

MINUTES OF THE **MEETING OF THE COUNCIL** HELD ON **WEDNESDAY 3rd JUNE 2026** AT 7.00 P.M. AT NEWTON'S PLACE, WOLBOROUGH STREET, NEWTON ABBOT

Present: Councillors L Cooke (Mayor) Presiding

Councillors:	B Bailey	A Hall
	P Bullivant	M Joyce
	R Buscombe	C Parker
	D Corney-Walker	P Parker
	C Davieson	L Wood
	A Gibbs	N Yabsley

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

By invitation	Freeman Mike Hocking
	Freewoman Carol Bunday
	Anna Chaplain, Kim Martin
	Representative of Devon County Council

Also, present	1 x Member of the public
	District Councillor J Hook

26. **WELCOME FROM THE MAYOR**

The Mayor welcomed those present to the meeting and invited Anna Chaplain, Kim Martin to open the meeting with prayers.

27. **APOLOGIES**

Valid reasons for absence were received from Councillors Janet Bradford, Tom Corney-Walker, Gwen Jennings and Mike Ryan.

An apology was also received from Councillor A Ineson (Deputy Mayor).

An apology was noted from Nigel Canham, Communications Advisor.

28. **INTERESTS**

None declared.

29. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Council Meetings held on:

- a) 18th March 2026
- b) 13th May 2026 (Annual Council Meeting)

Chairperson (Mayor) initials.....

were received and signed as a correct record.

30. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None.

31. **PRESENTATION – DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL WORKPLACE SKILLS PROJECT**

The Mayor welcomed a representative from Devon County Council, who delivered a presentation on the Newton Abbot, Dawlish and Teignmouth Workplace Skills Project.

The presentation provided an overview of the project, including:

- The rationale for selecting Newton Abbot, Dawlish and Teignmouth as the focus area;
- The successful pilot undertaken in Ilfracombe and the lessons learned;
- Challenges within Teignbridge, including low earnings, deprivation and lower levels of higher qualifications compared with the national average;
- Employment and economic opportunities within the area;
- Collaborative working with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations and Employment Hubs;
- Aligning skills and training provision to support unemployed residents into employment;
- Engagement with local businesses and employers to identify workforce needs;
- Partnership working across organisations and sectors;
- Proposed next steps for delivery within Teignbridge; and
- The establishment of a Task and Finish Working Group.

The Mayor thanked the representative for the presentation and invited questions from Members. Councillors asked:

- The number of people not in education, employment or training
- The impact of increases in National Insurance contributions
- How the scheme operates and supports participants.
- Partnership arrangements, the utilisation of South Devon UTC in Newton Abbot
- Assistance with travel to interviews and training, and
- The reporting and sharing of success stories

The Projects & Strategy Officer advised that he would be joining the Working Group and would support the project wherever possible.

Members expressed their thanks to the representative and looked forward to supporting this important project

32. **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.

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

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- Planning Reform and the implications on local decision making
- Adoption of the Teignbridge Local Plan and impact on CIL
- Chair of the Governance Committee

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

- Town Centre Master Plan
- Local Government Review

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

- Trees and traffic issues in Buckland & Milber
- Potholes
- Traffic queues at Recycling Centre

Councillor M Joyce advised that the Police are taking action with regard to traffic issues in this area.

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

- Town & Parish Charter
- Buckland and Courtenay Centres
- Concerns for ongoing youth provision in the town
- Town Centre Master Plan

District Councillor J Hook had submitted a report in advance of the meeting and welcomed questions on matters contained within the report, the following questions were raised.

Councillor M Joyce sought an update on the completion of the Market Hall and Market Square project and enquired about the process for traders to apply for premises. He reported having received complaints from traders who had not received responses to their enquiries. Councillor Joyce also asked when the new litter bins would be installed within Market Square and Queen Street.

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

33. **MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- a) Members noted the Mayoral events, as circulated prior to the meeting, attended by Councillor C Parker and the Mayoress at the end of his Mayoral Year.
- b) The Mayor, Councillor Louise Cooke, provided an update on events attended in her previous capacity as Deputy Mayor, as well as recent engagements she had attended in her current role as Mayor, as circulated prior to the meeting.

The Mayor highlighted the following events:

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- Classic Car Show
- Day at the Races

34. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Town Clerk advised that, following the Annual Council Meeting, the proposed membership of the Staffing Committee exceeded the number permitted under the Committee's Terms of Reference and that he needed to draw to the attention of the Council an issue relating to the recruitment of the Town Clerk (Chief Executive Officer- CEO)

The Clerk reported that an independent advisor, Council HR and Governance Support Consultancy (CHRGs), had been appointed to oversee the recruitment of the CEO in 2027. CHRGs had advised that all Councillors could be invited to have the opportunity to serve on the recruitment panel by being invited to submit an application (a draft process was previously circulated) and that Councillors would not need to be members of the Staffing Committee in order to be considered. This would enable Councillors with the appropriate skills and experience to be independently selected for the panel.

Members noted that the recruitment process would require a broad range of skills and that a panel drawn from the wider Council would be appropriate. It was further noted that the Staffing Committee was limited to six members under its Terms of Reference, in part to ensure the Council could properly manage any appeals process.

Members supported the proposal that applications to serve on the recruitment panel be invited from the wider Council. In response to concerns raised regarding the process, it was confirmed that the independent recruitment advisor would be responsible for selecting the panel. Members were satisfied with this clarification.

The Mayor reiterated the level of commitment that would be required from Councillors involved in the full recruitment process.

RESOLVED

- a) that the Staffing Committee Terms of Reference remain unchanged, that the Committee membership be limited to the six original members appointed.
- b) that the advice of CHRGs regarding the Chief Executive Officer recruitment panel be hereby adopted.
- c) That paragraph 11 of the Council's Recruitment & Retention Policy be hereby amended to allow the interview panel to be appointed from among the Council as a whole.

Councillor N Yabsley abstained from voting.

35. POLICIES

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

- Code of Conduct
- Standing Orders

Chairperson (Mayor) initials.....

- Grants Policy (*new*)
- Community Engagement Policy (*new*)
- IT Acceptable Use & Governance Policy (*new*)

Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that the policies in relation to the:

- a) Code of Conduct
- b) Standing Orders
- c) Grants Policy
- d) Community Engagement Policy
- e) IT Acceptable Use & Governance Policy

be hereby, approved and adopted subject to a minor amendment to the Standing Orders to ensure that the process for receiving tender applications mirrored the adopted Financial Regulations with regard to receiving electronic applications.

36. PROCEEDINGS OF COMMITTEES

- a) The Minutes of the Meeting of the **Community & Heritage Committee** held on 25th March 2026, as presented by Councillor B Bailey were received and approved.
- b) The Minutes of the Meeting of the **Planning Committee** held on 31st March 2026, as presented by the Chairperson, Councillor N Yabsley were received and approved.
- c) The Minutes of the Meeting of the **Planning Committee** held on 21st April 2026, as presented by the Chairperson, Councillor N Yabsley were received and approved.
- d) The Minutes of the Meeting of the **Planning Committee** held on 12th May 2026, as presented by the Chairperson, Councillor N Yabsley were received and approved.

37. ADOPTION OF TEIGNBRIDGE LOCAL PLAN

Members noted that Teignbridge District Council had adopted the Teignbridge Local Plan 2020–2040 at its meeting held on 19th May 2026. The new Local Plan now supersedes the Teignbridge Local Plan 2013 - 2033 and its policies should be applied when considering planning applications.

The Town Clerk advised that, following the adoption of the Teignbridge Local Plan 2020 - 2040, the Town Council should consider reviewing the Newton Abbot Neighbourhood Plan 2016 - 2033 to align it with the new Local Plan period.

Members were advised that specialist planning support would be required to undertake the review of the Neighbourhood Plan. It was proposed that delegated authority be granted to the Town Clerk to investigate the appointment of a Town Planner and report back to a future meeting with recommendations.

Arising from the discussion, it was:

Chairperson (Mayor) initials.....

RESOLVED that the Town Council prioritise the review of the Newton Abbot Neighbourhood Plan and grant delegated authority to the Town Clerk to investigate the appointment of a Town Planner to support the review process and report back to a future meeting.

38. **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

Members received and noted the survey results from the Annual Town Meeting held on Saturday 16th May 2026, as circulated prior to the meeting.

Members expressed their thanks to all staff involved in supporting and delivering the Annual Town Meeting.

39. **LATE CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

40. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting to be held on Wednesday 15th July 2026

41. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

Due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it was:

RESOLVED that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

42. **STRATEGIC MATTERS – UPDATE FROM THE TOWN CLERK**

The Town Clerk reported on the following strategic matters:

- a) Members received and noted a progress report on asset transfers as presented by the Projects and Strategy Officer.
- b) The Town Clerk provided an update on the due diligence being undertaken in relation to an ongoing asset acquisition opportunity.
- c) The Town Clerk gave an update on matters relating to Old Forde House.

Meeting closed at 20:45 hours.

Chairperson (Mayor).....

Date.....

Chairperson (Mayor) initials.....