



MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF COUNCIL MATTERS MONDAY 20TH APRIL 2026 AT 6.30PM IN THE GUILDHALL

Present: Councillors D Peters (Chair), L Auletta, C Beavis, T Bennett, J Chinnock, J Hannam and E Price.

Apologies: Cllr Trant.

In Attendance: Member of the Public (Chair of the Museum Trust), C Marlton (Town Clerk).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair read 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

The Chair of the Museum Trust attended to outline the request from the Museum to extend the lease of Totnes Museum/70 Fore Street to 99 years. This extension is both to ensure the commitment of Museum Trust funds to improvements internally (as per the existing lease) and to access external grant funding. This will be considered under item 12.

The Committee reconvened.

2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

To approve the minutes of 9th March 2026 and update on any matters arising.

The minutes were **AGREED** unanimously as an accurate record of the proceedings.

3. STRATEGY DELIVERY WORKING GROUPS

To consider any budgetary recommendations from the following (document attached):

a. Community Working Group, 14th April 2026.

Community Audit – To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council to ring fence £13,500 of the £50,000 Strategic Community Funding for Caring Town, subject to further work on the Job Description of the new role and the involvement of the Town Council in the future planning of the organisation and recruitment processes.

It was **AGREED** that £1,000 be allocated from professional fees for Devon Communities Foundation (DCF) to work on: project scoping with Caring Town (as outlined above); allocation for the remainder of the 2026/27 Strategic Community Budget; and to look ahead to how best to plan for community funding for 2027 onwards.

b. Economy Working Group, 8th April 2026.

No recommendations requiring budgetary approval.

c. Environment and Public Realm Working Group, 18th March 2026.

Cemetery Wild Area – Funding of £2275 for wild area maintenance in the cemetery was **AGREED**, by provider Park Life. It was **AGREED** that this should be reviewed before committing to future years.

Benches - It was **AGREED** to allocate funds for a bench at the weir

Noticeboard - It was **AGREED** to purchase a new noticeboard for the gate to the Council offices.

4. MAYOR’S ENGAGEMENTS AND BUDGET

To consider the Mayor’s engagements since January 2026 and the current budget.

The Mayor’s engagements and budget was **AGREED** unanimously.

5. STANDING ORDERS REVIEW

To review Standing Orders and make a recommendation to Full Council.

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that the revised Standing Orders (with minor amendments as listed) are adopted.

6. RISK REGISTER

To review the Risk Register.

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that the Risk Register is adopted as presented, with the Clerk requesting internal auditor advice about how risks assessed as high after mitigation are presented in future years and where any further mitigation is possible.

7. RESPONSIBLE AND SAFE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE POLICY

To consider any updates to the Responsible and Safe Use of Artificial Intelligence Use Policy for the Council to adopt.

The Clerk explained there has been no change in how AI is used internally and no external changes/updates have been identified that impact the current policy. It was **AGREED** no updates are currently required.

8. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND DEPUTY

To:

a. Make a recommendation to Full Council for the Chair of Council Matters Committee for 2026/27 (effective May 2026);

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that Cllr Peters is elected Chair of the Council Matters Committee.

b. Elect a deputy chair for the Committee (from May 2026).

Cllr Bennett was elected deputy chair of the Council Matters Committee.

9. YEAR END TIMELINE

To note the year end timeline for financial year 2025/26.

Noted.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note the date of the next meeting of the Council Matters Committee – Monday 18th May 2026 at 6.30pm in the Guildhall.

Noted.

The Committee **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)

11. BANK STATEMENTS AND RECONCILIATIONS (Standing Item)

To consider the bank statements and reconciliations for March (financial).

These were reviewed and **AGREED** unanimously.

12. TOTNES MUSEUM LEASE

To consider a request to extend the lease on 70 Fore Street/Totnes Museum (financial and legal).

It was **AGREED** to ask the Museum Trust about the minimum term of lease extension required for accessing external funding, and whether a transfer of the freehold had been discussed by trustees. There was no recommendation to Full Council on this matter given the queries above, but it was **AGREED** to table an agenda item at the May Full Council for further consideration.

13. GUILDHALL INVENTORY

To consider updates to the Guildhall inventory (financial).

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that the framed prints (excluding the Goss certificate) be added to the inventory and stored in the Muniments Room.

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that the other items as listed be disposed of.

14. STAFF ATTENDANCE

To note sickness and overtime balances (staffing).

Noted. It was **AGREED** not to implement the Absence Management Policy escalation at this time for a staff member due to the one-off nature of their surgery.

15. STAFFING UPDATE

For any general or urgent updates that required confidential sharing with Councillors (staffing).

No issues raised.

The meeting closed at 8.00pm

Catherine Marlton

Town Clerk

April 2026