

MINUTES OF THE **MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 16th JULY 2025**
AT 7.00 P.M. AT NEWTON'S PLACE, WOLBOROUGH STREET, NEWTON ABBOT

Present: Councillors C Parker (Mayor) Presiding
L Cooke (Deputy Mayor)

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

Officers in attendance: Phil Rowe Town Clerk
 Pierre Doutreligne Projects & Strategy Officer
 Linda McGuirk Principal Administrator
 Rob Woodger Facilities Maintenance Team Leader
 Nigel Canham Communications Advisor

By invitation Reverend Gill Daniel
 Carol Bunday, Freewoman
 Mike Hocking, Freeman

Also, present County Councillor M Cockerham
 3 x Members of the public

117. WELCOME FROM THE MAYOR

The Mayor welcomed those present to the meeting and invited Reverend Gill Daniel to open the meeting with prayers.

118. APOLOGIES

A valid reason for absence was received from Councillor T Corney-Walker. Apologies were noted from Sam Scott, Deputy Town Clerk & RFO, County Councillor Jacqueline Fry and District Councillor Jackie Hook.

119. INTERESTS

None declared.

120. MINUTES

The minutes of the Council Meetings held on:

- a) 4th June 2025.
- b) 11th June 2025 - Special Full Council.

The minutes were received and signed as correct records.

Chairperson (Mayor) initials.....

121. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

122. 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.

County Councillor M Cockerham provided a written report outlining a range of matters in which he and Councillor J Fry have been directly involved. The report, which was circulated prior to the meeting, highlighted the following key issues:

- Highway markings at Penn Inn roundabout
- Ongoing construction works to upgrade the A382
- Use and development of the Members Portal/Reporting Programme
- Personal safety measures for newly elected councillors
- Various community visits undertaken
- Recent 'Meet the Councillor' sessions

Councillor M Ryan expressed disappointment that a formal request for improved highway markings had to be made by the County Councillors, noting that the need for such improvements was self-evident.

Councillor J Bradford also noted that she had previously requested the replacement of the highway markings during her tenure as a County Councillor.

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

- Attendance at an Overview & Scrutiny meeting, looking at improvement of the District Councils response to enforcement of unauthorised travellers.
- Concerns regarding the current standard of education in Newton Abbot, Councillor Bullivant noted that a Spotlight Review is currently underway to examine this matter.
- The pressing need to address financial challenges facing the District Council, with urgent consideration being given to strategies for reducing expenditure.
- Attended a recent presentation regarding the NA1 development area. Councillor Bullivant reported that three applications are expected to come forward, including an outline planning application.

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

- Attended a meeting regarding the future of public conveniences and options being considered for their disposal/transfer.
- Ongoing concerns relating to unauthorised traveller encampments.
- Issues relating to the management and condition of trees within the district.

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

- Highlighted the upcoming Teignbridge District Council Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Drop-In Session, scheduled for 22nd July from 6:00pm to 8:00pm at Newton’s Place, and encouraged all members and residents to attend to learn more and ask questions.
- Councillor Buscombe also provided an update on the future of public conveniences in Teignbridge, noting that the District Council is seeking to transfer responsibility for these facilities. At present, it appears likely that only the Cricketfield Road toilets will be offered to Newton Abbot Town Council.

District Councillor J Bradford reported on issues in which she has had direct involvement:

- Attended Planning Committee with focus on the Houghton Barton planning applications, including considerations around the proposed size and scope of the Health and Wellbeing Centre.
- Participation in the Licensing Committee, which is currently reviewing the draft Statement of Licensing Policy.
- Attendance at the Public Toilets Review, contributing to discussions regarding the future management and provision of facilities across the district.
- Notified members of the forthcoming Teignbridge District Council Full Council meeting, scheduled for 29th July.

District Councillor M Ryan reported on issues in which he has had direct involvement:

- Ongoing concerns relating to highway issues at Penn Inn, regarding the need for improved road markings and infrastructure.
- Engagement with matters associated with unauthorised traveller encampments and related enforcement challenges.
- Attendance at Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.
- Provided an update on the status of the Queen Street improvement project, noting that the scheme has not yet been signed off or completed.
- Participation in the Public Toilets Review.
- Buckland Community Centre.

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

- Penn Inn roundabout
- Reported on an issue affecting the Courtenay Park public toilets, which in turn had a financial impact on the Party In the Park event.
- Wrote to Neighbouring parishes to initiate dialogue around the implications and opportunities of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

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

123. **MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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The Mayor, Councillor Colin Parker, provided an update on recent engagements that he and the Mayoress had attended, as circulated prior to the meeting.

The Mayor highlighted the following events:

- All Aboard Event
- Climate Concert

The Mayor also informed members that HMS Triumph is being decommissioned, and that four members of the Council have been invited to attend the decommissioning ceremony. With one place still available, it was agreed that Councillor A. Hall would attend as the Council's fourth representative.

124. **RECOMMENDATION FROM THE EMERGENCY PLAN WORKING GROUP**

Members considered a recommendation from the Emergency Plan Working Group that Newton Abbot Town Council adopts a Community Resilience Hub to support local emergency planning efforts and enhance preparedness at the community level.

Councillor G Jennings provided a verbal report on the recent Emergency Plan Working Group meeting, outlining the discussions held and the rationale for establishing the hub.

RESOLVED that Newton Abbot Town Council hereby adopts a Community Resilience Hub in support of local emergency planning initiatives.

125. **RECOMMENDATION FROM THE STAFFING COMMITTEE**

Members considered a recommendation from the Staffing Committee that an additional full time Facilities Maintenance Officer (FMO) post be added to the Council's staffing establishment, in order to support the increasing demands on the Facilities Team.

The recommendation was presented by Councillor R. Buscombe, Chair of the Staffing Committee.

RESOLVED that an additional full time Facilities Maintenance Officer post be hereby added to Newton Abbot Town Council's staffing establishment.

Councillor M Ryan declared a personal interest, as he is related to a member of the Council's staffing establishment. He abstained from participating in the discussion and did not vote on the matter.

Councillors P Bullivant and N Yabsley abstained from voting.

126. **POLICIES**

The Town Clerk introduced the policy documents, as circulated prior to the meeting, and advised that the Financial Regulations had undergone a rigorous review. The revised version is based on the latest NALC model, ensuring compliance with best practice and legislative requirements.

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Councillor M Joyce referred Members to page 3, section 1.5 and highlighted the RFO holds statutory office as appointed by the Council, expressing his thanks and acknowledging the dedicated and detailed work of the RFO.

Councillor P Bullivant referred Members to pages 24 and 25 raising concerns about the level of delegated authority permitting the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and one designated Officer to authorise payments up to £350,000 without further sign-off.

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

- Financial Regulations
- Reserves Policy
- Menopause Policy
- Sexual Harassment Policy
- Maternity Policy

Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that the policies in relation to the:

- a) Financial Regulations
- b) Reserves Policy
- c) Menopause Policy
- d) Sexual Harassment Policy
- e) Maternity Policy

be hereby, approved and adopted.

With regard to the Financial Regulations, an amendment to the motion was proposed and seconded, that for any payment over £10,000 the Chair of the Finance & Audit Committee be included as a third authorised person in the approval process.

Upon being put to the vote (Cllr G Jennings abstained from voting) the result was tied, requiring the casting vote of the Mayor, Councillor C Parker. The amendment was defeated and the original resolution stood.

127. **MENOPAUSE PLEDGE**

Following the adoption of the Menopause Policy (Minute 25/07(126c), Members considered signing the Menopause Workplace Pledge, recognising that menopause can be a workplace issue and that individuals affected require appropriate support. By signing the pledge, the Council will commit to:

- Recognising that the menopause can be an issue in the workplace and women need support.
- Talking openly, positively and respectfully about the menopause.

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- Actively supporting and informing employees affected by the menopause.

Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that Newton Abbot Town Council recognises that the menopause can present challenges in the workplace and acknowledges the importance of supporting women. Accordingly, the Council hereby agrees to sign the Menopause Workplace Pledge as a commitment to fostering a supportive and inclusive working environment.

128. PROCEEDINGS OF COMMITTEES

- a) The Minutes of the Meeting of the **Community & Heritage Committee** held on 11th June 2025, as presented by the Vice Chairperson, Councillor I Ineson, were received and approved.

Councillor A Ineson highlighted minute number 25/06(59) and encouraged Members to attend the forthcoming Community Engagement Workshop on behalf of Green Futures Newton Abbot.

- b) The Minutes of the Meeting of the **Policy & Resources Committee** held on 18th June 2025, as presented by the Chairperson, Councillor L Wood were received and approved.
- c) The Minutes of the Meeting of the **Planning Committee** held on 24th June 2025, as presented by the Chairperson, Councillor N Yabsley were received and approved, subject to:
- d) The Minutes of the Meeting of the **Staffing Committee**, held on 25th June 2025, as presented by the Chairperson, Councillor R Buscombe were received and approved.
- e) The Minutes of the Meeting of the **Finance & Audit Committee**, held on 25th June 2025 as presented by the Chairperson, Councillor D Corney Walker were received and approved subject to a minor amendment to the numbering.

129. LATE CORRESPONDENCE

None.

130. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting to be held on Wednesday 17th September 2025.

131. 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

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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.

132. **ASSET - PROPERTY**

The Town Clerk provided Members with a detailed update regarding a potential property acquisition under consideration by the Council. The property is being explored for its suitability to accommodate a range of community and operational functions.

The Town Clerk reminded Members that, in accordance with the Council's instruction, he is actively conducting due diligence in relation to the potential property asset. He emphasised that this process is being undertaken to ensure that Members are equipped with the necessary information and professional advice to enable them to make a fully informed decision at the appropriate time.

Members were invited to consider whether to proceed further with discussions, based on the current feasibility and cost analysis.

Arising from the discussion, it was:

RESOLVED that Newton Abbot Town Council authorise the Town Clerk to enter into negotiations regarding the property and report back to the Council with a detailed report to enable the Council to make a final decision.

An amendment to the motion was proposed and seconded, that:

- The public must be engaged in the process; and
- The Council should wait and monitor market conditions before making any final commitment.

The amendment was put to the vote but was defeated, and the original resolution stood.

Meeting closed at 20:50 hours.

Chairperson (Mayor).....Date.....

Chairperson (Mayor) initials.....