

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE **COMMUNITY & HERITAGE COMMITTEE** HELD ON **WEDNESDAY 15th OCTOBER 2025** AT **7:00 P.M.** AT NEWTON'S PLACE, WOLBOROUGH STREET, NEWTON ABBOT.

PRESENT Councillor: L Cooke - Chairperson) Presiding
A Ineson - (Vice Chairperson)

Councillors: B Bailey C Parker (Mayor)
C Davieson P Parker
A Gibbs M Ryan
A Hall L Wood
M Joyce

Officers in attendance: Linda McGuirk - Principal Administrator
Pierre Doutreligne - Projects & Strategy Officer
Dr Charlotte Dixon - Museum Curator
Joanna Eccles - Museum Curator, maternity cover
Kate Green - Community Engagement Officer
Rob Woodger - Facilities Maintenance Team Leader
Thomas Collard – Administrative Officer - Green Spaces
Nigel Canham - Communications Officer.

Present Devon County Councillor J Fry
Devon County Councillor M Cockerham

227. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Valid reasons for absence were received on behalf of Councillors J Bradford and R Buscombe.

Apologies were also received from Phil Rowe, Town Clerk and Sam Scott - Deputy Town Clerk & RFO.

228. INTERESTS

None were declared.

229. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Community and Heritage Committee held on 11th June 2025 were received and signed as a correct record.

230. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

231. MUSEUM CURATOR - PRESENTATION

- a) The Chairperson, Councillor Louise Cooke invited the Museum Curator, Dr Charlotte Dixon to provide a report on the Museum:

Dr Dixon referred to the Museum report, as circulated prior to the meeting. The report highlighted the following areas:

- Staff changes and maternity cover appointments
- Volunteer social outing
- Exhibitions and displays
- Christmas closure
- Events
- Poetry in the Museum
- Heritage Open Days
- 5th Anniversary of Newton's Place
- Halloween event
- St Leonard's Clock Tower
- Collections
- Website
- Collections Online
- Education
- Equality, diversity and inclusion

19:09 Having previously notified the Chairperson Cllr A Hall joined the meeting.

Dr Dixon reported that a member of the public had requested the return of an item they had previously donated to the Museum. Dr Dixon advised that this was a very unusual situation and asked the Committee to consider whether the item should be returned to the donor.

Arising from the discussion, it was:

RESOLVED that the Town Council agrees to return the item previously donated to the Museum to the original owner.

- b) The Museum Curator, Dr Charlotte Dixon gave an update on the What's In Store Project, as circulated prior to the meeting. The Curator was delighted to report that the application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund was successful, and the Museum has been awarded £818,653 to create a new accessible state-of-the-art museum store.

The three-year project will also provide the museum staff and volunteers with additional workspace which they desperately need to be able to work on managing, conserving and monitoring the collection. A programme of heritage skills training will support the project and provide opportunities for volunteers and staff to learn new skills. The project will create new employment opportunities.

During the development phase the project grew – in terms of the size of the building and the addition of a permanent accessible ramp. This means the project has added

an additional £70,001 which needs to be raised. A funding application for this amount has been submitted to Garfield Weston and the museum team are also looking at other funding options.

Members were advised that the Council is required to formally accept the terms of the Grant for the Delivery Phase of the What's In Store Project from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that Newton Abbot Town Council hereby accepts the grant of £818,653 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund together with the Terms of Grant for the Delivery Phase of the What's In Store Project at Newton's Place, Wolborough Street, Newton Abbot.

Councillors were extremely impressed by the outstanding work being carried out by the Museum team and were especially pleased to hear about the successful grant application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The Committee recognised the exceptional effort and professionalism that has gone into delivering this important initiative.

232. **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OFFICER - PRESENTATION**

The Chairperson invited the Community Engagement Officer, Kate Green, to provide an update on her recent community engagement work.

The Community Engagement Officer, presented highlights from the Community Engagement Report, circulated prior to the meeting, including the following activities and initiatives:

- Summer Exhibition activities:
 - Railway 200
 - Young Curators Club
- Creative Opportunities:
 - Twilight Sketching
 - Art Journaling
- Your Space Community Cabinet displays
- Make & Create Family workshops
- Newton's Place 5th Anniversary Celebrations
- What's In Store project
- Education packs
- Networking

It was noted that a wide range of the community actively engage with the Museum's activities, and that very positive feedback continues to be received.

Councillors extended their thanks to Kate for her excellent work in leading community engagement on behalf of the Town Council.

233. ALLOTMENTS

- a) The Chairperson invited the Administrative Officer for Green Spaces, Thomas Collard, to introduce the Allotment & Community Garden Strategy. The Strategy sets out Newton Abbot Town Council's commitment to supporting food-growing spaces for health, community, sustainability, and biodiversity. It outlines the Council's priorities for both allotments and the community garden, ensuring that both strands are developed in parallel and under shared values. The Strategy complements the Council's adopted Green Spaces Policy and supports the delivery of its wider environmental, wellbeing, and community engagement objectives.

Members considered the Strategy, which had been circulated prior to the meeting, and were invited to ask questions.

Arising from the discussion, it was:

RESOLVED that the Community & Heritage Committee hereby recommends to the Full Council, at its meeting in November, that the Allotment & Community Garden Strategy 2025–2027 be adopted.

- b) The Administrative Officer for Green Spaces introduced the Vicary's Field Allotment Transition Plan, as circulated prior to the meeting, and provided background information on the management of Vicary's Field. They highlighted the importance of bringing the site in line with the Council's other allotment sites.

Arising from the discussion, it was:

RESOLVED that that the Community & Heritage Committee hereby recommends to the Full Council, at its meeting in November, that the Vicary's Field Allotment Transition Plan, be adopted.

- c) The Administrative Officer for Green Spaces introduced the Accessible Allotment report, as circulated prior to the meeting, and invited members to ask any questions.

Arising from the discussion it was:

RESOLVED that that the Community & Heritage Committee hereby recommends to the Full Council, at its meeting in November, that the recommendations contained in the Accessible Allotment report be hereby adopted, as set out:

1. To establish an Accessible Allotment Plot at Decoy and Vicary's Fields, as outlined in the report.
2. Authorise officers to scope full costs and begin procurement and delivery planning.

3. Invite community partners and Newton Abbot District Community Allotment Association (NADCAA) to support delivery through volunteer and material contributions.
4. Review implementation outcomes in Year 1 with the potential to extend similar provision at other sites.

Councillors extended their thanks to Thomas for his excellent work in progressing the Town Council's allotment spaces.

234. **SOUTH WEST IN BLOOM 2026**

The Chairperson reported that she had attended the annual South West in Bloom Awards Ceremony together with the Facilities Maintenance Team Leader (FMTL), with a view to the Town Council entering the competition in 2026.

In addition, the Chairperson, Administrative Officer/Events Co-ordinator, Kelly Burrige (*In Bloom Project Lead*), and the FMTL had undertaken a walk-through of the town to consider options for enhancing the floral displays.

Members were invited to consider whether the Town Council should enter the South West in Bloom 2026 competition.

The FMTL provided a verbal report outlining his vision for the project.

Cllr A. Hall left the meeting briefly and did not take part in the vote.

Arising from the discussion, it was:

RESOLVED that Newton Abbot Town Council hereby agrees to enter the South West in Bloom 2026 competition.

Cllr A. Hall returned to the meeting.

235. **SUB-COMMITTEES/WORKING PARTIES/FORUMS**

- a) The Minutes of the meeting of the Emergency Plan Working Group held on 10th June 2025, as presented by the Councillor L Wood, were received and approved.
- b) The Minutes of the meeting of the Community Engagement Group held on 9th July 2025, as presented by Councillor M Joyce, were received and approved.
- c) The Minutes of the meeting of the Events Sub-Committee held on 24th September 2025, as presented by the Chairperson, Councillor A Hall were received and approved.
- d) The Minutes of the meeting of the Community Engagement Group held on 8th October 2025, as presented by Councillor M Joyce, were received and approved.

236. ACCOUNTS/INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

The Committee received and noted an overview of income and expenditure statements for the Community & Heritage Committee, Newton In Bloom and the Museum for the period 1st April to 31st August 2025.

The Chairperson advised that several questions had been raised in advance of the meeting and that the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) had provided satisfactory responses.

Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that the Town Council hereby:

Approves the Income and Expenditure Statements for the periods, 1st April to 31st August 2025 for the:

- Community and Heritage Committee.
- Newton In Bloom.
- Museum.

237. LATE CORRESPONDENCE

None.

238. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 4th February 2026

The Meeting closed at: 20:16

Chairperson.....Date.....