

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY & HERITAGE COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 25th MARCH 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 A Hall
J Bradford M Joyce
R Buscombe C Parker (Mayor)
C Davieson M Ryan
A Gibbs L Wood

Officers in attendance: Sam Scott – Deputy Town Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer
Linda McGuirk - Principal Administrator
Pierre Doutreligne - Projects & Strategy Officer
Joanna Eccles - Museum Curator (maternity cover)
Nigel Canham - Communications Advisor

By Invitation: GP, Dr Maurice Kemple

Present: Freeman Mike Hocking
Freewoman Carol Bunday

435. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

A valid reason for absence was received from Councillor P Parker.

436. INTERESTS

None.

437. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Community and Heritage Committee held on 4th February 2026 were received and signed as a correct record.

438. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

439. COMMUNITY WELLBEING DIGITAL APP - PRESENTATION

Councillors received a presentation from GP, Dr M Kemple, regarding the development of a Community Wellbeing Digital App. Dr Kemple outlined the core principles underpinning the initiative, including addressing health inequalities, the importance of community engagement, and the challenges of an increasingly fragmented society. He

emphasised the value of non-medication strategies in improving wellbeing and explained that the app has been developed as an additional tool to facilitate community connection.

The app functions as a digital community noticeboard and is designed to be simple, user-friendly, and readily accessible. A demonstration of the app was provided. Dr Kemple also highlighted the importance of GP involvement in community engagement. It was noted that the app is currently live, although still in an early stage of development.

Councillors discussed the potential of the app, noting it as an interesting initiative to help tackle health inequalities. It was confirmed that the app is intended to complement existing social prescribing efforts.

Councillors asked about:

- The role of digital engagement in supporting community wellbeing
- The current status of the app's rollout and its availability across GP practices (not yet widely shared)
- Potential inclusion of features such as healthy eating and cooking guidance
- Opportunities to share the app with organisations such as Talkworks and other mental health providers
- The impending end of the app development stage and budget
- How can Newton Abbot Town Council (NATC) support the project going forward

Dr Kemple advised that the project is currently at the launch stage, and support in promoting and networking the initiative would be beneficial. In addition, networking and identifying potential funding sources would be appreciated.

It was agreed that the Communications Advisor will work with Dr Kemple to draft a press release and offer support with media contacts to help raise the profile of the app.

Councillors thanked Dr Kemple for his informative presentation, commended his work, and expressed their support for the initiative.

440. **MUSEUM CURATOR AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OFFICER REPORTS**

a) The Chairperson, Councillor Louise Cooke welcomed the Museum Curator (maternity cover), Joanna Eccles to the meeting and invited her to provide a report on the Museum.

The Curator referred to the Museum report, as circulated prior to the meeting and highlighted the following areas:

- Staff changes
- Visitor numbers
- A trial of extending hours opening on Saturday
- Strategy and branding
- Establish museum values

- New exhibition – Insects Uncovered – collaborative exhibition with the Town Council
- Summer exhibition and future events
- Staff training
- Customer satisfaction survey and data collection

The Curator advised that following a review of the Museum’s collections care and storage conditions, and in line with the Museum’s Collections Development Policy and the principles of the Arts Council England Accreditation Scheme, it has identified two objects for deaccessioning. Members were asked to consider deaccessioning a cart and a piano.

Members raised concerns and enquired about the length of time the items had been held and whether contact would be made with the person who donated the object.

Members expressed that it would be a loss to dispose of items relating to Newton Abbot’s history. Further concerns were also raised regarding to where any items would be deaccessioned.

Arising from the discussion, it was:

RESOLVED that the Town Council hereby agrees to retain the cart within the Museum’s collection and to approve the deaccessioning of the piano.

b) The Curator provided a brief update on the What’s In Store Project, including:

- An update on funding
- Confirmation that the store fit-out tender is now live
- Notification that the building tender has been delayed

441. SUB-COMMITTEES/WORKING PARTIES/FORUMS

The Minutes of the meeting of the Community Engagement Group held on 25th February 2026, as presented by Councillor R Buscombe, were received and approved.

In relation to Minute 26/02(42) – a presentation by the Managing Director of Stagecoach South West, Councillors reiterated the importance that the Town Council joins the Devon BUS Forum.

442. 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 2025 to 28th February 2026.

Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that the Town Council hereby:

Approves the Income and Expenditure Statements for the periods, 1st April 2025 to 28th February 2026 for: -

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

The Chairperson, Councillor Louise Cooke, provided a brief update on the In Bloom application, reporting that the Office Administrator had drafted the application pack prior to commencing maternity leave. It was noted that the completed application pack will be shared once finalised.

Members expressed their thanks to the Office Administrator for her work and extended their best wishes for her maternity leave.

443. LATE CORRESPONDENCE

None.

444. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 10th June 2026

The Chairperson reminded Members that this was her final meeting as Chairperson of the Community & Heritage Committee and expressed her thanks to Councillors and Officers for their support during her tenure.

445. 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.

446. TRANSFER OF COMPETENCE

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

Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that the Town Council supports the proposed transfer of responsibilities in principle, and that delegated authority be hereby granted to the Projects & Strategy Officer to continue discussions with Teignbridge District Council and to undertake the necessary due diligence and feasibility work.

The Meeting closed at 20:00

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