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| Great Torrington Town Council Fleur de Lis logoGREAT TORRINGTON TOWN COUNCIL |

## Minutes of the Annual Business Meeting held on Wednesday 14th May 2025 at 7pm in the Committee Room, Great Torrington Town Council, Castle Hill, Great Torrington

## Fr. Steve Turner, Mayor’s Chaplain, led prayers at 6:50pm prior to the meeting commencing.

##

## MEMBERS PRESENT:

Cllrs L Bright, P Cloke (Chair), J Isaac, S Mills, D Parish and D Smith

### **ALSO, PRESENT:**

Jennie Smithson, Town Clerk and Charlotte Kirby, Deputy Town Clerk

### COUNCIL REFLECTION

Cllr Cloke read the Council Reflection to start the meeting.

### ELECT A CHAIR/TOWN MAYOR

Cllr Smith proposed Cllr Phil Cloke for the position of Chair/Town Mayor for 2025/26; Cllr Parish seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.

1. **RECEIVE THE TOWN MAYOR’S DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**

Cllr Cloke signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office as the new Chair/Town Mayor.

Cllr Cloke informed Members that his charities for 2025/26 will be the Bickford Centre and Torrington Rugby Club.

Cllr Cloke announced that the Mayor’s Chaplain for his second term as Mayor will be Fr. Steve Turner from St Michaels and All Angels church.

Cllr Cloke informed Members that his consort will be Elizabeth Yates.

The Mayor’s Introduction Ceremony will be held at the Town Hall on Wednesday 21st May 2025 at 7pm.

### ELECT A DEPUTY CHAIR/DEPUTY MAYOR

Cllr Cloke proposed Cllr Parish for the position of Deputy Chair/Deputy Mayor for 2025/26. Cllr Mills seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.

### APOLOGIES

 Cllrs K Allin, C Bright, M Brown, B Callaghan-Martin, J Insull and D Maisey.

### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Mills declared a personal interest in agenda item 16b as a trustee at Torrington Museum.

### POLICE REPORT

Members had no comments on the police reports supplied to them in advance of the meeting. The Town Clerk informed members she had spoken to the local Police Constable during Mayfair. It was felt that the police were very proactive during the Mayfair weekend. Members were reminded to attend the monthly police online meetings for the local area: meeting details will be shared with all members.

### REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR: CLLR COTTLE-HUNKIN

Cllr Cheryl Cottle-Hunkin joined the meeting: Members welcomed her as the new Devon County Councillor for Torrington Rural. Cllr Cottle-Hunkin is currently undertaking training for her new role with the first Full Council meeting taking place on 22nd May 2025, therefore there is no official report this month.

### PUBLIC CONTRIBUTIONS

 None.

### CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

### Full Council minutes: 02 April 2025

Cllr Mills proposed that minutes were correct and approved; Cllr Isaac seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: 5 in favour; 1 abstention (Cllr Smith due to absence at the 02 Apr 2025 meeting).

 The following meeting minutes were noted by Members:

### Environment Committee minutes: 08 April 2025

### Planning Committee minutes: 09 April 2025

### Planning Committee minutes: 23 April 2025

### MATTERS ARISING

**Full Council 02 Apr 2025: Minute Item 17:**

* **VE Day 80:** Feedback from this event was very positive. The final budget is being calculated but is expected to be approximately £2000 and will be reported at a future meeting.
* **Mayfair:** Cllr Isaac received complaints from members of the public about the lack of toilet facilities on Mayfair Day due to the Pannier Market toilets closing early. Cllr Mills explained that the cost to the Funfair of cleaning the Pannier Market toilets if they had stayed open until 10pm was prohibitive

**Environment Committee 08 Apr 2025: Minute Item 15: Weed Spraying:** The Town Clerk has followed up with the local resident who complained about the residue remaining on her house paintwork and is awaiting a response. However, upon observation, the residue has been washed off by rain.

### CORRESPONDENCE AND MATTERS BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE CHAIR AS A MATTER OF URGENCY

* The Chair has received a complaint from a member of the public regarding a vehicle driving around the town with a very noisy exhaust. The member of the public has already tried to report it to the police but without success, and therefore requested it be brought to the attention of this Council. Officers will ensure the Police are informed of the details. Cllr Isaac has received a similar report: the person reporting will be advised to report the incidents directly to the police.
* Japanese Knotweed has been identified as being present in a small section of land at Donnacroft. The Town Clerk, along with the Manager at Torrington Town and Lands Charity, are investigating how best to manage the situation.

### QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS SUBMITTED NO LATER THAN NOON, WEDNESDAY 13 MAY 2025

None.

### TO APPOINT MEMBERS AND CHAIRS TO SERVE ON THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEES

**Committee membership:**

The Town Clerk had not received any indication from those Members absent that they wished to change their membership of any of the committees.

* Membership of committees was agreed as follows:
	+ **Planning Committee:** Cllrs M Brown, P Cloke, J Isaac, S Mills, D Parish and D Smith
	+ **Policy & Finance Committee:** Cllrs K Allin, C Bright, B Callaghan-Martin, P Cloke, S Mills, D Parish and D Smith
	+ **HR Subcommittee:** Cllrs L Bright, B Callaghan-Martin, P Cloke, S Mills, D Parish and D Smith
	+ **Environment Committee:** Cllrs K Allin, L Bright, B Callaghan-Martin, P Cloke, J Insull, D Maisey and D Parish.

**Committee Chairs:**

* **Planning Committee:** Cllr Isaac proposed Cllr Mills for the position of Chair of the Planning Committee; Cllr Parish seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour
* **Policy & Finance Committee:** Cllr Mills proposed Cllr Parish for the position of Chair of the Policy & Finance Committee; Cllr Smith seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.
* **HR Sub-Committee:** Cllr Smith proposed Cllr Callaghan-Martin for the position of Chair of the HR Subcommittee; Cllr L Bright seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.
* **Environment Committee:** Cllr Allin informed the Town Clerk in advance of this evening’s meeting that she wished to step down as Chair of the Environment Committee. In the absence of the current Vice-Chair of that committee (Cllr Callaghan-Martin) it was agreed that selection of a Chair for this committee will be postponed to the first committee meeting in June 2025.

###  APPROVE DATES OF MEETINGS AND FUNCTIONS FOR THE CIVIC YEAR 2025/26 AND DETERMINE THE TIME AND PLACE OF ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETINGS OF THE FULL COUNCIL UP TO AND INCLUDING THE NEXT ANNUAL MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL

Members were provided with a list of meeting dates in advance of this evening’s meeting. Dates for HR Sub-committee meetings have not yet been set and will be discussed at the first meeting of that committee.

Cllr Mills proposed that the meeting dates be accepted, along with the recommendation about dates for future HR Sub-committee meetings. Cllr Smith seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.

### APPOINT AN INTERNAL AUDITOR

Cllr Mills proposed that Tim Sanders continues to undertake the internal audit for Great Torrington Town Council for the current financial year. Cllr Parish seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.

### FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

### Council Banking Arrangements:

The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that the Council banks with Lloyds Bank. Cllr L Bright proposed to accept these arrangements; Cllr Isaac seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.

### Variable Direct Debit Arrangements;

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that direct debits are used to pay for the following:

* Broadband: monthly, fixed direct debit
* Accounting software: monthly, fixed direct debit
* Vehicle and mower/strimmer fuel: variable direct debit
* Public Works Loan (mortgage for 14 South Street): six-monthly fixed direct debit
* Lloyds credit card: monthly, variable direct debit

Cllr Parish proposed these arrangements be accepted; Cllr Smith seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.

### Use of BACS or CHAPS for payment of invoices:

The Deputy Town Clerk advised Members that BACS is used for payments of invoices unless a cheque is specifically requested by a supplier. Cllr L Bright proposed these arrangements be accepted; Cllr Smith seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.

### Use of banker’s standing order for regular payments of fixed sums:

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that standing orders are used for the following types of payments:

* + - Staff salary payments
		- Employer’s pension contributions
		- Rent (Market House and Committee Room)

Cllr Smith proposed the above arrangements be accepted; Cllr Mills seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.

### Financial Regulations:

The Town Clerk provided Members with an updated version of the Financial Regulations. This document has been updated in line with a new NALC model document. Changes were minor and included reference to the new Procurement Act 2023 and Procurement Regulations 2024. Cllr L Bright proposed to accept the updated Financial Regulations; Cllr Smith seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.

### STANDING ORDERS

Standing Orders have been updated to reflect the new NALC model to make the document gender neutral and there have been some customisations for the Town Council including:

* A change to the total amount of time permitted for public participation from 10 to 15 minutes.
* To increase the amount of time allocated to each public participant from 3 to 5 minutes.
* To increase the meeting length from 2 to 2.5 hours, however Officers will still aim for a meeting of 2 hours in length.

Cllr Mills proposed that the above referenced changes to the Standing Orders be accepted; Cllr Isaac seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.

### GDPR POLICY

The GDPR policy has been updated in accordance with a revised NALC model and to remove reference to a Data Protection Officer: as a Town Council, the Council is the Data Controller as a corporate body.

Cllr Smith proposed to accept the changes to the GDPR policy; Cllr Mills seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.

### FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

This document remains unchanged. Cllr Cloke proposed to accept continued use of the Freedom of Information Policy; Cllr Parish seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.

### GTTC COMMITTEE MEETINGS TERMS OF REFERENCE

This document now contains the terms and conditions of HR Sub-Committee meetings. Cllr Cloke proposed the changes to the Committee Meetings Terms of Reference be accepted; Cllr Parish seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.

### ASSET REGISTER

This document has been updated with changes to assets owned by the Town Council. A review of the current format of the asset register will be undertaken. Cllr Smith proposed to accept the updated Asset Register; Cllr Cloke seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.

### CODE OF CONDUCT

This document has been updated to reflect the new NALC model. Cllr Mills proposed to accept the revised Code of Conduct; Cllr L Bright seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.

### APPOINT REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Mills requested that she be removed from the Torrington in Bloom organisation. No further changes were requested.

Cllr Mills proposed that the updated document (see above changes) be accepted by Members; Cllr Smith seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.

### REGISTER OF INTERESTS AND GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

Members were reminded to let the office know if they need to record any changes to their Register of Interests and if they have received any gifts or hospitality that requires declaration.

### FINANCIAL UPDATE AND ACCOUNTS PAID

1. Accounts Paid March 2025: Cllr Isaac proposed to accept the March 2025 Accounts Paid summary; Cllr Mills seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.
2. Bank Reconciliation to end April 2025: Cllr Smith proposed to accept the Bank Reconciliation for April 2025
3. Fund Transfers March 2025: Cllr Isaac proposed to accept the summary of fund transfers for March 2025; Cllr Parish seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.
4. Summary of payments/invoices over £500 to end March 2025: Cllr Isaac proposed to accept the summary of payments/invoices to end March 2025; Cllr Parish seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.

### DEFIBRILLATORS

A revised set of options has been put forward to the Town Council by South West Ambulance Service NHS Trust for the 5 defibrillators in the town:

1. Renew all defibrillators for a cost of £3500.00 excluding VAT, as only pads/batteries required, full support and training included. This will run December 2025 – December 2029, at this point they will be gifted with no option to renew the lease.
2. Renew only the Old Bowling Green and Tarka Trail for a cost of £1000.00 excluding VAT (running from December 2025 – 2029), the Methodist Church (free of charge), Heritage Museum, Fire Station would be gifted as of December 2025 and will not be supported for replacement parts/maintenance.
3. Gift all the defibrillators as of December 2025.
4. Cancel the agreement for all defibrillators and they will then be removed.

Members requested that Officers investigate funding sources to contribute towards option 1 including District Councillor grants and a contribution from the Rotary Club who have contributed previously.

### COMMITTEE ROOM LEASE

The Town Clerk reminded Members that the lease on the Committee Room between Torridge District Council (TDC) and Genesis expires at the end of May 2025. The Town Council has been in discussions with Genesis to take the lease on directly rather than through TDC. Officers are currently waiting on Genesis to supply a lease document for review.

### TORRIDGESIDE

### Hedgerow:

Officers met with representatives from Torridgeside AFC today to discuss the moving/removal of the grass bank (previously referred to as a hedgerow) at one end of Pitch 1 at Donnacroft. The current plan is to move the bank rather than remove it, in order to provide more space for a hard standing/walkway to Pitch 2 as required by the FA. Torridgeside AFC has identified a contractor who can move the bank. The club is unable to move the pitch to create space as it would then encroach on a public footpath.

Members discussed the issue and recommended the following:

* That Torridgeside consider if the length of Pitch 1 can be reduced to increase the space available between the bank and the pitch and remain compliant with the FA requirements. If this is possible this would be members preferred option.
* If this is not possible, members were happy with the proposal for the bank to be moved (as described at the onsite meeting, using plant machinery to push the bank towards the rugby pitch, but no further than the boundary formed by the Torrington Rugby Football Club floodlights). In addition, members request that disruption to wildlife is kept to a minimum and that Town & Lands and Torridge District Council are consulted/informed about the changed proposal.

Cllr Smith proposed that the above proposals be put forward to Torridgeside AFC; Cllr Isaac seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.

### Lease

At a previous meeting of this Council, Members were asked to consider a 15 year extension to the lease between Torridgeside AFC and Great Torrington Town Council. Members requested Officers investigate the option of a rolling lease instead: this was deemed an unsuitable option, therefore Members were recommended today to approve a 15 year lease extension to the existing lease, taking it to 2050.

Cllr Mills proposed that Members accept the above recommendation; Cllr Smith seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.

### DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

Full Council: Wednesday 4th June 2025 at 7pm.

Meeting closed at 8:26pm.

Signed ………………………………………… Date ………………………..