

MINUTES OF THE **MEETING OF THE COUNCIL** HELD ON **WEDNESDAY 12th NOVEMBER 2025** AT 7.00 P.M. AT NEWTON'S PLACE, WOLBOROUGH STREET, NEWTON ABBOT

Present: Councillors C Parker (Mayor) Presiding
L Cooke (Deputy Mayor)

Councillors: B Bailey A Ineson
P Bullivant G Jennings
R Buscombe M Joyce
C Davieson P Parker
A Gibbs M Ryan
A Hall N Yabsley

Officers in attendance: Phil Rowe Town Clerk
Sam Scott Deputy Town Clerk & RFO
Pierre Doutreligne Projects & Strategy Officer
Linda McGuirk Principal Administrator
Nigel Canham Communications Advisor

By invitation Freeman Mike Hocking
Freewoman Carol Bunday
Reverend Gill Daniel
3 x Representatives of the Teignbridge Community Project CIC

Also, present County Councillor Mick Cockerham

Before the meeting commenced, the Council welcomed six representatives from the Ay Twinning Association, who kindly presented artwork to the Council as a gesture of friendship and continued partnership.

274. WELCOME FROM THE MAYOR

The Mayor welcomed those present to the meeting and invited Reverend Gill Daniel to open the meeting with prayers.

275. APOLOGIES

a) Valid reasons for absence were received from Councillors Janet Bradford, David Corney-Walker, Tom Corney-Walker and Laura Wood.

Apologies were noted from District Councillors Jackie Hook, Robert Hayes and County Councillor Jacqueline Fry.

b) Members were asked to consider granting an extended leave of absence for Councillor Tom Corney-Walker due to ongoing health issues.

During the discussion, Members expressed their continued respect and concern for Councillor Tom Corney-Walker while recognising the importance of ensuring full representation for the residents of the Bushell Ward. It was noted that this was a

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second request for extended leave and that, while Members wished Councillor Tom Corney-Walker a full recovery, consideration must also be given to the effective fulfilment of Council duties. Arising from the discussion, it was:

RESOLVED that Councillor Tom Corney-Walker be hereby granted a further leave of absence of up to three months, with the situation to be reviewed at the end of that period.

Cllr B Bailey abstained from voting

276. INTERESTS

None declared.

277. MINUTES

The minutes of the Council Meeting held on 17th September 2025 were received and signed as a correct record.

Cllr A Hall abstained from voting.

278. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

279. PRESENTATION – THE TEIGNBRIDGE COMMUNITY PROJECT CIC

The Mayor welcomed the representatives of The Teignbridge Community Project CIC to the meeting and invited them to give a presentation to members. The presentation covered:

- A Community led skills hub supporting individuals with learning disabilities and mental health challenges to build confidence, develop life and employability skills and find their place in the community.
- Offering practical vocational workshops.
- Wellbeing and creative sessions.
- The impact on individuals who gain independence, pride and new opportunities.
- Opportunities for the Town Council to get involved and support the project.

The Mayor thanked the representative for their informative presentation and invited members to ask questions.

Councillors expressed their gratitude, recognising the valuable work being carried out in Newton Abbot and asked the following questions:

- Location of the facility.
- How the organisation receives its 11plus referrals.
- Congratulations, Cllr Mike Ryan offered access to various tools and support.

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- Cllrs Alex Hall, P Bullivant and C Parker advised they would be happy to contribute through their District Councillor Fund and encouraged an application.
- County Councillor Mick Cockerham also offered financial support.

280. **REPORTS OF COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES**

The Mayor invited County and District Councillors to provide a report on their recent activity in Newton Abbot.

County Councillor M Cockerham had submitted a report in advance of the meeting and highlighted ongoing issues relating to the A382 and A383 highways.

Councillor Paul Parker raised concerns regarding the A383 works, noting that he had not yet received a response to previous correspondence and expressed strong frustration about the matter.

Members noted that Councillor Jacqueline Fry had submitted a report in advance of the meeting, and the contents of the report were duly noted in her absence.

District Councillor R Buscombe reported on issues in which he has had direct involvement:

- Development proposals for the Bradley Mills site, with an investment of £300,000 to support an extra care housing project.
- Teignbridge District Council had been awarded partnership status with Centre Point.
- Approval by Full Council on 23rd October of the Sherborne Car Park housing scheme.

Councillor M Joyce queried what discussions had taken place with the Primary Care Network (PCN) and Integrated Care Board (ICB) regarding healthcare capacity, expressing concern that additional housing developments could exacerbate existing pressure on local health services.

District Councillor P Bullivant reported on issues in which he has had direct involvement:

- Meetings with the ICB and PCN, confirming that local healthcare capacity issues are under review.
- Overview & Scrutiny work examining opportunities to reduce costs.
- An update from Persimmon regarding adoption matters.
- Concerns about a rat run that requires police attention arising from the diversion of the A382.
- Attendance at a Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) discussion at Teignbridge District Council, with recommendations due to be submitted to Government by 28th November.
- Attended a Chamber of Commerce meeting and thanked the Project & Strategies Officer for their attendance and presentation to the Chamber.

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Cllr L Cooke commented that surgeries are unable to recruit or afford additional doctors, and that healthcare provision will not improve until surgeries are financially supported.

Cllr A Hall proposed that representatives of the Chamber of Commerce attend a future meeting of the Council to report on the Discover Newton Abbot website.

Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that representatives of the Chamber of Commerce are invited to attend a meeting of the Council to report on the Discover Newton Abbot website.

District Councillor A Hall reported on issues in which he has had direct involvement:

- The adoption of the One Teignbridge Report.
- Issues concerning the Penn Inn underpass, including graffiti and anti-social behaviour; a local resident has requested the installation of CCTV in the area.

District Councillor M Ryan reported on issues in which he has had direct involvement:

- Attended O&S meeting.
- Market Square improvement – paving not as shown in the artist impression.
- Attended LGR meeting.

County Councillor M. Cockerham highlighted that the Buckland Community Hub facilities are currently underused and encouraged Members to help raise its profile within the community.

Freewoman Carol Bunday, in her capacity as a director of the Buckland Community Hub, expressed her thanks to the Council for its continued support.

District Councillor C Parker reported on issues in which he has had direct involvement:

- The need to address speeding concerns in Buckland.
- Attendance at the HATOC Committee, where the new speed cameras on Ashburton Road were discussed; no additional signage will be installed.
- Ongoing concerns regarding safety in the Penn Inn subways.

The Mayor thanked the District and County Councillors for their reports as they provided a valuable insight into the issues within Newton Abbot.

281. **MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

a) The Mayor, Councillor Colin Parker, provided an update on recent engagements that he and the Mayoress had attended, as circulated prior to the meeting. The Mayor highlighted the following events:

- Mary's Meals Charity event.
- Remembrance Sunday parade and service, Poppy Train and Armistice Day.

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The Deputy Mayor provided an update on recent engagements that she had attended:

- Newton Abbot Borough Law Day.
 - Opening Holly's Interiors shop on Bank Street.
- b) The Mayor invited Councillors to contribute items towards the Mayor's Hamper, which will serve as the main prize in the Mayor's Charity Raffle to be held on Victorian Evening. Members were also reminded to sell their allocated raffle tickets and to return any unsold draw tickets by 3rd December.

Councillor A Hall advised that help is required for the Christmas lights switch on event on the 22nd November. Members were asked to contact the Events Co-Ordinator with their availability.

282. **WHAT'S IN STORE PROJECT BOARD**

- a) The minutes of the What's In Store Project Board meeting held on 28th October 2025, as circulated prior to the meeting, were noted.

Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that the minutes of the What's In Store Project Board meeting held on 28th October 2025 were approved as a correct record

- b) Members were asked to consider granting delegated authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairperson of the What's In Store Project Board, to seek, receive and approve tender applications for the What's In Store Project.

Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that delegated authority be hereby granted to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairperson of the What's In Store Project Board, to seek, receive and approve tender applications for the What's In Store Project.

283. **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR)**

The Mayor, Councillor Colin Parker, advised that there had been an unexpected delay in the Council receiving its Annual Governance and Accountability Statement (AGAR) from the External Auditor. The delay was due to an anonymous query raised with the External Auditor concerning Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) matters.

The Mayor assured Members that they would be kept informed of progress as further updates become available.

284. **BECOMING A COUNCILLOR – PREPARING FOR THE 2027 LOCAL ELECTIONS**

The Projects & Strategy Officer gave a report on work being carried out in preparation for the next local elections expected in May 2027. The presentation covered:

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National Context:

- Voting could be extended to 16 and 17 year-olds from 2027.
- Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) will result in additional assets and responsibilities for Town Councils.
- Central Government is promoting a “hub” model of local governance.
- Elections for Shadow Unitary Authorities are scheduled for May 2027, which may affect Town Council candidacy levels.

Local Context:

- The May 2023 elections did not attract candidates for six of the Council’s 18 seats.
- There is a risk of losing the General Power of Competence (GPoC), which could limit the Council’s ability to deliver ambitious projects under the forthcoming LGR framework.
- It is therefore essential to ensure candidates stand in all wards at the next election.

Timeline:

- Dec 2025 – Jan 2026: Design of new handbook and publicity materials.
- Spring 2026: Filming of councillor “first-person” videos and attendance/presentations at local events (e.g. Chamber of Commerce, Community Support, Young Devon).
- 16 May 2026: Annual Town Meeting.
- Late June 2026: Anticipated announcement of the Secretary of State’s decision.
- Summer 2026: Launch of social media campaign.
- 3 October 2026: “Meet Your Council” event.

Members expressed their thanks to the Projects & Strategy Officer and Communications Advisor for their work to encourage public engagement and participation in the 2027 local elections.

285. **LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME**

Councillors were asked to consider the Local Council Award Scheme application, as circulated prior to the meeting. Confirmation was required by resolution that the Council is satisfied that all required documents, information and conditions are in place for the Bronze and Silver awards of the Local Council Award Scheme, and that these are published on the Council’s website, where applicable. Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that Newton Abbot Town Council hereby confirms that the Council is satisfied that all required documents, information and conditions are in place for the Bronze and Silver awards of the Local Council Award Scheme, and that these are published on the Council’s website, where applicable.

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286. **RECOMMENDATION FROM THE STAFFING COMMITTEE**

The Mayor asked Councillors to consider a recommendation from the Staffing Committee that, in accordance with Minute No. 25/10(213C), the title of Town Clerk be changed to Chief Executive Officer during the forthcoming recruitment process for the role.

The Chairperson of the Staffing Committee, Councillor Richard Buscombe, advised that following the announcement of the Town Clerk’s intention to retire in 2027, the Committee had commenced a review of the recruitment process. As part of this, Members agreed that a more contemporary title was appropriate, reflecting the likely increase in responsibilities associated with the role as a result of the ongoing Local Government Reorganisation.

Following a lengthy debate, it was:

RESOLVED that the title of Town Clerk be changed to Chief Executive Officer (CEO) during the forthcoming recruitment process.

Councillor Colin Parker abstained from voting.

287. **POLICIES**

The Town Clerk introduced the policy documents, as circulated prior to the meeting.

Members considered the following policies, as circulated prior to the meeting.

- Appraisal Policy
- Mental Health Policy
- Drivers Policy
- Contractors Policy
- Fire Policy
- Allotments & Community Garden Strategy 2025 to 2027
- Vicary’s Field Allotment Transition Plan
- Accessible Allotment
- Safeguarding Policy

Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that the policies in relation to the:

- a) Appraisal Policy
- b) Mental Health Policy
- c) Drivers Policy
- d) Contractors Policy
- e) Fire Policy
- f) Allotments & Community Garden Strategy 2025 to 2027
- g) Vicary’s Field Allotment Transition Plan
- h) Accessible Allotment Report
- i) Safeguarding Policy

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be hereby, approved and adopted.

288. **PROCEEDINGS OF COMMITTEES**

- a) The Minutes of the Meeting of the **Planning Committee** held on 16th September 2025, as presented by the Chairperson, Councillor N Yabsley were received and approved.
- b) The Minutes of the Meeting of the **Staffing Committee** held on 1st October 2025, as presented by the Chairperson, Councillor R Buscombe were received and approved.
- c) The Minutes of the Meeting of the **Planning Committee** held on 7th October 2025, as presented by the Chairperson, Councillor N Yabsley were received and approved.
- d) The Minutes of the Meeting of the **Community & Heritage Committee** held on 15th October 2025, as presented by the Chairperson, Councillor L Cooke were received and approved.
- e) The Minutes of the Meeting of the **Policy & Resources Committee**, held on 22nd October 2025 as presented by the Vice Chairperson, Councillor M Ryan were received and approved.

Councillor M Ryan referred to Minute number 25/10(246) of the above minutes, Town Centre Masterplan, and reported that:

- Teignbridge District Council Executive approved on 4th November 2025 the commencement of work on developing a Newton Abbot Masterplan.

Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that Newton Abbot Town Council formally welcomes partnership with Teignbridge District Council on a new Masterplan, which aims to benefit Newton Abbot through strategic planning and coordinated town centre development.

- f) The Minutes of the Meeting of the **Planning Committee** held on 28th October 2025, as presented by the Chairperson, Councillor N Yabsley were received and approved.
- g) The Minutes of the Meeting of the **Finance & Audit Committee** held on 29th October 2025, as presented by the Vice Chairperson, Councillor B Bailey were received and approved.

289. **LATE CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

290. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

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The next meeting to be held on Wednesday 21st January 2026 (Precept meeting).

Meeting closed at hours 20:50 hours.

Chairperson (Mayor)..... Date.....

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