with Devon County Council in conjunction with various other agencies, including South Hams District Council, the Environment Agency, NHS and the emergency services. The Town Council will support the principal authorities in implementing their Major Emergency Plan and make its resources available to them.

## Objectives

The objective for this document is to identify:

- The role and contact details for the Town Council.
- Who to Contact - there are a number of different types of emergency that could occur, so who should you contact and what can you do;
- Be Prepared – Government advice on how to prepare to keep you and your family safe, particularly with the increasing number of weather warnings; and

## Local Help - The Town Council's Role

In the case of an emergency the first point of contact is always 999. If the emergency is related to a need for access to one of the Town Council buildings, i.e. the Civic Hall or the Guildhall then the points of contact are as follows:

- The Mayor – postholder changes annually, contact information available on the Town Council website, see [Totnes Town Council Mayor](#)
- The Town Clerk – current postholder Catherine Marlton. Emergency contact information. Work – 01803 862147

## Communications: Keeping residents, local community groups and businesses informed

The Town Council is subscribed to a number of updates to help share information locally (for example, the Environment Agency, South West Water, NHS, Devon County Council and South Hams District Council). The Town Council will use its website, social media channels, local media, notice boards and relevant email lists to keep residents, local community groups, and businesses regularly informed during a major emergency. This includes where there are weather related issues (for example, when the Met Office has issued a red warning for snow, ice, flooding, storms, extreme heat).

## Cancellation of Meetings

The Town Council subscribes to Met Office weather updates. In the event of a red alert for snow the Town Council will:

- cancel all public meetings;
- post updates on the website and social media with the latest advice from specialist agencies.

In the event of an amber weather warning or unexpected snowfall the Town Clerk has delegated authority to implement the above actions on a discretionary basis.

## Rough Sleepers

Assistance for Rough Sleepers during cold weather - The Town Council website is often asked to assist with housing rough sleepers, particularly during cold weather. South Hams District Council has the responsibility and resources to assist rough sleepers and the Housing Team can be contacted on 01803 861234 or 01803 861539 outside of office hours. You can also connect with [StreetLink](#), a service for reporting concerns about rough sleepers. For more information see the South Hams District Council website for [rough sleepers support](#)

## Emergency Centres

In the event of an emergency requiring the evacuation of homes (for example, a gas leak or flooding) these centres are normally opened at the instruction of the County and/or District Council.

## Who to Contact

### Power Cuts

Although it is increasingly rare to experience a prolonged power outage, power cuts can and do still happen, especially if cables and equipment become damaged during storms. It's important to make a plan and know what to do if you experience a power cut:

- Report a power cut 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by dialling 0800 6783 105 or 105. If you're hard of hearing or deaf, dial 18001 before each number and a Text Relay Operator will join the call.
- Check in with people who might need extra support. Help them sign up to the free [Priority Services Register](#) (see below). Make sure they know what to do if there's a power cut.
- Before the onset of severe weather it is important to charge phones, power banks, and any medical equipment. Have backup power sources, like a battery-powered torch and a windup radio.

For further advice on how to prepare and to check for power outages in your area visit the [National Grid - Power cut advice](#) website

### Water Outages

Interruptions to your water supply can occur for various reasons, but winter weather can lead to an increase in burst water pipes both around the home and on the supply network.

To report a leak or water outage contact South West Water Emergency number **0344 346 2020** or [visit their website](#).

- Speak to them about being added to their Priority Services Register if you are eligible
- Store essentials at home like bottled water, canned food, and basic medical supplies.
- [Visit their website for advice](#) about preparing your home for cold weather. Prepare your home for cold weather.

### Flooding

The Environment Agency has installed flood defences to high risk areas of the town. They have volunteers to manually open and close the gates based on alerts they send out directly. Residents and business owners at risk are encouraged to register for updates on flooding directly (see below). The Town Council is subscribed to Environment Agency updates and Met Office severe weather warnings and will publish these on social media to inform the community.

The onset of flooding can be rapid and unexpected and can have a devastating and long-term impact to your home, business or everyday life. Whilst flooding is most likely to occur in areas

close to rivers and/or the sea, surface water can affect almost anywhere especially when drainage systems are unable to cope with a sudden downpour.

- [Check the Met Office weather forecast](#) and set local alerts. Pay particular attention to any [National Severe Weather Warnings](#) covering your area, and act on any advice issued.
- Check your flood risk, and sign up to receive free flood warnings by phone text or email, you can sign up by calling **Floodline** on **0345 988 1188** or by [visiting the government's website](#).
- Check you have adequate household and/or business insurance and that your policy covers you for flooding.
- Make sure any drains, rivers or streams on your property are flowing and where it is safe to do so remove debris or report blockages.

For further information on what to do before, during and after flooding read the Environment Agency's [flood advice booklet](#) and [visit the Devon County Council website](#).

Flooding in the road that has been caused by blocked drains or gullies can be reported to Devon County Council Highways on their [report-a-problem](#) website.

## Fire

During colder months it's really important to take simple steps to minimise the risk of a fire starting in your home.

- Get your chimney inspected and swept by a certified and insured professional. [Find a sweep near you](#). Visit the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service website to [learn the signs that could indicate a chimney fire](#).
- Check smoke alarms and consider fitting a carbon monoxide detector. You can find [more information on the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue website](#).
- Practice your escape route so everyone in your household knows what to do if a fire occurs.

For further fire safety advice visit the [Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service](#) website.

## Priority Services Register

The Priority Services Register (PSR) is free to join. It helps utility companies, including energy suppliers, electricity, gas and water networks to look after customers who have extra communication, access or safety needs. It helps them tailor their services to support households who need extra help with everyday energy matters like bills, and also in the unlikely event of a power cut, gas or water supply interruption.

You can find out if you're eligible to join the Priority Services Register, by checking online.

## Cold Weather

In winter, periods of low temperatures, freezing conditions, ice, sleet and snow can all cause disruption on the roads and transport networks. If you notice that a grit bin is running low, this can be reported on the Devon County Council [report a problem](#) website.

Cold weather can also affect our health and some people may face higher risk from the cold.

Those most at risk during the winter include older adults, people with long-term health conditions, pregnant people, babies and young children.

- Check you have enough emergency supplies of food and medication
- Prepare your home by making sure you have drained down any outside taps and have enough insulation around exposed water pipes. There is [further guidance on South West Water's website](#).

- Have your heating or hot water appliances inspected and serviced by a [Gas Safe](#) registered engineer.
- If you are concerned about a person sleeping rough in cold weather contact [South Hams District Council](#) or use [Street link to create a report](#).

School Closures - Burst pipes, faulty heating systems, or heavy snow can sometimes lead to schools having to temporarily close. In addition to following updates directly from your child's school, residents can get updates on any temporary school closures and school transport disruption on [the Devon County Council website](#).

Snow Wardens - If any member of the community wishes to participate in the Devon County Council run Snow Warden Scheme please contact the Town Council on 01803 862147. Further information on the role and responsibilities are found at [snow warden scheme](#)

## Be Prepared

The Government has a [Get prepared for emergencies website](#) that includes some simple and effective steps to consider taking in preparing for emergencies and disruption. It suggests that you: are informed; make a plan; prepare your home; talk to others; get emergency supplies. For example,

### Put together an emergency kit of items at home

This could include:

- **Battery or wind-up torch** – torches are safer than candles.
- **Portable power bank** for charging your mobile phone.
- **Battery or wind-up radio** to get updates during a power cut – a car radio can be used, however in severe weather it might be safer to stay inside.
- **Spare batteries** for torches and radio and a backup battery for any medical equipment you rely on.
- **A first aid kit (or some first aid items)** including items such as waterproof plasters, bandages, a thermometer, antiseptic, eyewash solution, sterile dressings and gloves, medical tape for dressings, and tweezers.
- **Hand sanitiser and wet wipes** for hygiene purposes when the water is off.
- **Bottled water** – there is no standard figure for this as emergencies can vary in duration and people use different amounts. A minimum of 2.5-3 litres of drinking water per person per day is recommended by the World Health Organisation for survival. 10 litres per person per day will make you more comfortable by also providing for basic cooking and hygiene needs. Additional water might be needed to make up baby formula, for medical devices and for pets.
- **Non-perishable food** that doesn't need cooking, such as ready-to-eat tinned meat, fruit or vegetables (and a tin opener). As with water, how much you need will vary based on your own circumstances. Don't forget food for pets.
- **Baby supplies** such as nappies and baby formula – ready made or 'ready-to-feed' formula is best as you may not be able to boil water or sterilise bottles.

Rather than buying all the items at once, you could just add to your emergency kit when you are able and build it up over time.

## The Weather

The [Met Office provide up-to-date, expert seasonal advice from carefully selected organisations](#) to help you prepare for and respond to the weather, to stay safe and protect yourself, your homes and businesses.

It includes:

- Top tips to be weather ready
- Tips for staying safe in icy conditions
- Tips for staying safe in snowy conditions
- Prepare a winter kit for your car
- Keeping your home warm this winter
- Vehicle checks to make before long journeys
- Things you should do to prepare for cold weather
- Winter health hacks
- How to get your home and property winter weather ready
- How cold weather affects your health
- Protecting property from flooding
- Looking after your pets during colder weather
- Tips for getting out and about this winter
- Looking after your mental health through the winter
- What do to if you have a frozen or burst pipe

## Defibrillators

The Town Council owns and maintains two defibrillators in the town – outside the Royal Seven Stars Hotel at the bottom of Fore Street and outside the Visitor Information Point at the Civic Hall on the Market Square. Other units are available in the town but community groups need to ensure these are registered and accredited to ensure that the caller can be signposted to the nearest working unit.

## Pandemic

The Town Council subscribes to NHS and Public Health England updates and in the event of a pandemic will:

- cancel all public meetings;
- post updates on the website and social media with the latest advice from specialist agencies.
- act as a co-ordinator for various community groups who are able to offer practical assistance.

## Useful Links

[South Hams District Council Emergency Planning Information](#)

[Devon Emergency Planning Partnership information](#)

## ITEM 5 – NATIONAL EMERGENCY BRIEFING: PLANT-BASED COUNCIL

The Council has received an email from a member of the public about its support for the National Emergency briefing and requesting that it becomes a plant-based council:

“At the last Full Council meeting councillors resolved to support the points raised at the Climate National Emergency Briefing. As part of that National Briefing a professor spoke on food security and the need to move to a plant based food system. But the Town Council is not promoting plant based eating either on its website, Facebook page or in practice. I wondered what exactly councillors are doing on this as they declared support for the National Briefing. Plant based Councils is an organisation trying to encourage Councils to lead by example and choose plant base catering for all meetings and events. Could the Council commit to this proposal?”

Background: At the February 2026 Full Council, the Council resolved the recommendation from the Town Matters Committee that it adopts the South Hams District Council motion on the National Emergency Briefing which are:

1. It supports the work and message of the National Emergency Briefing and calls on the government, politicians, businesses and organisations to heed its call for effective and urgent action.
2. It recognises and thanks Nick and Simon Oldridge for all the hard work they are putting into raising awareness of the real and imminent threats of climate change.
3. It will ask that all members of the UK100 network of Local Authorities consider passing similar motions that support the National Emergency Briefing initiative.
4. It reaffirms the Climate and Biodiversity Emergency it declared in 2020 and recognises that with the passage of 5 years the climate crisis has deepened and it is more important than ever to be guided by that declaration in everything the Council does.

*Officer Note:* The current position is that the Council always offers a plant-based option [interpreted as vegan, not vegetarian] in terms of oat milk for meetings and at functions, for example the reception after the Civic Service and Mayor Making.

Moving to a fully plant-based catering approach would represent a change in practice. This may well have implications for supplier availability, costs, and attendee preferences, which would need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

The Committee may wish to consider the following options:

1. Maintaining the current approach of offering plant-based options alongside other choices.
2. Committing to fully plant-based catering at all Council meetings and events.
3. Adopting a phased or proportional approach (e.g. a minimum percentage of plant-based catering).

Members are invited to determine the preferred approach considering the Council’s existing climate commitments, operational considerations (as above), and community engagement.