

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY & HERITAGE COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 4th FEBRUARY 2026 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 M Joyce
J Bradford C Parker (Mayor)
R Buscombe M Ryan
C Davieson L Wood
A Hall

Officers in attendance: Sam Scott – Deputy Town Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer
Pierre Doutreligne - Projects & Strategy Officer
Thomas Collard – Administrative Officer - Green Spaces
Nigel Canham - Communications Advisor.

Present Freeman Mike Hocking
Devon County Councillor J Fry
Mr Charlie Penny - Managing Director, Falcon Digital

369. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Valid reasons for absence were received on behalf of Councillors A Gibbs and P Parker.

Apologies were also received from Phil Rowe - Town Clerk, Linda McGuirk - Principal Administrator and Joanna Eccles - Museum Curator (maternity cover).

370. INTERESTS

Councillor B Bailey declared an interest relating to agenda item no. 5, namely that he was a personal friend of the external speaker.

371. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Community and Heritage Committee held on 15th October 2025 were received and signed as a correct record.

372. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

373. VISIT NEWTON ABBOT - PRESENTATION

Councillors received a presentation from Mr Charlie Penny, Managing Director of Falcon Digital, which covered:-

- the background of the Visit Newton Abbot website (<http://visitnewtonabbot.org>) as a community project;
- how he had acquired the website from its founders;
- Falcon Digital's record of providing a digital lifeline for charity and community groups;
- the proposed full system rebuild for the website;
- next steps;
- free business support (e.g. seminars) for Newton Abbot businesses; and
- how Newton Abbot Town Council could help the project in terms of guidance and visibility.

During discussion:-

- Councillor C Parker suggested that Mr Penny should liaise with town council officers regarding guidance;
- Freeman M Hocking welcomed the opportunity for the website to promote Community Transport;
- Councillor M Ryan pointed out factual inaccuracies on the website; and
- the Communications Advisor suggested the website could make use of existing copy on the history of the town.

Mr Penny clarified that:-

- he had only inherited access the website a few weeks ago and hadn't had the time to proofread it;
- the Visit Newton Abbot website was unrelated to a similar website which had been presented to the town council in 2024;
- he had no current involvement with the Newton Abbot Chamber of Commerce;
- the maintenance costs of the website were negligible; and
- trusted organisations such as Newton Abbot Town Council would have the ability to upload events onto the website themselves.

Councillors thanked Mr Penny for his presentation and praised his efforts to offer assistance to charities, community groups and Newton Abbot businesses.

374. **TRANSPORT – 20 MPH**

Councillor M Ryan reminded members of the background to the proposal and the issues faced by Buckland. Councillor C Parker advised that County Councillor Mick Cockerham would put the case forward to the Teignbridge Highways and Traffic Orders Committee (HATOC). Members expressed unanimous support for the proposal and it was consequently:

RESOLVED that a letter be sent to HATOC, signed by both the Mayor and the Town Clerk on behalf of Newton Abbot Town Council, supporting the implementation of a 20mph speed limit in the Buckland area

375. **SOUTH WEST IN BLOOM 2026**

The Chairperson gave members a progress update on the forthcoming South West in Bloom 2026 competition, noting:-

- the enthusiasm shown by the Administrative Officer/Events Co-ordinator, Kelly Burrige and the Facilities Maintenance Team Leader, Rob Woodger, for the project;
- the support for the scheme shown by the manager of the Wetherspoons pub on Queen Street and by one of the judges; and
- the proposed route for the walk-through with the judges, as discussed with the aforementioned council officers.

Councillor M Ryan remarked on the wider issue of keeping Newton Abbot tidy, deploring the lack of bins on Queen Street, which resulted in people littering the planters.

Councillors expressed gratitude to the Chairperson and to council staff for their dedication to South West in Bloom.

376. **GREEN SPACES UPDATE**

The Administrative Officer - Green Spaces gave a brief summary of the report submitted, highlighting:-

- the Vicary's Field allotments, which would soon come into joint management by NATC and NADCAA; and
- the imminent wildlife-friendly management trial on seven test verges.

Councillors thanked the Administrative Officer - Green Spaces for his update and report, praised his work and congratulated him on his one-year anniversary in post.

377. **ROYAL GARDEN PARTY NOMINATIONS**

Councillor C Parker remarked that, while traditionally the nominee was the most senior councillor who had not yet attended the Royal Garden Party, there was no obligation to follow this process.

Following discussion, it was:

RESOLVED that Councillor Alex Hall be Newton Abbot Town Council's nominee to attend the Royal Garden Party on Friday 8th May 2026.

Cllr J Bradford abstained from the vote.

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

The Minutes of the meeting of the Events Sub Committee held on 28th January 2026, as presented by Councillor A Hall, were received and approved.

379. 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 to 31st December 2025. Clarification was given that the museum donations were almost entirely recorded under the ‘museum sales’ entry.

Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that the Town Council hereby:

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

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

380. LATE CORRESPONDENCE

None.

381. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 25th March 2026

The Meeting closed at 19:46

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