

NEWTON
ABBOT
TOWN
COUNCIL

Annual Report

2025/26



Your Council

Newton Abbot Town Council is made up of 18 elected councillors representing the town's five wards, supported by a team of staff who deliver a wide range of services and activities for the community including Newton Abbot Museum.

Town Quay
Newton Abbot



The council manages and maintains local amenities including Golden Lion Square, Victoria Gardens, Newton Abbot Museum, St Leonard's Clock Tower, Newfoundland Way public conveniences and the War Memorial. It also oversees allotment sites, and undertakes maintenance of selected verges and footpaths.

It organises and supports a programme of popular community events throughout the year, including Easter activities, the Town Criers' Competition, band concerts in Courtenay Park, the Charity Christmas Markets, Lantern Parade and Christmas Lights Switch On.

In addition, the council provides civic and ceremonial leadership through the mayor and deputy mayor, acts as a statutory consultee on planning applications affecting the town, and offers community room hire at Newton's Place.

Keep in touch

Newton's Place | Wolborough Street | Newton Abbot | TQ12 1JQ
call: 01626 201120 | email: info@newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk

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Mayor's Report

It has been a profound honour to serve once again as Mayor of Newton Abbot during the civic year 2025/26 with my wife Jean at my side supporting me wherever possible. Having previously held this office in 2011/12, and after almost 20 years as a councillor, I believed I understood the scale and privilege of the role. However, the past year has demonstrated just how much the responsibilities of civic leadership have evolved – both in visibility and in the significant work that I have carried out behind the scenes.

This has been a year of energy, challenge and transition for our town, set against the backdrop of impending local government reorganisation and the likelihood of increased responsibilities for town and parish councils.

Throughout 2025/26, I have proudly represented Newton Abbot at a wide range of events across the town, district and county.

This year has been notably busier than my previous mayoral term in 2011/12 due to the engagements attended, which included civic services/receptions across Devon, Remembrance Sunday, Armed Forces events, school visits and prize-giving ceremonies, community group anniversaries and charity fundraisers, business openings and networking events, cultural gatherings, centenarian celebrations and not forgetting the numerous town council events.

In addition to the large number of mayoral engagements attended, representing our town, I've also been involved in detailed meetings and discussions regarding several planned projects for our town, many of which have now been delivered.

It is being a visible advocate for community leadership, regeneration and partnership, working for the benefit of Newton Abbot, which have been foremost in my mind, reflecting both the growth of the town and the inevitably expanding role of the mayor.

Having been Chair of Finance for the previous ten years I have continued to be very closely involved with many of the town's initiatives. I thank Phil Rowe (town clerk), Sam Scott (deputy town clerk)



MAYOR OF NEWTON ABBOT | CIVIC YEAR 2025/26



Councillor Colin Parker

22 Twickenham Road
Newton Abbot TQ12 4JE

colin.parker@newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk

<p>DATE JOINED NEWTON ABBOT TOWN COUNCIL: 2007</p> <p>WARD: Buckland & Milber</p> <p>POLITICAL PARTY: Liberal Democrats</p> <p>MAYORESS: Jean Parker</p>	<p>PERSONAL BIO:</p> <p>Born in Torrington. Married with two grown-up children and one grandson, all of whom live locally.</p> <p>Hobbies and interests include sport, family activities, socialising, and community service aimed at helping others.</p>
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and Pierre Doutreligne for their deliberations with issues. Carla Winsborrow has kept my diary for me. To other staff, notably those with new and extra responsibilities, thanks for your hard work.

This year has seen continued focus on strengthening Newton Abbot's town centre and community assets. The refurbishment of the Market Hall, by Teignbridge District Council aims to regenerate the indoor market, and our other public realm improvements continue to draw visitors and provide opportunities for traders and events. The town centre remains central to our identity and economic resilience. Engagement with traders, community groups and strategic partners has been a consistent priority throughout the year.

When I first served as mayor in 2011/12, the role was largely ceremonial with important community representation duties. While that remains true today, the scope has broadened very significantly. This year I have been focused on strategic leadership and regeneration involvement, multiple cross-authority meetings and active preparation for local government reorganisation, which, although not highly visible to the public, have required considerable time and collaboration. The likely outcome is that Newton Abbot Town Council will take on greater local service delivery responsibilities such as assessing financial risk, capacity abilities and public expectations – presenting both opportunity and challenge.

The modern mayor, in my opinion, must now combine the traditional civic duty role with diplomacy, advocacy, and strategic awareness. The workload of councillors has already increased in anticipation of this change, and I commend all members for their commitment and professionalism.

Just a few words of encouragement to those of you who may wish to become a councillor. The role can be flexible and carried out alongside employment, studying, or caring responsibilities. It is also fulfilling and a privileged position, with the chance to leave a legacy by shaping the future for your area and those living within it. With the next elections for our town council due in May 2027, why not consider putting your name forward?

I must highlight the resilience and compassion shown by Newton Abbot's voluntary and community sector, which continues to be inspiring. From youth organisations and heritage groups, to charities and business networks, the town benefits from extraordinary civic pride.

Supporting these groups, attending their events, promoting their work and listening to their concerns, has remained one of the most rewarding aspects of this year.

Specifically, I must mention Citizens Advice, who were my chosen charity for the year. They offer exceptional help to thousands of people who are in need of guidance in so many ways.

It is extremely pleasing to see the success of our annual town meetings. Held in Courtenay Street (and soon to be twice yearly), these informal public forums are something I instigated during my first term as mayor.



Cllr Parker speaking with a member of the community at the 2025 Annual Town Meeting

Serving again as mayor after a 14 year break has been a reflective experience. Newton Abbot has grown in confidence and ambition. The challenges and obligations are greater, but so too is the determination of our community. The role today requires stamina, diplomacy and foresight in equal measure. The diary has been fuller, the meetings longer, and the strategic discussions more complex than in 2011/12. Yet the heart of the role remains unchanged: service to our town and its people.

As we move into a period of structural change in local government, Newton Abbot must remain, confident in its identity, I am proud of what has been achieved this year; the groundwork laid for our future positioning as we move into uncharted territories. I'm also grateful for the support of fellow councillors, officers, community organisations and residents. It has been an honour to serve.

Colin Parker

Councillor Colin Parker

MAYOR OF NEWTON ABBOT – CIVIC YEAR 2025/26



Poppy Train: members of the RBL with the mayor and mayoress




*Councillor Colin Parker and Mayoress Jean Parker
at the 2025 NATC Civic Service*

Town Councillors

Town councillors are elected to serve for a period of four years across the five wards in the town.


The eighteen councillors serving the term from 2023 to 2027 are:

BRADLEY WARD | MEMBER



Councillor Brian Bailey
1 Higher Budleigh Meadow,
Newton Abbot, TQ12 1UL
brian.bailey@newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk

BUSHELL WARD | MEMBER




Councillor Tom Corney-Walker
Tykki-Dyw, Aller Road, Kingskerswell
Newton Abbot TQ12 5AN
tom.corney-walker@newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk

BRADLEY WARD | MEMBER



Councillor Philip Bullivant
6 Gaze Hill, Highweek
Newton Abbot TQ12 1QL
philip.bullivant@newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk

BUSHELL WARD | MEMBER



Councillor Amanda Ineson
c/o Newton's Place, Wolborough Street,
Newton Abbot TQ12 1JQ
amanda.ineson@newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk

BRADLEY WARD | MEMBER




Councillor Richard Buscombe
c/o Newton's Place, Wolborough Street,
Newton Abbot TQ12 1JQ
richard.buscombe@newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk

BUSHELL WARD | MEMBER



Councillor Mike Joyce
c/o Newton's Place, Wolborough Street,
Newton Abbot TQ12 1JQ
mike.joyce@newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk

BRADLEY WARD | MEMBER



Councillor Louise Cooke
c/o Newton's Place, Wolborough Street,
Newton Abbot TQ12 1JQ
louise.cooke@newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk

BUSHELL WARD | MEMBER




Councillor Nick Yabsley
72 Ashburton Road
Newton Abbot TQ12 1RH
nick.yabsley@newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk

BUCKLAND & MILBER WARD | MEMBER



Councillor David Corney-Walker
Tykki-Dyw, Aller Road, Kingskerswell
Newton Abbot TQ12 5AN
david.corney-walker@newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk

BRUNEL WARD | MEMBER




Councillor Paul Parker
Mead, Alston Cross,
Ashburton, TQ13 7LJ
paul.parker@newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk

BUCKLAND & MILBER WARD | MEMBER



Councillor Colin Davieson
22 Margaret Gardens, Buckland
Newton Abbot TQ12 4DG
colin.davieson@newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk

COLLEGE WARD | MEMBER




Councillor Janet Bradford
c/o Newton's Place, Wolborough Street,
Newton Abbot TQ12 1JQ
janet.bradford@newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk

BUCKLAND & MILBER WARD | MEMBER



Councillor Alex Hall
44 Aller Park Road
Newton Abbot TQ12 4NQ
alex.hall@newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk

COLLEGE WARD | MEMBER



Councillor Alan Gibbs
14 Beaumont Road,
Newton Abbot, TQ12 1BB
alan.gibbs@newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk

BUCKLAND & MILBER WARD | MEMBER



Councillor Colin Parker
22 Twickenham Road
Newton Abbot TQ12 4JE
colin.parker@newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk

COLLEGE WARD | MEMBER




Councillor Gwen Jennings
c/o Newton's Place, Wolborough Street,
Newton Abbot TQ12 1JQ
gwen.jennings@newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk

BUCKLAND & MILBER WARD | MEMBER




Councillor Mike Ryan
66 Oakland Road
Newton Abbot TQ12 4EE
mike.ryan@newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk

COLLEGE WARD | MEMBER



Councillor Laura Wood
c/o Newton's Place, Wolborough Street,
Newton Abbot TQ12 1JQ
laura.wood@newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk

Town Council Staff

 FULL TIME

 PART TIME



TOWN CLERK
Phil Rowe




DEPUTY TOWN CLERK
& RESPONSIBLE
FINANCIAL OFFICER
Sam Scott



PRINCIPAL
ADMINISTRATOR
Linda McGuirk



PROJECTS & STRATEGY
OFFICER
Pierre Doutreligne



ADMIN ASSISTANT
(OFFICE)
Kelly Burrige




EVENTS
CO-ORDINATOR
Natalie Hicks



MAYOR'S SECRETARY
Carla Winsborrow



FACILITIES
MAINTENANCE
TEAM LEADER
Rob Woodger



ADMIN ASSISTANT
(GREEN SPACES)
Thomas Collard



HOUSEKEEPER
Michele Webber



FACILITIES
MAINTENANCE
OFFICER
Stephen Payne



FACILITIES
MAINTENANCE
OFFICER
Steven Ryan



FACILITIES
MAINTENANCE
OFFICER
Tony Little



FACILITIES
MAINTENANCE
OFFICER
David Samson

Committees and Sub-Committees

Finance & Audit Committee

CHAIRPERSON: Cllr David Corney-Walker

VICE-CHAIRPERSON: Cllr Brian Bailey

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Cllrs Phil Bullivant, Louise Cooke, Colin Davieson, Alan Gibbs, Alex Hall, Mike Joyce, Colin Parker, Paul Parker, Mike Ryan

and

Policy & Resources Committee

CHAIRPERSON: Cllr Laura Wood

VICE-CHAIRPERSON: Cllr Mike Ryan

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Cllrs Brian Bailey, Phil Bullivant, Louise Cooke, David Corney-Walker, Colin Davieson, Alan Gibbs, Alex Hall, Mike Joyce, Colin Parker

- ◆ Month by month income and expenditure statements and other detailed financial reports
- ◆ Annual governance and accountability return
- ◆ Internal audit reports
- ◆ Recommend policy to the council
- ◆ Recommend budget and precept to the council
- ◆ Consideration of all aspects of the maintenance of property and assets of the council
- ◆ Reports from council representatives that serve on various outside organisations
- ◆ Regular updates by the Police Inspector based in Newton Abbot
- ◆ Applications for financial support.

This year detailed consideration has been given to various issues, including the following:

- ◆ The management of Newton Abbot's Community Hub, Newton's Place and its museum

- ◆ Involvement in Newton Abbot Community Trust to own, and maintain the public space, Golden Lion Square
- ◆ Under the Community Right to Bid, commissioned a building condition survey and valuation of Old Forde House
- ◆ Ongoing contributions to the funding and management of CCTV facilities in Newton Abbot
- ◆ To discuss and consider supporting the Electrical Safety-First Battery Breakdown safety campaign for lithium-ion batteries
- ◆ Review of the town council's vision and priorities
- ◆ Review of the council's standing orders, financial regulations and other strategic and operational policies pertaining to the work of the council
- ◆ The ongoing opportunity to devise the town centre master plan
- ◆ Continuation of the Localism Act and its various regulations
- ◆ The budget provides for grants and financial assistance to various organisations in Newton Abbot.



Golden Lion Square

This year, with many still suffering the effects of the cost-of-living crisis and cuts in core funding, we tried to assist as many organisations as we could. Grants were made to local organisations including:

Citizens Advice Bureau – Teignbridge	£5,500
Newton Abbot Community Transport Association	£5,000
Wellbeing in Action	£4,600
Space Youth Services	£2,000
Newton Town Youth Football Club	£2,000
Newton Abbot Community Shed.....	£1,000
Home-Start Teignbridge.....	£996
Green Futures.....	£850
Newton Abbot Seed Library.....	£300
TOTAL FUNDS GRANTED	£22,246

The committees received presentations from the following organisations:

- ◆ Newton Abbot Community Interest Company, on the ways in which it supports the local community
- ◆ Cwtch Hub CIC regarding proposed plans to enhance the public realm on Union Street.

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Community & Heritage Committee

CHAIRPERSON: Cllr Louise Cooke

VICE-CHAIRPERSON: Cllr Amanda Ineson

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Cllrs Brian Bailey, Janet Bradford, Richard Buscombe, Colin Davieson, Alan Gibbs, Alex Hall, Mike Joyce, Colin Parker, Paul Parker, Mike Ryan and Laura Wood.

The Community & Heritage Committee continues to work towards strengthening partnerships, enhancing public spaces, and ensuring the town remains vibrant and welcoming.

Museum

The **What's In Store?** project secured £818,653 from National Lottery Heritage Fund to deliver a new, accessible, environmentally controlled collections store, the project will:

- ◆ Safeguard the town's historic collections
- ◆ Improve volunteer workspace
- ◆ Deliver heritage skills training
- ◆ Create new employment opportunities.



Greener Newton Abbot

Floral displays, biodiversity, sustainability and allotments.

Environmental action remained a clear priority, highlights include:

- ◆ An updated biodiversity policy
- ◆ Launch of a wildlife-friendly grass verge project
- ◆ Supporting Green Futures with pesticide reduction initiatives
- ◆ Tree safety assessments across council land
- ◆ Swift nest boxes installed in St Leonard's Clock Tower
- ◆ Entered the South West in Bloom 2026 competition
- ◆ Agreed a new Allotment & Community Garden Strategy 2025 – 2027
- ◆ Supported water harvesting at Decoy Allotments and creation of accessible allotment plots
- ◆ Improved management at Vicary's Field and the Community Garden.



Cleaner Streets, Stronger Advocacy

The Facilities Maintenance Team removed 13 tonnes of waste across 87 locations, improving the town's appearance. The Committee also:

- ◆ Supported action to reopen a public right of way
- ◆ Backed a 20mph proposal for Buckland

Planning Committee

CHAIRPERSON: Cllr Nick Yabsley

VICE-CHAIRPERSON: Cllr Gwen Jennings

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Cllrs Janet Bradford, Alan Gibbs, Alex Hall, Mike Joyce, Colin Parker, Mike Ryan and Laura Wood.

During the reporting period, the Planning Committee met regularly to consider planning applications and strategic planning matters affecting Newton Abbot. The committee reviewed a wide range of applications including major residential developments, householder proposals, listed building consents, changes of use, and numerous Tree Preservation Order applications.

The committee continued to champion sustainable development by reaffirming support for the Newton Abbot Neighbourhood Development Plan. Recommendations consistently encouraged the inclusion of renewable energy, electric vehicle charging provision and sustainable heating systems in new developments.

The committee also engaged in strategic policy matters, including submitting a formal response to the Teignbridge Local Plan Review (main modifications) and arranging representation at the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) examination.

Street naming proposals for new developments were considered to ensure they reflected local heritage and character. The committee also supported appropriate tree management while promoting

replacement planting where removals were proposed. In addition to numerous householder, listed building, and Tree Preservation Order applications, the committee considered several major and strategic developments, including:

- ◆ **A382/A383 Link Road proposals** – The Committee raised strong highway safety concerns regarding access, junction arrangements and overall infrastructure impact
- ◆ **Wolborough development (Reserved Matters applications)** – Including public open space, green infrastructure, drainage infrastructure, and Local Centre proposals. The Committee emphasised the need for confirmed sewerage capacity and appropriate supporting infrastructure
- ◆ **Land North of Howton Road (hybrid application for residential development)** – Recommended refusal due to poor access, infrastructure concerns and the absence of the link road.
- ◆ **Land East of Buckland Road (outline application for up to 50 dwellings)** – Objected on highway safety grounds, citing the inadequacy of Buckland Road to serve additional development
- ◆ **Courtenay Road HMO proposals (28 & 30 Courtenay Road)** – Supported in principle subject to strict conditions regarding parking, cycle storage and waste management, highlighting concerns about infrastructure pressures
- ◆ **Former Car Park, Brunel Road (self-storage units)** – Supported in principle but raised highways access concerns
- ◆ **Former ATS Euromaster site (change of use)** – Considered change of use proposals contributing to economic activity.



Staffing Committee

CHAIRPERSON: Cllr Richard Buscombe

VICE-CHAIRPERSON: Cllr Mike Joyce

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Cllrs David Corney-Walker, Alan Gibbs, Paul Parker and Laura Wood

During the year, the Staffing Committee met regularly to oversee the council's staffing structure, policies, and employment matters, ensuring that the organisation continues to operate effectively and that staff are supported through appropriate governance and policy frameworks.

A key focus of the committee's work was the review and development of employment policies.

During the year, the committee considered and approved a range of updated and new policies to strengthen the council's framework. These included updates to the home working, leave, paternity leave & pay, recruitment & retention, grievance, and disciplinary policies, as well as the introduction of a new appraisal policy. These policies ensure that the council's procedures remain aligned with current employment legislation.

Earlier in the year, the committee also reviewed pension-related policies and recommended the adoption of the LGPS Employer Discretions Policy and Flexible Retirement Policy to the full council. These policies provide clarity around the council's approach to pension discretions and support flexible retirement arrangements where appropriate.

The committee maintained oversight of the council's staffing establishment and operational workforce needs. During the year it considered proposals relating to the Facilities Maintenance Team and recommended the creation of an additional facilities maintenance officer role to strengthen service delivery.

The committee also approved arrangements for the provision of health & safety and human resources support services, enabling the council to secure specialist professional advice through an external service level agreement.

Further work during the year included oversight of the council's organisational structure, including the early stages of the recruitment process for a new town clerk following the approved flexible retirement arrangements for the current post-holder. The committee approved the recruitment pack with a recommendation to consider changing the title of Town Clerk to Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for future appointments, to better reflect the strategic nature of the role.

Community Engagement Group

CHAIRPERSON: Cllr Richard Buscombe

VICE-CHAIRPERSON: Cllr Mike Joyce

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Cllrs Louise Cooke, Colin Davieson, Alex Hall, Amanda Ineson, Colin Parker, Mike Ryan and Laura Wood.

Throughout the year, the Community Engagement Group has continued to strengthen connections between the town council and the many organisations that make Newton Abbot a vibrant and supportive community.

Across all meetings, a common theme has been collaboration, using the town council's platform to: increase visibility for community organisations; support volunteer recruitment; promote wellbeing and inclusion; encourage partnership working; and share information about local initiatives and events.

Supporting Housing & Residents

The group welcomed Teign Housing, discussing affordable housing delivery, damp and condensation concerns, anti-social behaviour, and the wider pressures facing social landlords. Ongoing partnership working was reaffirmed to support tenants and neighbourhood wellbeing.





Egg & Chef – Easter street performers

Promoting Sport, Health & Wellbeing

Presentations from the Devon Football Association and Newton Abbot Rugby Football Club showcased the significant contribution of local sport to community life. Discussions highlighted youth engagement, women’s sport, volunteer support, and opportunities for the town council to help promote grassroots initiatives.

Social Prescribing & Community Care

Templer Wellbeing outlined its social prescribing service, working alongside GP surgeries to support residents with non-clinical needs such as isolation, financial hardship, and mental wellbeing. The group explored ways to raise awareness and improve access to these vital services.

Supporting Young People

The group engaged with Newton Abbot Police Cadets, recognising their positive work within the community, from volunteering in care homes to supporting local initiatives. Members committed to promoting recruitment of cadet leaders and involving cadets in future council events.

Transport & Accessibility

Looking ahead, the group engaged with Stagecoach to discuss public transport provision and community connectivity. Members also began exploring how Newton Abbot can further develop as an Age Friendly Town, focusing on accessibility, inclusion, and outdoor spaces.

The Community Engagement Group provides a valuable forum for open discussion, helping to ensure that Newton Abbot remains connected, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of its residents.

Events Sub-Committee

CHAIRPERSON: Cllr Alex Hall

VICE-CHAIRPERSON: Cllr Brian Bailey

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Cllrs Janet Bradford, Louise Cooke, Colin Davieson, Amanda Ineson, Mike Joyce, Colin Parker, Paul Parker, Mike Ryan and Laura Wood

The town council hosted several very successful free-to-attend events for residents and visitors alike in 2025. The start of the year saw events such as the Easter Saturday event, free entertainment and chocolate Easter eggs for all children in attendance. And in recognition of VE Day, the three town beacons were also lit.



Councillor Alex Hall lighting the beacon at Highweek to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day



Many musical events were organised throughout the year at the bandstand, with concerts throughout the summer, plus the Party in the Park weekend in partnership with Newton Abbot Rotary Club.

The town council have been pleased to support events in conjunction with other organisations including Teignbridge Classics (Classic Car Shows), Teignmouth Regatta (Barham Cup), Newton Abbot Royal British Legion (Remembrance Day parade) and Animals in Distress (Dog Friendly Carol Service).

The year ended with Christmas events in town, including the lights switch-on, the much-loved lantern parade and the Victorian evening.



Public Spaces & Facilities

Facilities Maintenance Team

The Facilities Maintenance Team plays a vital role in delivering a high standard of service to both visitors and residents of Newton Abbot. The team is responsible for the upkeep of a diverse range of properties and assets, including Newton's Place Community Space & Museum, St Leonard's Clock Tower, a section of the leat, Town Quay, Victoria Gardens, Golden Lion Square, Newfoundland Way public toilets, the War Memorial, the Council Depot, 55 public footpaths, allotments, and street furniture, amongst others.

In 2025, the team expanded with the addition of another full-time post. This increased capacity has enabled the team to undertake a greater volume of work and maintain a more consistent programme of routine maintenance. With this additional resource, the team successfully completed its largest project to date at Golden Lion Square, where all softwood sleepers were replaced with durable oak due to significant deterioration.



War Memorial gates decorated with knitted poppies



David and Steven with the City Master 1650

The introduction of the Foamstream – an environmentally friendly, herbicide-free weed control system – in 2021 has continued to deliver highly effective results, while remaining safe for use around people and animals. This has been further enhanced by the acquisition of the City Master 1650 road sweeper and weed-removal unit. The ongoing use of this equipment is significantly improving the team's ability to manage demanding maintenance tasks, particularly within residential areas, contributing to enhanced cleanliness and safety across the town.

The team's working week is spent outdoors, in all weather conditions, undertaking a wide variety of tasks essential to keeping Newton Abbot well-presented. In addition to their maintenance responsibilities, they also support the council's extensive programme of community events. This includes managing road closures, setting up and dismantling gazebos, assisting with crowd management, towing Father Christmas in his sleigh, and, on occasion, donning the costume of Newton, the town council's mascot.

Green Spaces

The town council continues to work closely with Newton Abbot & District Co-operative Allotment Association (NADCAA) in the management of the council's seven allotment sites. Since opening in early 2025, Camomile Allotment has continued to develop successfully, with plans progressing to bring the adjoining Larkspur Allotment site into use. In March 2026, the council also began work to revitalise Vicary's Allotment, including the introduction of improved facilities such as an accessible allotment space and enhanced rainwater collection.

In May 2025, a community survey was taken to explore the introduction of wildlife-friendly management across selected grass verges. Following further consultation in January 2026, and input from ecological specialists, seven sites have been identified for a

trial scheme. Site preparation, including signage installation and wildflower seeding, is scheduled for spring 2026.

The town council remains committed to its 'pesticide free' pledge and continues to adapt its management practices accordingly. The council works closely with local group Green Futures, supporting initiatives such as kerbside pesticide collection. This work is also being highlighted through a collaborative display at Newton Abbot Museum titled *Insects Uncovered: Biodiversity in Newton Abbot*. Officers also attended the Pesticide Free Devon conference in June 2025, contributing a workshop on the role of local government in achieving pesticide free town management.

These actions form part of an ongoing commitment to a biodiversity policy, which is actively reviewed throughout the year by the Biodiversity Working Group.



Museum Staff

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 FULL TIME

 PART TIME

 FREELANCE



Museum Report

Visitors

Between April 2025 and March 2026, Newton Abbot Museum welcomed 13,921 visitors, including 2,293 educational visits from schools and home education groups. The museum also engaged 783 participants through community activities linked to the development of the new heritage store.

This compares with 16,735 visitors between April 2024 and March 2025. This change reflects a transitional period and strategic investment in the museum's future, including the team's focus on securing funding for a new heritage store and developing the museum's education offer, which led to fewer school visits during this time.

Newton Abbot Museum extends sincere thanks to all visitors for their continued support.



Museum volunteers Ed and Bridie

Volunteers

The museum is supported by a team of 59 active volunteers, contributing across front-of-house, collections care, research, education, and conservation. Between April 2025 and March 2026, volunteers contributed more than 6,000 hours of their time.

The museum facilitated seven work placements and maintained partnerships with local schools and organisations, including Eat That Frog and Lifeworks. These placements supported young people in gaining valuable experience and reducing barriers to employment.

The museum is deeply grateful to its volunteers, whose dedication underpins its work.

Exhibitions 2025

In August, the museum team delivered two highly successful exhibitions:

Making Tracks

Explored the history and impact of the railways in Newton Abbot, aligning with the national Railway 200 celebrations.

Rediscovering Stover Country Park

Showcased volunteer-led research from the Stover Park Restoration Project.



Visitors engaging with interactive exhibits

Events

The museum delivered a varied and successful events programme throughout the year. Highlights included a series of sold-out Music at the Museum performances featuring Old Time Sailors, Jim Causley, Haldon String Quartet, and the Budapest Café Orchestra.

The programming team also partnered with Devon Escape Rooms to deliver a family-friendly Halloween escape room experience, which proved especially popular.

Throughout the year, the team delivered a wide range of regular activities, including family heritage craft sessions, Toddler Tuesday, Twilight Sketching, home education sessions, summer holiday activities, and the Young Curators Club.

Local groups, including Scouts, Women's Institute, and U3A, visited the museum regularly, while the outreach programme connected with community groups, memory cafés, and schools across the area.

St Leonard's Tower

Volunteers enabled St Leonard's Tower to open to the public from May to September 2025, welcoming 1,197 visitors.

The 2026 season will run from 16 May to 16 September, with opening hours on Wednesdays (10am–1pm) and selected Saturdays. Entry remains free.

Looking Forward

Insects Uncovered: Biodiversity in Newton Abbot

From March 2026, this year-long exhibition will explore the world of insects, combining the museum's historic entomology collection with the work of Newton Abbot Town Council to enhance local biodiversity.

Wildlife Exhibition with Andrew Cooper, 31 July – 30 August 2026

This free exhibition will showcase the work of wildlife documentarian Andrew Cooper, featuring striking imagery and behind-the-scenes insights from his work with the BBC.

Summer of Wildlife

During the 2026 summer holidays, the museum will deliver a programme offering families and nature enthusiasts a chance to enjoy activities and experiences inspired by our wildlife exhibitions.

Regular Free Activities

The museum will continue to deliver a programme of free activities, including:

- ◆ **Toddler Tuesday**
Weekly informal sessions for children aged 0–4 (term-time, 9:30–10:30)
- ◆ **Make & Create**
Family craft sessions on the first Saturday of each month
- ◆ **Relaxed Visits**
Quieter sessions with reduced sound and a dedicated chill-out space
- ◆ **Summer Holiday Crafts**
Weekly sessions linked to the summer exhibitions
- ◆ **Young Curators Club**
Returning for ages 8–16 during the summer holidays
- ◆ **Twilight Sketching (autumn–spring)**
Evening sessions combining music and artwork.



For more information or to book, please visit the What's On page on the museum's website, email groups@newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk, or call 01626 201121.

A New Heritage Store

Newton Abbot Museum has secured approval for a new heritage store. With support from National Lottery Heritage Fund, Garfield Weston Foundation, and other partners, the project will create a climate-controlled facility to house over 18,000 collection items.

The new store will improve physical access through step-free entrance points, and expand intellectual access through tours, workshops, and enhanced research and volunteer facilities. It will also support digitisation and enable the discovery of new stories within the collection.

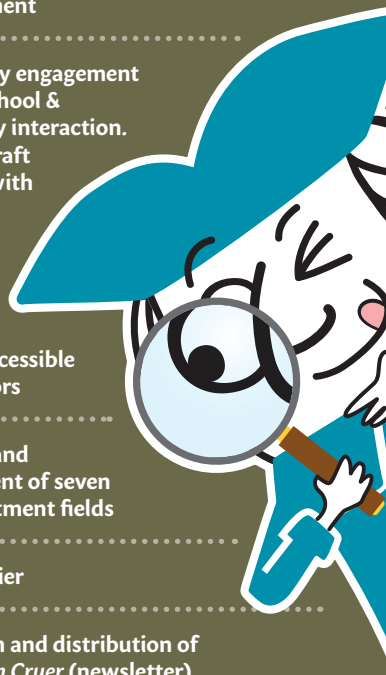
The museum's community engagement officer is already developing and testing activities with local audiences, helping to shape future engagement with the store.

Construction is expected to begin in summer 2026.



How is your council tax spent?

- ◆ Free seasonal community events throughout the year
- ◆ Public open spaces – Golden Lion Square, Victoria Gardens, Town Quay and the Leat
- ◆ Newton’s Place, home to the town council offices, the museum and community rooms
- ◆ Information point
- ◆ Administration & Facilities Maintenance Officers
- ◆ Cutting of grass verges & visibility splays within Newton Abbot
- ◆ Seasonal embellishments, e.g. floral displays, Christmas lights and flags
- ◆ Street cleansing
- ◆ Statutory consultee for planning
- ◆ Working in partnership with Newton Abbot Security Trust to provide CCTV
- ◆ Neighbourhood Plan
- ◆ Maintenance of 50+ footpaths
- ◆ Preservation of St Leonard’s Clock Tower and the War Memorial
- ◆ Community representations – responding to consultations at local and national level
- ◆ Partly funding Newton Abbot Community Interest Company
- ◆ Town centre management – supporting businesses and providing street entertainment
- ◆ Community engagement officer – school & community interaction. Plus free craft activities with Creative Newton Abbot
- ◆ Two publicly accessible defibrillators
- ◆ Provision and management of seven public allotment fields
- ◆ A Town Crier
- ◆ Publication and distribution of *The Newton Cryer* (newsletter)
- ◆ Newfoundland Way public conveniences
- ◆ Community & shop improvement grants
- ◆ Installation & maintenance of street furniture
- ◆ Dog waste bins



NEWTON ABBOT TOWN COUNCIL



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