



DRAFT MINUTES FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING OF TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL

THURSDAY 28TH MAY 2026 AT 6.00PM IN THE CIVIC HALL

Present: Councillors M Trant (Deputy Chair), L Auletta, C Beavis, J Chinnock, S Collinson, T Cooper, J Hodgson and E Price.

In Attendance: Members of the public, C Marlton (Town Clerk), B Day (Communications and Marketing Officer) and S Halliday (Governance and Projects Manager).

1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME FROM THE MAYOR OF TOTNES

The Deputy Mayor welcomed those present and explained how the meeting would run, giving apologies from the Town Mayor, Cllr Bennett.

2. TO AGREE THE MINUTES FROM THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD ON 15TH MAY 2025.

The minutes were accepted as a true record of proceedings.

3. MAYOR'S REPORT ON COUNCIL BUSINESS

Cllr Trant explained how the Council is split into different Committees and Working Groups who focus on specific elements of the Council's work.

The Community Working Group focuses on how the Council best spends its time and resources to support the community. In the past year this has included: allocating community grants, including £30K towards the delivery of the Skate Park; conducting a Community Audit to see how it can best utilise limited resources going forwards to support community groups and projects; the Fringe and Heritage Festivals; and the Christmas late night markets and free Christmas lights switch on event.

The Economy Working Group has been working with our business community, and its focus has been on the South Hams District Council Community Economic Plan project. The Christmas Window competition was free for businesses to enter and was a showcase of the amazing shops in the town.

The Environment and Public Realm Working Group focus on the look and feel of the town and have delivered various enhancements, including: installing two benches at the skate park; refurbishment of all benches in Totnes Cemetery; installation of five mosaics in the Coronation Road bus shelters; and maintenance and removal of planters in the town.

Looking ahead, Local Government Reform will take up Council time. We are fortunate to have a strong Council, with Councillors who have a range of professional skills that they bring to working together as a Council to deliver for the town.

4. CLERK REPORT

The Clerk set out the focus for work over the past year and what is coming up. Communications – the Council commissioned a marketing and communications audit, recommending how the Council could be more effective and will see a rebalancing of Council and Community communications, and Visit Totnes and economic support. The Community Audit set out how the voluntary and community sector is comprised in Totnes and will help the Council identify what support is most needed and how the Council can best use its limited resources. Over £43K was awarded in Community Grants in 2025, plus £30K towards delivery of the skate park, with applications being oversubscribed for the budget available. In 2026 smaller grants will be available through the Working Groups (£15K in total) and £50K in core funding aimed at the provision of

community services. There has been essential works to the Council's assets, often complex due to the age and historic nature of the buildings. Looking ahead, a Government decision on Local Government Reform and what this might look like in Devon is still awaited. As part of this, the Town Council has requested a transfer of the Civic Square from South Hams District Council to the Town Council to protect its future use. Formal notice of the disposal of the KEVICC lower site has been received and will be considered at Full Council on Monday 1st June 2026. 2027 will see local council elections, so please consider getting involved and standing as a Councillor, or by making sure that you vote.

5. COMMUNITY ECONOMIC PLAN

The Clerk explained that the Community Economic Plan (CEP) is a partnership project led by South Hams District Council, with Totnes Town Council closely involved alongside local businesses, community organisations, and other stakeholders. Project plans have been developed over three themes – business and economy, community and culture, and traffic and transport – and the focus is now on determining deliverable, practical actions. The Town Council will support the projects where the aims align with its strategic objectives, for example support for events (like the Heritage, Fringe and Lantern Festivals, provision of Christmas lights), and developing a business fair to be held this autumn. The Town Council has allocated £2K to the new Business Forum which will work with and independently of the Town Council. The Council is also looking to support those elements that can help business such as digital connectivity and strengthening local procurement and sustainability.

6. COMMUNITY AWARDS PRESENTATION

The Deputy Mayor announced the awards. The two winners of the 2026 Totnes Community Individual Award were:

- Malcolm Curley for his Bridgetown Safari sculptures and the unknown amount of money that has been raised for various charities, as well as enjoyment that they bring; and
- Philip Yonge for his work with the homeless in Totnes through fundraising and practical help, and for raising awareness about rough sleeping in rural areas.

The 2026 Community Group Award was presented to the Caring Town Volunteers for the variety of roles that they perform to help and support so many people in our community.

The 2026 Judy Westacott Award for lifetime achievement was awarded to Sue Misselbrook for her work with Bridgetown Alive! over many years.

7. OPEN FORUM

The following question was asked in the open forum. Why were the wreaths removed from the War Memorial? An officer explained that due to ongoing works at St Mary's Church the war memorial was not accessible to the public after the Remembrance Sunday and 11th November commemorations. Prior discussion with the Royal British Legion led to the agreement that after 11th November the wreaths would be fixed to the fencing so that they could be viewed by the public and then removed by mid-December.

The meeting closed at 18.30.

Cllr Matt Trant
Deputy Mayor