

April -June 2026 Clerks Report

Full Council – 6th July 2026

Meetings and training attended (excluding weekly staff and management meetings, weekly meetings with the Mayor, and monthly team meetings):

April

Returned from medical leave 20th April

20 – Council Matters Committee

21 – Bob the Bus meeting

22 – Parish Clerk Cluster

23 – Chair of T&TF meeting

27 – Guildhall Cottage meeting

28 – Laura Campbell meeting

(Economy/Tourism)

29 – Presented a DALC session on clustering with the Mayor

May

6 – Heritage Cluster

6 – Museum meeting

6 – Town Team Meeting

6 – Devon Community Foundation meeting

7 – *Annual Leave*

11 – All Councillor informal session

11 – DWP meeting

11 – Paige Adams

11 – Full Council

12 – Laura Eames meeting (CEP)

13 – Bob the Bus meeting

13 – Paul Carpenter Heritage ADVICE (GH Ceiling)

18 – Council Matters

20 – Interviews for Yr 9 students (youth engagement)

20 – Community Working Group

21 – Mayor Making

21 – Police meeting

25-27 *Annual Leave*

28 – Annual Town Meeting

June

1 – Full Council

2 – Legal meeting

3 – SLCC Regional Training Day Taunton

4 – Guildhall Cottage meeting

8 – Museum Trust

8 – Community meeting Allotments/Compost

8 – Council Matters

10 – Heritage Cluster

10 – Town Team

11 – Laura House meeting 1 (community partners)

11 – Parish Clerk Cluster

11 – Caring Town Chair meeting

11 – Meeting for VAT advice

17 – SLCC Branch meeting Ivybridge

18 – Legal meeting (Laura House)

22 – DALC meeting County Hall

23-24 Annual NALC conference London

25 – Laura House Site meeting and partners group

29 – SHDC Town Clerk Cluster

29 – Community Working Group

30 – Wider Area Cluster meetings (Clerks and Cllrs)

Clerk General updates not covered elsewhere:

Firstly, thank you to colleagues, members and community partners for their support following my return from medical leave in April. It has been a busy quarter and I am grateful for the patience and flexibility shown while I settled back into work.

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR): Work continues across Devon as proposals develop. I have attended a number of parish and town clerk cluster meetings, wider area discussions and county-level briefings to ensure Totnes remains engaged in conversations

about future governance arrangements. The pace of change remains significant, with plenty of challenge but also opportunity, and further updates will be provided to members as matters progress.

Laura House: Considerable officer time has been dedicated to progressing the acquisition and development of Laura House as a future community, health and wellbeing hub. This has included legal discussions, partner engagement, site visits and the development of funding and governance arrangements.

Strategic Community Funding: Following the Community Audit and member discussions regarding future funding arrangements, work has continued with community partners to develop proposals that focus on delivering long-term outcomes and ensuring that limited council resources achieve the greatest possible benefit for local residents.

Asset Management: A substantial amount of officer time continues to be directed towards the Council's assets, particularly the Civic Hall, Guildhall, Museum building and Guildhall Cottage. Members will be aware that a number of these buildings require significant investment over the coming years and work is ongoing to better understand priorities, costs and funding opportunities. The good news is that the Civic Hall Gable End and Guildhall Ceiling conditions do not seem to be in imminent danger of collapse – work is ongoing on repairs.

Conferences, Training and Collaboration: During the quarter I presented a DALC session on council clustering alongside the Mayor and attended the NALC Annual Conference in London. Both provided useful opportunities to learn from councils facing similar challenges and to bring back ideas and examples of good practice that may benefit Totnes.

Members Bulletin: Weekly Members Bulletins continue to be used for sector updates, consultations, training opportunities and future dates. Feedback on the format is always welcome.

Future Clerk's Reports: Members should note that the Clerk's Report will now be produced **quarterly** rather than every two months. The next report will therefore cover the period **July to September 2026** and will be presented to **Full Council in October 2026**.

Governance and Projects Manager Update

Environment and Public Realm Working Group actions:

- Fingerpost to Leechwell Gardens from Civic Square – liaison with Leftbridge for the artwork and Wood and Wood for updated graphics (sign dropped off 26 Jun for new graphics to be applied).
- Planters – all retained planters now painted Invisible Green. Sign for the side of the planter opposite the museum to warn of narrow pavements has been ordered and should be ready w/c 29 June.
- Noticeboard under Civic Hall – the larger noticeboard is now installed with ability to post more than just agendas (for example the two asset of community value disposal notices, Civic Hall events, Christmas Markets stalls and Artisan market dates).
- Liaison with South Hams District Council about: the Civic Square surface; repeated blocking of the Civic Hall fire escape by market traders; and street furniture licences.

Neighbourhood Plan Health Check – a useful meeting was held with IPE to discuss the points identified in the health check and seek advice on timing and how best to proceed on some of the points. Full Council agreed to too to make the modifications suggested and liaison with South

Hams District Council has confirmed that the changes identified are non-material in nature. The next steps is for SHDC to produce a report on the proposed modifications that goes to the SHDC Executive Committee for discussion (likely to be Sep 2026) and if they agree the changes, the modifications can be made with the need for consultation or external examination.

Governance – policies reviewed and passed to Council Matters Committee for consideration including: Standing Orders, Complaints Policy and Procedure, Death of a Senior National Figure Protocol, and Responsible and Safe Use of Artificial Intelligence Use Policy.

Strategic Plan Delivery Objectives – quarterly report produced for Full Council in June and monthly updates continue with inputs from colleagues so that these can be used by the Working Groups.

Cemetery

- There have been two interments from Apr to Jun, with two new plot purchases, three memorial stone applications and four deed of grant transfers carried out along with enquiries of those trying to locating graves.
- The Town Maintenance Team have carried out: maintenance on the main gates (rubbing down and repainting); a thorough cut back and tidying of the Garden of Rest following several complaints; and removal of dead/dying branches over neighbouring gardens.
- The annual memorial stone safety check has been carried out with no real problems reported.
- Parklife carried out a top cut of the wild areas in late April and are due to put up new signage about the areas.
- The current grounds maintenance contract has given notice as of 1st September. Providers who bid for the tender in 2025 have been approached to quote for the interim six-month period and a new tender will be run in Autumn 2026 to start April 2027. Full Council will consider the quotes received on 6th July.
- A webinar run by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management on the implications of Martyn's Law to funerals and burials was attended – there are no implications for Totnes Cemetery as it is an outside space but it proved useful in thinking about what mitigations may be required in the future.

Christmas Lights

- Projections - Council Matters has approved the proposed projection areas on Fore Street for 2026 (The Mansion, wall of Halls and the old Lloyds Bank building and Shady Garden floor) and the provider has been notified; a list of questions on the displays and points to consider has been sent requesting a meeting in July; and draft contract terms and effects/patterns to be agreed over the coming weeks.
- Unmetered Power Sources - Enervo have been booked to check the unmetered power point at 34 Fore Street which will be used for the projection onto and near The Mansion. The other unmetered points were tested in 2025 and the certificate is valid for 6 years.
- Light Testing - The Town Maintenance Team have checked and tested the lights returned and are making a note of any additional requirements (cables and connectors) for the installation this year.

Marketing and Communications Update

SOCIAL MEDIA – Stats last 90 days [28 March – 25 June 2026]

VISIT TOTNES - FACEBOOK

- Views – 549,000 (up 89.2% from previous 3-month period)

- Interactions – 6,300 (up 57.1% from previous 3-month period)
- Follows – 551 (up 57.4% from previous 3-month period)
- Link Clicks – 1600 (up 566.9% from previous 3-month period)

Note 10% of views were from paid advertising – regardless, these are very positive results. The page has a small regular audience and the mix of heritage, local business and scenic shots of Totnes is proving increasingly popular. The increase in views is likely because we created more business posts, which are the highest performing: Our top 3 posts were about Gather chef receiving a culinary award [86.7K views]; new burger bar Shaka [57.6K views] and a new branch of the Curator coffee shop [56.3K views]. These were all organic posts with plenty of shares.

VISIT TOTNES - INSTAGRAM

Organic views 108,474.86 (up 24.79%); Interactions 4,920; 119 new follows (down 26.44%)

We don't have the interaction figure from the previous term but this appears as a small but positive increase on a well-established page. Content is almost identical to VT Facebook.

TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL - FACEBOOK

- Views 207,200 (up 38.1% from previous 3-month period)
- Interactions – 1800 (up 47.4% from previous 3-month period)
- Follows – 128 (up 52.4% from previous 3-month period)
- Link Clicks – 662 (up 93% from previous 3-month period)

Again, a terrific increase on the town council site. In general it's mostly positive too. Generally strategy to is intersperse informative council posts with community posts as the higher engagement generally lifts the reach of both.

Totnes Town Council

Instagram

Organic views – 13,781 [11.76% decrease]; Interactions – 209; 31 follows [decrease from 32]

A small decrease – as such, we can read this as steady. Currently the Instagram posts - whilst formatted correctly - do not differ particularly from the Facebook posts in look and feel. If we wanted more success on this feed, we could focus on more visual representations of the information we want to share – something that could be put into action towards the end of the year.

WEBSITE VISITORS - Users on our sites [28 March – 25 June 2026]

Totnes Town Council - 10,000 [down from 11,485]

Visit Totnes - 46,000 [down from 101,298]

This is significantly down as we have had someone working on the page to remove bots [largely from Singapore and Vietnam]. Although rigorous filters are in place, it's likely at least a further 20-45% on the websites are still bot activity. The websites are the biggest area of potential growth; as the marketing function is working under time constraints social media posts don't link to the website as standard [usually 1-2 posts a week would link to an article].

When 24hrs a week are just Civic Communications there should be a sharp rise in website activity as there will be more time to link TTC socials to the TTC website. Visit Totnes will also benefit from a new website so it can be more easily found through online searches.

SUMMARY

Social media continues to perform well, while the website remains stable and up to date.

Marketing support is ongoing for summer community events, alongside the promotion of wider regional events. Current projects include the Heritage Festival leaflet, the Bob's Bus (Malcolm Curley) map, and the Time Trail map for the Totnes Image Bank.

We are also supporting 2025 Guide advertisers by creating bespoke boosted social media content to replace the *What's On* posts included in their original Guide agreement. Additionally, we are receiving an increasing number of requests from organisations seeking promotion on the Visit Totnes social media channels. This growing demand could present a potential revenue-generating opportunity in the future, should we choose to introduce a paid promotional offering.

Town Maintenance Update

Completed the cutting back of brambles in Castle Meadow. Cut brambles used on the top low wall to deter access into the castle grounds. Hoping they will form a frame for the growing brambles to grow over stop the unauthorised access. Have also removed all visible barbed wire as requested. Numerous posts around the whole site perimeter have now shown they need replacing.

Agreed planters plus the one outside Annies have been removed and taken to Follaton Cemetery. Remainder have been painted the requested colour and are being watered along with other planters attended by Diana and her team.

Cleared area around telephone box and cleaned up the box itself after complaints from a member of the public.

Cemetery gates are being prepared and painted. We are going back to bare metal and painting black. Gates were clearly bodged when painted last time.

Gutters have been cleared on all assets by an external contractor.

Down pipes on Civic Hall gutters that have been blocked for years are now running clear after some creative thinking on how best to clear from such a tall height. The maintenance team didn't give up and great satisfaction was felt when they finally ran clear.

Guildhall Ceiling has been surveyed and found to be safe, although needs repair and redecoration.

Gable end of Civic Hall has been scaffolded and inspected by a structural Engineer and hoping that the works will be identified and quotes obtained soon. It appears it is all repairable without having to take down all the brickwork.

New large noticeboard is now installed under the Civic. Complaints from the market trader who pitches in that area. Suggested they hung a sheet over the noticeboard and have provided some screw eyes to enable hanging garments on the wall. After complaints about the noticeboard, I politely pointed out she was there two days a week and the noticeboard is used 365 days a week.

Getting prepared to start prepping and decorating the external frontage of the Guildhall and Offices. This will require extensive works as most cast-iron gutter works are leaking and a lot of the wooden fascias and structural timbers are requiring repair. Certificate of Lawfulness applied for. External contractors will need to be involved or this will all take too long to repair.

Cutting back of brambles and other vegetation in Follaton Cemetery has been halted until bird nesting season is finished. All suspect trees have been inspected and a complaint from a neighbour is now resolved and neighbours are now happy again.

Quotes have been requested to repair the roofs on Birdwood and the roof above the Market store building to resolve leaks and bring both roofs into a state of stopping water ingress.

Safety rail brackets are nearing completion for the external walkway around the Civic Hall.

All Guildhall Courtyard walls that are in a state of disrepair have now had polythene covering the tops to prevent water ingress. Hopefully this work will be carried out shortly to enable the area to get back to normal.

Legionella works identified from an inspection have been carried out to insure compliance.

Up and coming works:

Training for myself to work in the cherry picker to assist with erecting the lights for that time of year in December, Refusing to say the C word in June!

Making up extra strands of lights for above due to broken and non-working lights. These will be for the Civic Hall.

Need to replace Civic Hall gutter joints as all are leaking.

Economy Update

CEP - Project plans for the task groups have now been finalised, with project leads and partners allocated for each one. The steering group and SHDC are beginning to plan a Business Expo in November which can act as a launch for the finalised Community Economic Plan. Invites will be sent to various organisations such as Transition Town, as well as potential guest speakers to provide presentations or take part in discussions and networking.

Heritage Festival – We have started the process to apply for a road closure to stop traffic during the Heritage Festival on the 19th September. This is to give visitors a more enjoyable and safer experience while visiting the various heritage sites around town. The Heritage Trust are on board with the initiative and have confirmed they will use the closed road as an opportunity for the Morris Dancers to perform in the street giving it more of a festival vibe. Quotes have been obtained from traffic management companies and there has been liaison with the Business Forum. Next steps are to put together some comms for the businesses in town with further details, as well as conversations with Bob the Bus, SHDC markets Team, and the emergency services.

The Narrows – One of the projects that came out of the meeting with the business community located in the Narrows was for signage to welcome people into that part of town. Quote has been obtained for the replacement and strength testing of eyebolts in the walls at the start of the Narrows (above Happy Apple and Joe Joes) for signage, to go to EWG in July and then to meet again with businesses to discuss artwork etc if approved. Owners of the buildings are being approached to gain permission for works to be carried out.

Totnes Pride – An application from a group of people wanting to bring Pride back to Totnes was submitted to the EWG for a Small Grant, and £1000 was allocated from the events budget. Pride will be running from the 24th – 27th September in various locations around Totnes. The

money will be spent on developing the festival for their first year, marketing efforts and community activities.

Guildhall and Civic Hall Updates:

Civic Hall

Community Bookings

The Civic Hall continues to provide a valuable and well-used space for regular weekly community groups. Current activities include:

- Monday: Singing Workshop, Youth Theatre, Conscious Dance
- Tuesday: Community Dance Group
- Wednesday: Margaret Morris Movement (fitness for older adults), Community Fun Choir, Harmony Choir
- Thursday: Male Voice Choir

The hall also successfully hosted the Totnes Ukulele Festival for the second consecutive year. Organised by volunteers from the Totnes Ukulele Kollektive, the event attracted visitors from across the country to celebrate ukulele music. In addition to being a successful booking, the festival delivered wider economic benefits to the town, contributing to local accommodation bookings, hospitality, and retail, and reinforcing Totnes' reputation as a vibrant visitor destination.

The second consecutive South Devon Beer & Cider Fest is happening at the end of June.

Commercial Bookings

The Hall continues to attract a strong programme of commercial events. A recent live comedy night headlined by Marcus Brigstocke, supported by two additional acts, was very well attended. A further three comedy events are scheduled later in the year.

Recent live music events included Hejira – Celebrating Joni Mitchell (May) and Ye Vagabonds (June). A further five music events are confirmed for later in the year, beginning with This Is The Kit in early September, followed by pianist and electronic performer Yann Tiersen.

Guildhall

Wedding Bookings

Wedding bookings continue to show steady growth, which reflects the ongoing appeal of the Guildhall as a unique and valued venue.

One of the ceremonies at the end of June will celebrate a local couple aged 82 and 85, highlighting the Guildhall's importance to the community.

There are currently 22 ceremonies confirmed for 2026, an increase from 17 reported previously. This continues the upward trend from recent years:

- 2025: 18 weddings
- 2024: 14 weddings
- 2023: 9 weddings

Volunteering and Community Engagement

Volunteer capacity remains a key challenge. The retirement of one of the longest-serving volunteers, alongside ongoing ill health affecting another, has made staffing the Guildhall more difficult this year.

Lifeworks and TIPS have not yet been able to support a volunteer this year, although this may be revisited in the future.

Efforts are now being made to recruit new volunteers, including targeted outreach to local retirement communities.

Visitor numbers have been slightly lower than the previous year. However, this is largely attributed to several planned closures in May for civic functions (including Mayor Making), weddings, and essential building inspections.

Correspondence Log April - June 2026

Date	email/phone/ in person	Details	Response
01/04/2027	phone	MoP concerned over the reduction in number of bins on Vire Island which are already showing signs of overflowing and additional litter.	Referred to SHDC and shown how to report Fly Tipping and overflowing bins. Advised of the TTC comment in February FC regarding concerns over removal of bins.
01/04/2028	phone	Query about planning meetings and how to seek advice or make a comment.	Directed to SHDC planning portal to make comment on the application and gave contact details for Cllr Auletta as chair of the planning committee.
01/04/2028	email		To Fusion - Request to ensure MoPs know that TTC hasn't withdrawn funding for Bouncy fun. It provided the funds that were requested for the year by Fusion.
07/04/2028	email	The recent closure of Lloyds Bank on Fore Street results in no bank at all for Totnes which I am sure you agree is totally unacceptable for the town. Not everyone banks online!! I see no reference to this in the Totnes Community Economic Plan thus concluding there are no plans to rectify the problem with perhaps a banking hub concept. Your observation on this matter would be appreciated.	
07/04/2028	email	Request for Clock at St John's to be updated with BST.	Informed that TTC don't maintain the St John's clock.
09/04/2026	phone	Cemetery Enquiry - confirming grave location and memorial stone placement	Replied with plot location, ownership status and process for applying to erect a memorial stone.

08/04/2028	email	Member of the Public who expressed an interest in attending meetings and getting involved in our community and council.	Advised of meeting dates, agendas and minutes and recommended speaking with the Mayor who always has time to invest in young people wanting to get involved in community and council business.
10/04/2026	email	Suggestion for a speakers corner to be set up in the Market Square.	Reply to suggest additional District Councillors are also asked for their support.
10/04/2026	Phone	TIC enquiry – Mobility Scooter Hire.	No knowledge of mobility scooter hire and will post a copy of the guide out.
10/04/2026	email	Cemetery Enquiry - locating graves	Replied with information requested.
13/04/2026	Phone	Request for information on Totnes	VT Guide sent in the post.
16/04/2026	email	-	SHDC Heritage Officer emailed with FC April position on the Totnes Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.
16/04/2026	Phone	Complaint about the loudness of a busker in the Civic Square	Reported to PCSO
16/04/2026	email	-	Letter to Dartington Hall Trust Estate Manager about condition of the pontoon.
16/04/2026	email	-	Letter to County Cllr supporting an extension of the national landscape area to include Totnes.
17/04/2026	email	Email from MP enquiring about TTC position on the large heritage style bins.	Explained the situation with purchasing larger bins last year after discussion with SHDC and the new policy they introduced this year which prompted the removal of the larger bins.
20/04/2026	email	Markets Enquiry	Referred to SHDC website
20/04/2026	letter	Request for road sweeping, weed clearing and additional supermarket at the Old Dairy Crest site.	No return address
20/04/2026	Phone	Tourism Enquiry: Map of Town, places to stay, things to do.	Advice given
24/04/2026	Phone	Tourism Enquiry: Is there any lockable storage for luggage for day visitors.	Advice given
24/04/2026	Phone	Request from Totnes Show to place their cross street banner at the bottom of town in July.	Agreed
27/04/2026	email	Enquiry about use of the old TIC.	Informed that this unavailable to rent due to being part of the Civic Hall.
27/04/2026	Phone	Enquiry about bin collections.	Referred to SHDC
27/04/2026	phone	Enquiry about who owns the pontoon at Steamer Quay. Informed that a MoP had an injury on it due to the missing boards.	Directed to SHDC and informed that TTC would also chase it up with them.

28/04/2026	email	Email to SHDC regarding the missing planks on the pontoon and informed about previous incident.	Officer emailed to say this would be escalated. Updated: Pontoon repaired.
28/04/2026	Phone	Tourism Enquiry: Bank holiday events	Directed to VT what's on page
29/04/2026	Phone	Request for maintenance team to check a tree in cemetery	TMO inspected and made plan for work to be done.
06/05/2026	email	Concern over a tree which hangs over a garden in the cemetery.	TMO to check the tree.
07/05/2026	email	TTC informed SHDC of overflowing litter bin in the High Street.	
07/05/2026	email	Request for an individual to go on an overseas charitable project.	Informed the TTC grants won't cover this but directed to our funding directory on the website.
07/05/2026	email	Message from SHDC to let us know of the overflow from the Salvation Army bin in the car park. They have contacted the SA to ask for it to be emptied and cleared.	Feedback from SHDC to say this area has been cleared by the Salvation Army.
07/05/2026	Facebook	Request for cemetery to be tidied	
11/05/2026	Phone	Luggage storage enquiry	Directed to new storage location on Station Road.
11/05/2026	Phone	Tourism Enquiry: Totnes Castle and Compton Castle	Advice given
11/05/2026	Phone	Enquiry about Transition Town Totnes	Directed to Cllr Nick Roberts
11/05/2026	Phone	Tourism Enquiry: Bus from Totnes to Dartmouth	Advice given
12/05/2026	email	Request for map of section E of the cemetery.	
14/05/2026	email	Enquiry about possible maintenance to pontoon on Dartington Estate.	Advised to contact Dcllr Allen.
14/05/2026	Phone	Bus routes to Dartmouth	Advice given
14/05/2026	online	Reported blocked drain at the bottom of Fore St.	Reply from DCC to say the gulley will be cleared when contractors resources allow.
15/05/2026	email	Access to Free cash in Totnes - commercial enquiry from Euronet	Reply to thank for offer but that TTC doesn't have a suitable location for an ATM.
18/05/2026	Phone	Request about parking for a removals lorry	directed to DCC highways
18/05/2026	Phone	Enquiry about the grounds maintenance at the cemetery.	Informed about the cutting schedule being chased.
18/05/2026	letter	Request for the Cemetery and allotments to be tidied and request for another supermarket at the old dairy crest site.	No return address to send reply.

01/06/2026	email to Cllr Auletta	Concern regarding air quality in the high street.	Answered by Cllr Auletta - directed to data from high street monitor. Informed this is worse in winter when log fires are on. Invited to attend a council meeting public session to discuss concerns.
01/06/2026	email	Concern over the reduction in bins on Vire Island.	Advised how to report this to SHDC and advised to contact District Councillors.
02/06/2026	Phone	Tourism Enquiry: Phone number for Dynamic adventures	number provided
04/06/2026	email	KEVICC ACV - Disposal Notice	Email from Clerk to community groups to make them aware.
08/06/2026	In person	Concern over seagull nest in North Street car park with adult seagulls divebombing passers-by.	SHDC contacted and signs put up to warn people.
08/06/2026	letter	Complaint about the number of weeds around Plymouth road and request for supermarkets on the old Dairy Crest site.	No return address to send reply.
09/06/2026	email	TTC Contacted Police to report ASB outside the Guildhall	Police contacted later in the day to say the person had been apprehended.
09/06/2026	email	Totnes Castle reported ASB outside Castle	Informed that the neighbourhood policing team have been very responsive in dealing with issues. Email forwarded to the team.
10/06/2026	email	Cemetery Enquiry	Response sent
22/06/2026	phone	KEVICC ACV Disposal - can TTC apply an expression of interest	Council considered and decided against at June Full Council. Pointed to news post on website.
22/06/2026	letter	Complaint about the number of weeds around Plymouth road and request for supermarkets on the old Dairy Crest site.	No return address to send reply.
23/06/2026	email	Concern over nesting birds on the civic hall being affected by scaffolding work	
23/06/2026	email	enquiry about planned path closure	sent link to details on TTC website.
26/06/2026	Facebook	Complaint to SHDC (with TTC copied in) regarding the car parking meters and how difficult it is to make a payment if you don't have coins.	Acknowledged the issue and made MoP aware that the point will be shared with cllrs.
29/06/2026	email	enquiry about whether a license is required to distribute leaflets around town.	Reply to inform there is no license required from TTC.