



## MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL MONDAY 2<sup>ND</sup> MARCH 2026 IN THE GUILDHALL

Present: Councillors T Bennett (Mayor and Chair), L Auletta, C Beavis, J Chinnock, T Cooper, J Cummings, J Hodgson, D Peters, A Presswell, E Price and T Robshaw.

Apologies: Cllrs Collinson, Hannam, Roberts, Smallridge and Trant, and District Cllr Birch.

In Attendance: District Councillor Allen, 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.

*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: extra funding has been received, with the special educational needs debt written off which means that additional funding of £650k for libraries, £4m for pothole repair and £15m on roads has been agreed; the final draft for the 20mph proposals is with officers for consideration; and work is ongoing to find a solution for domestic waste bin storage and enforcement of the rules around not keeping them on the streets.

b. District Cllr Allen had submitted a report that hadn't been circulated in time for the meeting. She updated on: the Slapton line repair budget challenges with estimated remedial cost at £18m; the eviction at Jackmans Lane (and will circulate a letter from DCllr McKay outlining the background); the Morrisons Garage licence, where some community concerns and objections have been submitted; the Brunel park [former Dairy Crest site] planning application – Cllrs raised the need for affordable housing, with some suggestions of self-build; and the weight and status of made Neighbourhood

Plans following the situation with Modbury, with a briefing to follow.

- c. District Cllr Birch (DCllr) had not submitted a report and was not present.
- d. District Cllr Presswell had submitted a report and Councillors asked: her to check the data in her report; and thanked her for her efforts in getting the Steamer Quay mooring repaired. DCllr Presswell will send out the rough sleepers procedure to all.

*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 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2026.**

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

**To note the following minutes:**

**b. Council Matters Committee 9<sup>th</sup> February 2026.**

Noted.

**c. Planning Committee 16<sup>th</sup> February 2026.**

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 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2026.**

No matters arising.

**b. Council Matters Committee 9<sup>th</sup> February 2026.**

Item 5. Council Risk Assessments - See item 7 on the Full Council agenda.

The following recommendations came from the Confidential section of the meeting:

Item 13. Guildhall Garage Ownership (legal) – It was **AGREED** to discuss the recommendation under item 10.

Item 14. Budget and Staffing implications of the Marketing and Communications Audit (staffing) - It was **AGREED** to discuss the recommendation under item 10.

Item 15. Guildhall Wall and the remedial works required (commercial). It was **AGREED** to discuss this matter under item 10.

**c. Planning Committee 16<sup>th</sup> February 2026.**

No recommendations.

#### **5. STRATEGY DELIVERY WORKING GROUP UPDATES**

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

There were no updates received.

#### **6. DEVON, PLYMOUTH AND TORBAY: LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION CONSULTATION** **To consider the 'Devon, Plymouth and Torbay: Local Government Reorganisation' consultation and any response (deadline 26<sup>th</sup> March 2026).**

The Council felt that it is important to respond to the government consultation using the portal and separately write to the government on this matter. It was **RESOLVED** unanimously to delegate authority to the Town Clerk to submit the Local Government Reorganisation consultation response and write to government, subject to the input of the Devolution Working Group.

#### **7. COUNCIL RISK ASSESSMENTS**

**To consider a summary of the Council's Risk Assessments.**

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the summary and the deadlines for completion of actions.

#### **8. 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.

#### **9. NEXT MEETING**

**To note the next meeting dates of Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April 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)*

#### **10. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE (Standing Item)**

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

Council Matters Committee recommendations:

Item 13. Guildhall Garage Ownership (legal) – After consideration of legal advice, background and discussion, it was unanimously **RESOLVED** to pursue adverse possession of the disputed property.

Item 14. Budget and Staffing implications of the Marketing and Communications Audit (staffing) - It was **RESOLVED** by majority to:

- Approve the restructure of two distinct roles from October 2026: Community Communications Officer (24 hrs); and Business and Economic Support Officer (24 hrs).
- Agree that Visit Totnes is repositioned within the economic development and business support function.
- Agree the outsourcing of agreed Visit Totnes elements to reduce officer workload and improve efficiency.

- Note and approve the proposed interim arrangements from April to September 2026 – this means limited capacity and management of expectations when considering output.
- Approve the financial implications as outlined.

Item 15. Guildhall Wall and the remedial works required (commercial) - It was **RESOLVED** unanimously to agree in principle the estimated increased costs to the rebuild of the Guildhall wall (approximately £24k), subject to the usual requirement for multiple quotes, and subject to listed building consent. It was noted that the wall will remain fenced off in the meantime for safety reasons.

Item 16. Staffing – It was **RESOLVED** unanimously to: decrease the attendance time of the Town Sergeant at Full Council meetings to the first hour; and ensure the Mayor and Mayoral PA has sign off for appointment of Macebearers at Civic events (to diversify the involvement of others, potentially using local young people, at the Mayor’s discretion).

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.

Cllr Tim Bennett  
Chair