APPENDIX A

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE **COMMUNITY & HERITAGE COMMITTEE** HELD ON **WEDNESDAY 10th JUNE 2026** AT **7:00** P.M. AT NEWTON'S PLACE, WOLBOROUGH STREET, NEWTON ABBOT.

PRESENT Councillor: A Ineson - (Chairperson) Presiding
B Bailey - (Vice Chairperson)

Councillors: J Bradford, R Buscombe, L Cooke (Mayor), C Davieson, A Gibbs, A Hall, M Ryan

Officers in attendance:
Linda McGuirk - Principal Administrator
Pierre Doutreligne - Projects & Strategy Officer
Thomas Collard – Administrative Officer - Green Spaces
Nigel Canham - Communications Advisor

Also present: DCC Councillor Mick Cockerham

43. **ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMUNITY & HERITAGE COMMITTEE 2026/27**

Nominations were received for the election of the Chairperson of the Community & Heritage Committee for the year 2026/2027.

Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that Councillor Amanda Ineson be elected Chairperson of the Community & Heritage Committee for the year 2026/2027.

44. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Valid reasons for absence were received from Councillors Colin Parker, Paul Parker and Laura Wood, and from Sam Scott, Deputy Town Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer.

45. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMUNITY & HERITAGE COMMITTEE 2026/27**

Nominations were received for the appointment of the Vice Chairperson of the Community & Heritage Committee for the year 2026/2027.

Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that Councillor Brian Bailey be appointed Vice Chairperson of the Community & Heritage Committee for the year 2026/2027.

46. **INTERESTS**

Councillor R Buscombe declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 15, Transfer of Competence, by virtue of his membership of Teignbridge District Council.

47. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Community and Heritage Committee held on 25th March 2026 were received and signed as a correct record.

Cllr J Bradford abstained from voting

48. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None.

49. **COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee gave due consideration to the Terms of Reference for the Community and Heritage Committee, circulated prior to the meeting.

Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that the Terms of Reference for the Community and Heritage Committee be hereby approved and adopted.

50. **BIODIVERSITY POLICY**

a) The Green Spaces Officer gave an update on progress against the actions identified within the Biodiversity Policy. A visual presentation was displayed on the large screen and included:

- Timeline of actions to date
- Location of the trial verges
- Images of verges
- Surface-level biodiversity audits completed

In addition Members were informed about general biodiversity updates:

- Biodiversity page launched on the website
- Biodiversity and insect display at the museum
- Allotment and Town iNaturalist projects are progressing well
- Rainwater collection facility installed at Decoy Allotments with NATC funding
- Swift boxes, bee hotels and support for pollinator-friendly bed planting
- Continued support for Pesticide Free Devon and attendance at the Pesticide Free Conference

- Presentation delivered at the Saving Species Conference at South Devon College
- Printing and postage costs significantly reduced

The Green Spaces Officer continues to support the Planning Committee through the assessment of Tree Preservation Order (TPO) and Conservation Area Notification (CAN) applications and is undertaking arboriculture training to further develop expertise in this area.

Members asked how the wildflower trial beds were being maintained. They were advised that the Facilities Maintenance Team is monitoring the beds, undertaking watering as required and carrying out routine maintenance, including litter clearance.

In response to a question regarding whether sites had been identified within College Ward and whether a second phase of the project was planned, members were advised that the trial would continue until 2028. Following evaluation of the data and outcomes from the trial, opportunities for future phases and additional locations could be considered.

b) Members were asked to consider recommendations from the recent Biodiversity Working Group and to incorporate the following additional actions into the Biodiversity Policy:

- Produce an annual biodiversity monitoring report measuring habitat creation, species records, volunteer engagement and biodiversity improvements.
- Install biodiversity enhancement features at Council-managed sites, including bee hotels, bat boxes, swift boxes, ponds, deadwood habitats and pollinator planting.
- Increase native tree and hedge planting across Council-managed land.
- Investigate opportunities for rain gardens, wildlife ponds and sustainable drainage planting.
- Install interpretation signage at biodiversity project sites.
- Investigate the development of a Newton Abbot Green Trail.

Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that the recommendations of the Biodiversity Working Group be hereby approved and the additional actions be incorporated into the Biodiversity Policy.

Cllr A Hall abstained from voting.

51. **GREEN SPACES UPDATE**

The Green Spaces Officer gave an update on:

Community Spaces

- Community Garden and leat diversion improvement works now complete
    - Track potholes filled
    - Antisocial behaviour remains an ongoing issue

Allotments

- All existing tenants at Vicary's Allotments have now signed tenancy agreements
    - Meeting planned with NADCAA to discuss management transition
    - Clearance and development works at Vicary's Field to commence this year
- First round of 2026 allotment inspections completed; over 10 eviction notices issued, though the process generally went well
- Security improvements implemented at Decoy Allotments following break-ins

Trees and Grounds Maintenance

- Significant programme of both emergency and planned tree works undertaken throughout the year
- Working closely with verge maintenance contractors to improve service delivery

Members expressed their thanks to the Green Spaces Officer for his reports and asked questions regarding:

- Maintenance of the Leat
- Allotments waiting list

The Communications Advisor suggested that a press release be issued to highlight the Council's biodiversity initiatives and wider environmental actions.

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

a) The Minutes of the meeting of the Community Engagement Group held on 15th April 2026, as presented by Councillor R Buscombe, were received and approved.

b) The Minutes of the meeting of the Allotment Group held on 22nd April 2026, as presented by Councillor M Ryan, were received and approved.

c) The Minutes of the meeting of the Biodiversity Working Group held on 20th May 2026, as presented by Councillor A Ineson, were received and approved.

d) The Minutes of the meeting of the Events Sub Committee held on 20th May 2026, as presented by Councillor A Hall, were received and approved.

53. **ACCOUNTS/INCOME & 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 2026 to 31st May 2026.

Councillors discussed the current operation of the kiosk at the Town Quay, including matters relating to its ongoing use and management. It was noted that the kiosk had not been opening regularly and members were concerned about the current costs associated with supporting the business and suggested future options need to be considered.

Arising from the discussion, it was:

RESOLVED that the Town Council hereby:

a) Approves the Income and Expenditure Statements for the periods, 1st April 2026 to 31st May 2026 for: -

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

b) Officers submit a report to a future meeting on the current arrangements for the kiosk, including associated costs and options for its future operation.

54. **LATE CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

55. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 14th October 2026

56. **EXCLUSION OF 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.

57. **TRANSFER OF COMPETENCE**

The Projects & Strategy Officer reported on a potential transfer of responsibilities from Teignbridge District Council to Newton Abbot Town Council and outlined two options.

Arising from the discussion, it was:

RESOLVED that delegated authority be granted to the Projects & Strategy Officer to continue discussions with Teignbridge District Council regarding Option 2 and to undertake the necessary due diligence and feasibility work, with a further report to be submitted to the Committee in due course.

The Meeting closed at 19:47

Chairperson……Date……