NOTES OF THE **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GROUP** HELD ON **WEDNESDAY 8th JULY 2026** AT 7.00 P.M. AT NEWTON'S PLACE.

PRESENT: Councillor: R Buscombe (Chairperson) Presiding
C Parker (Vice Chairperson)

Councillors: L Cooke
C Davieson
A Ineson
M Ryan
L Wood

By invitation: 2 x Representatives of the Westcountry Rivers Trust
1 x Representative of the National Trust
1 x Representative of Fishtek Consulting
1 x Representative of the Environment Agency

Officers In attendance: Linda McGuirk - Principal Administrator
Pierre Doutreligne - Projects & Strategy Officer
Nigel Canham - Communications Advisor

Also, in attendance Freeman Mike Hocking
Freewoman Carol Bunday
County Councillor Jacqueline Fry

53. **ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GROUP 2026/27**

Nominations were received for the election of the Chairperson of the Community & Engagement Group for the year 2026/2027.

Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that Councillor Richard Buscombe be elected Chairperson of the Community & Engagement Group for the year 2026/2027.

54. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

A valid reason for absence was received from Councillor A Hall.

55. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GROUP 2026/27**

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

Accordingly, it was:

Chair……..

RESOLVED that Councillor Colin Parker be appointed Vice Chairperson of the Community & Engagement Group for the year 2026/2027.

56. **INTERESTS**

None declared.

57. **MINUTES**

The notes of the Community Engagement Group meeting held on 15th April 2026 were received and signed as a correct record.

58. **COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee gave due consideration to the Terms of Reference for the Community & Engagement Group, as circulated prior to the meeting.

Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that the Terms of Reference for the Community & Engagement Group be hereby, approved and adopted.

59. **PRESENTATION – RIVER LEMON PARTNERSHIP PROJECT TO IMPROVE PASSAGE (PPIP)**

The Chairperson, Councillor Richard Buscombe, welcomed representatives from the Westcountry Rivers Trust, Environment Agency, Fishtek Consulting and the National Trust who delivered a presentation on the River Lemon Partnership Project to Improve Passage (PPIP).

The presentation outlined the aims of the project and explained that the River Lemon is currently classified as having poor fish status under the Water Framework Directive, with salmon now recognised as an endangered species. Representatives highlighted that existing weirs are significant barriers to fish migration and described proposals to improve river connectivity through the removal of Bradley Manor Weir and Chipley Mill Weir.

Members were informed that Bradley Manor Weir is in a poor state of repair and currently prevents salmon migration. Although acknowledged as a well-loved feature of the estate, it was considered uneconomical to repair. The proposed design for its removal was presented, with assurances that the existing footpath would be retained. It was also confirmed that the project is progressing through the planning process.

Representatives advised that public consultation events had been held and stated that the project would also provide benefits by reducing upstream flood risk. Examples of similar deteriorating barriers on the River Exe were also shown, together with proposed mitigation measures relating to the footpath, Leat, sluice structure and wall.

Chair……..

The Chairperson invited Members to ask questions. The following matters were raised by Members and the Freeman:

Whether salmon would be expected to return to the area following the removal of the barrier, given there is currently no known salmon spawning near Bradley, and reassurance was sought regarding the potential impact on flood risk.

Clarification was requested on the future of Bradley Leat - representatives advised that it would remain but would carry less water than at present.

Members commented that the engineering proposals were highly technical and sought further information regarding site access, project costs and funding arrangements. Representatives advised that the project is being funded by the Environment Agency.

Concerns were expressed at the loss of the Bradley Manor weir, with questions regarding the stability of the proposed boulders and responsibility for any future maintenance. Representatives confirmed that ongoing maintenance would be the responsibility of the landowner.

Concerns were made regarding the overall merits of the project.

Members asked for an indication of the project's anticipated cost and timescale. Representatives advised that the estimated project cost was approximately £400,000 subject to the tendering process.

The Chairperson, Councillor Richard Buscombe, expressed his thanks to the representatives for their extensive and detailed presentation. He reaffirmed the Council's commitment to working collaboratively with them and maintaining ongoing communication.

At 19:46 the meeting was adjourned for a comfort break.

Representatives of the Westcountry Rivers Trust, Environment Agency, Fishtek Consulting and the National Trust

19:50 the meeting resumed

60. **PRESENTATION – TEIGNBRIDGE YOUTH SUPPORT FORUM**

The Chairperson, Councillor Richard Buscombe, welcomed the Projects and Strategy Officer and the Principal Strategy and Policy Officer from Teignbridge District Council, who delivered a joint presentation on the proposed Teignbridge Youth Support Forum.

The presentation outlined the vision for the Youth Forum, which aims to strengthen the voice of young people, improve collaboration between organisations supporting young people across Teignbridge, and develop a coordinated approach to youth provision. It was noted that no other local authority in South Devon currently has a dedicated youth policy, and the Forum seeks to bring together partners to improve outcomes for young people.

Chair……..

Members were advised of Newton Abbot Town Council's role in supporting the initiative and the opportunities for partnership working.

During the discussion, Members welcomed the collaborative approach and raised a number of questions and observations:

Members discussed the challenges facing young people, including resilience, access to work experience, employment opportunities, the cost of living and the availability of youth services. Questions were raised about how the Forum would address these complex issues and how organisations could work more effectively together despite funding constraints.

The potential value of a dedicated Youth Support Officer to co-ordinate local provision was suggested, together with the need for improved partnership working and better co-ordination between existing services. Concern was also expressed regarding the closure of Buckland Youth Club and the impact this may have on young people.

Representatives acknowledged that the current youth provision is complex and recognised that the Forum's purpose is to bring together the right organisations to improve co-ordination, maximise available funding opportunities and develop more effective support for young people. Existing apprenticeship opportunities at Teignbridge District Council were highlighted, and it was suggested that Newton Abbot Town Council may wish to consider offering work experience opportunities.

Concerns were also expressed about ensuring the Forum's long-term sustainability beyond the involvement of individual organisations or funding streams and the impact of Local Government Reorganisation.

The Chairperson expressed confidence that, with the right support and opportunities, young people would continue to make a positive contribution to the community.

61. **HOT TOPICS**

None.

62. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next scheduled meeting is Wednesday 11th November 2026.

Meeting closed at 20:45

CHAIRPERSON…… Date……

Chair……..