|  |
| --- |
| Great Torrington Town Council Fleur de Lis logo  GREAT TORRINGTON TOWN COUNCIL |

## Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Wednesday 23rd July 2025 at 7pm in the Committee Room, Great Torrington Town Council, Castle Hill, Great Torrington

## 

## MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

### **ALSO, PRESENT:**

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

### COUNCIL REFLECTION

Cllr Cloke read the Council Reflection to start the meeting.

### APOLOGIES

Cllrs K Allin, M Brown, B Callaghan-Martin and D Smith gave their apologies for this evening’s meeting.

1. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Cllr Cloke declared an interest in agenda item 23 (Funding Requests) as his Mayor’s Charity for FY24/25 was Torrington Amateur Athletic Club and his Mayor’s Charity for FY25/26 is Torrington Rugby Football Club. Cllr Mills declared an interest in agenda item 19 (Market House) as a trustee of Torrington Museum. Cllr Mills declared an interest in agenda item 27 (Christmas Event) as one of the quotations was provided by a family member. Cllr Isaac declared an interest in agenda item 27 (Christmas Event) as one of the quotations was provided by an employee.

### POLICE REPORT AND CRIME ISSUES

Links to the Devon and Cornwall Police reporting tool had been provided to Members in advance.

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

Cllr Cottle-Hunkin sent her apologies for this evening’s meeting. Her report was shared via email with Members in advance of this evening’s meeting: see Appendix A.

### REPORT FROM TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Cllr L Bright’s report was shared with Members via email: see Appendix B.

Since the report was written in early July, Torridge District Council (TDC) has agreed to contribute £45,000.00 towards The Plough Arts Centre over a number of years.

Local Government Reorganisation: TDC is looking at an alternative unitary plan to include Torridge, North Devon, East and Mid Devon only.

### PUBLIC CONTRIBUTIONS

None.

### CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

### Annual Business Meeting minutes: 18th June 2025

Cllr C Bright proposed that minutes were correct and approved; Cllr Parish seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: 7 in favour and 1 abstention (Cllr L Bright).

The following meeting minutes were noted by Members:

### Draft Planning Committee minutes: 9th July 2025

### MATTERS ARISING

**Full Council 18 June 2025 Minute Number 74: Childcare Availability:** The Town Clerk informed Members that Devon County Council (DCC) has recently issued a survey soliciting feedback on childcare availability. JS will share the survey with Members.

**Full Council 18 June 2025 Minute Number 79: Funding Requests:** The Town Clerk obtained clarification from the Devon Association of Local Councils regarding whether funding requests should be considered in the open or closed part of a council meeting. It has been confirmed that all funding requests will remain in the public part of the meeting as they are in the public’s interest.

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

The Chair informed Members that Sir Geoffrey Cox, KC MP will be holding an open surgery at the Town Hall on Saturday 9th August 2025.

The Town Clerk informed Members that correspondence has been received from a former Town Clerk, Mr Michael Tighe, regarding the forthcoming Local Government Reorganisation. The email will be forwarded to Members for their information and Mr Tighe will be thanked for his input.

### QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS SUBMITTED NO LATER THAN NOON, TUESDAY 22nd July 2025

None.

### HEALTH & SAFETY: FLAGPOLE

The Deputy Town Clerk is still investigating costs for removal of the existing flagpole and installation of a new ground-mounted flagpole. It is hoped that a full set of investigations can be presented to Members in September.

### TRAINING: GDPR

Officers obtained a quote for a Town Council specific GDPR training session, however it is prohibitively expensive, therefore Officers will look at an alternative way of delivering this training to councillors.

### ELECT CHAIRS FOR ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE AND HR SUB COMMITTEE

Cllr Insull proposed Cllr Lauren Bright to be chair of the Environment Committee. Cllr Parish seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.

No changes were made to the chair of the HR Subcommittee due to Cllr Callaghan-Martin’s absence from the meeting.

### CIVILITY AND RESPECT PLEDGE

Members debated the proposal to adopt the Civility and Respect Pledge. The Town Clerk reviewed all clauses in the pledge with Members and confirmed that the Town Council has achieved all of the statements. The Town Clerk clarified that assistance with any issues arising from the pledge would be sought from DALC, TDC and our HR consultants if needed. Any sanctions would follow those set out in the existing Code of Conduct.

Cllr Insull proposed that Great Torrington Town Council adopts the Civility and Respect Pledge; Cllr Maisey seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.

### CHURCHYARD MAINTENANCE

The Town Clerk confirmed with Members that the TDC Grounds Maintenance Team (who currently look after St Michael’s Churchyard) is happy for our Town Council Technicians to support them in keeping the churchyard tidy. Our Technicians currently have capacity to help for a maximum of 1 hour per Technician per week with tasks such as leaf clearance, weed management and cleaning of the ironwork at the entrances. TDC will remain responsible for strimming/mowing the grass and pruning trees/hedges.

Cllr Isaac proposed that the Town Council’s Technicians provide support to the TDC Grounds Maintenance team in the churchyard for no more than 2 hours per week (Total) for activities including leaf clearance, weed management and gate cleaning. Cllr Maisey seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.

Members requested that the responsibilities for maintenance of the churchyard and the support to be provided by GTTC be publicised more widely to inform the community.

Cllr Insull raised the issue of poor lighting in the churchyard: the Town Clerk confirmed she had raised this with the relevant TDC Officer but had not yet received a response. This issue will be followed up.

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

Cllr Cloke and the Town Clerk met with a representative from Sir Geoffrey Cox’s office this week who was unable to provide any more detail on the plans for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

The Town Clerk and Cllr Cloke will be attending a meeting hosted by TDC on Tuesday 29th July to discuss LGR alongside other local parish councils.

TDC has issued a survey asking for feedback on the LGR: the deadline is 11th August 2025 and Members are encouraged to complete the survey as individuals.

### COMMITTEE ROOM LEASE

Further to Members’ request at the Policy & Finance Committee meeting regarding requesting a full lease (rather than Heads of Terms) with Genesis for the Committee Room, the Town Clerk met with the Chair of the Community Development Trust (CDT) to discuss Members’ concerns in more detail.

Following this meeting, the Town Clerk recommended to Members to accept a Heads of Terms document for a period of 3 years with some additional clauses to be included such as condition photographs, clarity over who is responsible for maintenance/repairs, a break clause and clarity on insurance cover.

Cllr L Bright proposed that a further meeting be held with representatives of Genesis and the CDT to agree additional terms to be included in the Heads of Terms document. Cllr Mills seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.

### MARKET HOUSE

The Deputy Town Clerk summarised the report provided to Members regarding Market House. The Museum wishes to make some improvements to the space to facilitate it’s use as a museum display area, however in the absence of a lease, they have asked for clarification as to who is responsible for making these changes.

The Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk recently discussed these queries with an Officer from the TDC Estates team who would like to visit the museum and Market House to assess the situation in more detail.

Cllr L Bright suggested the improvements might be a candidate for funding through the Rural England Prosperity fund. This will be further explored with the Estates team when they visit.

### SECTION 106/SKATE PARK ACCOUNT

This bank account (Sort Code: 30-90-78; Account Number: 01165631) was created specifically for funds transferred from TDC when the Town Council took over maintenance of some play parks in Torrington. The funding was specifically for playpark maintenance. The funds are nearly exhausted and Lloyds bank is now charging £4.25 per month for the account, even if empty of funds. Officers have therefore been investigating as to whether this account could be closed once it has been emptied of all remaining funds.

DALC has advised that such funds could be placed into a General Reserves account provided they are ring-fenced specifically for Section 106. However, they also recommended checking whether TDC has any specific requirements.

Cllr L Bright proposed that the account remains open until further clarification is obtained from TDC regarding Section 106 funds; Cllr C Bright seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.

### TORRIDGESIDE AFC SHIPPING CONTAINER PERMISSION

Torridgeside AFC has approached the Town Council, as their landlord, for permission to install a new shipping container at Donnacroft as secure storage for a new ride-on mower.

Cllr Parish proposed no objections to this request provided all planning procedures are followed by Torridgeside AFC; Cllr L Bright seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: 5 in favour; 3 abstentions (Cllrs Cloke, Isaac and Mills as members of Great Torrington Town Council’s Planning Committee).

### YELLOW LINES CONSULTATION: ALEXANDER PARK/SCHOOL LANE

DCC Highways has approached the Town Council with a proposal to install yellow lines at the junction of Alexander Park and School Lane. After reviewing the proposal, members had no comments.

Cllr Maisey proposed no objections; Cllr Parish seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.

### FUNDING REQUESTS

1. **South West Ambulance Charity:**

Following discussions at June Full Council, the Town Clerk clarified with the South West Ambulance Charity that the vehicle they are requesting funding towards will cover Torridge. The charity is asking for a donation of 1% of the cost of the new vehicle which equates to approximately £300.00. Cllr Parish proposed that £300.00 be awarded from the Town Council’s Emergency Grant Pot to South West Ambulance Charity; Cllr C Bright seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.

1. **Torrington Amateur Athletics Club (TAAC):**

Following an arson attack at Donnacroft last week in which TAAC’s storage shed was set alight and all of it’s contents destroyed, the club has approached the Town Council for an emergency grant to replace the shed and their equipment.

Cllr Insull proposed that further information be obtained from the club in order to make a decision. Cllr Maisey seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.

1. **Torrington Rugby Football Club (TRFC):**

Following an arson attack at Donnacroft last week in which TAAC’s storage shed was set alight, the contents of the adjacent shipping container owned by TRFC was destroyed in the heat generated by the fire. The club has approached the Town Council for an emergency grant to replace the lost equipment.

Cllr Parish proposed that further information be obtained from the club in order to make a decision. Cllr L Bright seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.

### EVENTS UPDATE

1. **VJ Day:** On Saturday 9th August 2025 between 10:30am and 12 noon Torrington Silver Band will be playing wartime tunes in the town square. On Friday 15th August 2025, Fr. Steve will lead a short memorial service at the war memorial in Great Torrington Cemetery. This will coincide with the nationally observed 2 minutes silence at 12 noon.
2. **Mayor’s Charity Events: Bake Off:** Scheduled for Saturday 20th September 2025 at the Town Hall.

### OUTSIDE BODIES

**Torrington in Bloom:** The Mayor reported that he attended (and helped with judging) last Sunday’s TIB Open Gardens event.

**Children’s Hospice South West:** After selecting the hospice as one of his charities for last year, the Mayor was invited to visit CHSW Little Bridge House on Monday 14th July 2025.

**Mayfair & Carnival Committee Open Meeting 18th July 2025:** The Mayor attended this open meeting at which members of the public were asked to provide feedback on this year’s Mayfair and Carnival events. The meeting was generally poorly attended. The committee’s AGM will take place in September and will be widely advertised.

**Meeting with Cavaliers re: Bonfire 2027:** Cllrs Cloke, Maisey and Parish met with a representative of the Cavaliers on 14th July 2025 to discuss concerns about the bonfire theme raised at last month’s Full Council meeting. Members were informed that the Cavaliers have written to the American Embassy to inform them of the planned event but have not yet received a response. Members asked the Cavaliers to write again and to provide the Town Council with a copy of the letter (and response once received). Members requested that the organiser of the bonfire, Chris Tattersall, be invited to the next Full Council meeting in September to discuss further.

**Torri Youth:** the Police and Police and Crime Commissioner visited Torri Youth recently to follow up on a grant they had awarded the youth group. Their feedback on how the group is working was excellent. Cllr Mills thanked Paula Fuller for her hard work with Torri Youth.

### FINANCIAL UPDATE AND ACCOUNTS PAID

1. Accounts Paid May and June 2025: Cllr Isaac proposed to accept the May and June 2025 Accounts Paid summaries; Cllr Mills seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.
2. Bank Reconciliations to end May and June 2025: Cllr Parish proposed to accept the Bank Reconciliations for May and June 2025; Cllr Maisey seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.
3. Fund Transfers: April, May and June 2025: Cllr Parish proposed to accept the fund transfers for April, May and June 2025; Cllr Mills seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.
4. Summary of payments/invoices over £500 to end June 2025: Cllr Maisey proposed to accept the summary of payments/invoices to end June 2025; Cllr Insull seconded the proposal; a vote was taken: all in favour.
5. Quarterly spending report: Noted

**Items to be discussed which exclude the press and the public.**

### CHRISTMAS EVENT

The Deputy Town Clerk updated Members on draft plans for the Christmas Lights Switch-on Event in November. Three companies have been approached to quote for a kids Christmas disco; two responses have been received. Members considered the quotes provided and a majority (6 in favour; 2 abstentions: Cllrs Mills and Isaac) voted in favour of awarding the work to Shane Coysh.

### TOWN CENTRE CCTV QUOTES

Following a discussion about the quotations provided by two local businesses, members requested that this decision be postponed to a future Council meeting once a separate meeting has been held with the police to discuss the need for CCTV in more detail.

### DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

Full Council: Wednesday 3rd September 2025 at 7pm.

Meeting closed at 9:12pm.

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

### Appendix A: County Councillor’s Report: Cllr Cheryl Cottle-Hunkin

Following up on the shock news about the plans to phase out fire service co-responders across the Southwest, and the decision to move solely to volunteer community first responders: The ambulance trust was called in for scrutiny by Devon County Council’s Health and Adult Care Scrutiny committee which was held last week. The committee heard from a large number of members of the public talking passionately about the need to retain the service, and the Southwest Ambulance Trust was heavily scrutinised by councillors. The recommendation from the committee was that SWAST should pause the termination of fire co-responders, respond within 28 days with more detail and metrics, and come back to committee in September, as they were not satisfied by the detail and reasoning that was provided.

 At our most recent cabinet meeting we presented a large number of reports which have all been reported on the DCC website. Most notable decisions included the agreement “to trial pothole repair blitz as part of £83 million road maintenance programme” Our highways teams will carry out a repair blitz on potholes, where all potholes would be filled, rather than just dealing with safety defects, in a few trial areas of the county. Although the exact details are still to be agreed, this pilot would be used to establish the budget implications of changing maintenance procedures. [https://www.devon.gov.uk/news/council-to-trial-pothole-repair-blitz-as-part-of-83-million-road-maintenance-programme/](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.devon.gov.uk%2fnews%2fcouncil-to-trial-pothole-repair-blitz-as-part-of-83-million-road-maintenance-programme%2f&c=E,1,NjpNn_kqE0rw5Lj7MyRcSp0P1OKL2KD9iqT4tLhENDoc400aGqjpwdz6d2ILWVydCOhJBPfFzFVPS39nsn81yJllk8I_YNZyb8tsZOm9TR9mahAgvCNb-WLtbg,,&typo=1)

And we also agreed to “Improve the outcomes of our most vulnerable children through new 10-year plan” A new long-term plan to improve the outcomes of Devon’s most vulnerable young people by overhauling how they are supported and cared for has been approved by our cabinet. Councillors have agreed to an ambitious multi-million investment programme to establish 12 new children’s homes; 20 specialist foster places; and up to four new therapeutic schools, over the next 10 years. [https://www.devon.gov.uk/children-families-education/news/new-cabinet-vows-to-improve-the-outcomes-of-our-most-vulnerable-children-through-10-year-plan/](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.devon.gov.uk%2fchildren-families-education%2fnews%2fnew-cabinet-vows-to-improve-the-outcomes-of-our-most-vulnerable-children-through-10-year-plan%2f&c=E,1,3PKdFhxIrwvItKVZntngN7yex3hVhZkJT7FG4le1o06RrjOPP2dF-E21BXdFb5NR7mqq_3tXEqq_SaQ-R_eL8d1ZfFQlPicQd-tmYiClEl7gUeiT-zh7eMCM&typo=1)

A few weeks ago I was really pleased to visit a place where I have spent a huge amount of time in the past- both as a pupil and as a teacher! Great Torrington School. I want to thank headteacher Andy Bloodworth and chair of governors Ian Newberry for inviting me in, in my new role as County Councillor. They showed me around and I heard about the challenges and things that have changed since I was there 6 years ago. A big thing that I took away was the will and the need for more collaboration between Devon County Council and the school and that is one of the things I will be working on over the next few years. I also attended Chulmleigh College soon after, along with other county councillors including the leader and deputy leader of DCC. We had very open discussions with the headteachers of Chulmleigh, South Molton and Ilfracombe and a lot of similar issues were raised including the need for more face to face contact with DCC staff. We look forward to working more closely with schools across Devon.

Also earlier this month, as county councillors we were all invited down to a farm near Ivybridge. This was organised by the NFU South team, helping to build relationships and was a great opportunity for councillors to learn about the issues and especially the recent challenges we are facing in the farming sector. The family farm tax, the closure of the sustainable farming incentive, and unfair trade deals to name a few. As well as a presentation from the NFU and having a tour of the farm, we also heard from the Rural Affairs team at Devon & Cornwall Police about the different challenges in rural areas- from flocks of more than 100 sheep being stolen overnight, to GPS systems being stolen and ending up as far away as the USA and Mexico. These are highly organised crimes and we were urged to report any suspicious behaviour that we see in the countryside to them. As cabinet member for Rural Affairs I look forward to working together with organisations such as the NFU - National Farmers' Union, sharing knowledge and information with fellow councillors, and helping us to make informed decisions, allowing Devon County Council to be a bigger voice for our rural communities.

Finally… another reminder to please support the Globe Hotel in Great Torrington I believe there is currently more than £190,000 raised with just £40,000 to go!. Luckily they have been able to extend the deadline to raise the money, the final deadline is now 18th August. Once the amount is raised the hotel will be owned by the community and a grant of more than half a million pounds will be released by central government towards its renovation. The aim of the globe project is to provide a training hotel to train young people in the hospitality sector. It would raise aspirations and would transform the town centre. Community shares start at just £50. There are also tax reliefs and benefits for businesses that invest. Please spread the word with everyone and encourage them to invest. Link to crowdfunder here: [https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/the-globe-hotel-torrington#start](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.crowdfunder.co.uk%2fp%2fthe-globe-hotel-torrington%23start&c=E,1,9uWZ78zZVDxZ_xqIxDqHGISXJ7taakp_oGQayGf-snZ50F2Gz1-qy8PIVyNc32YWEV1hOiYaMGl-knzreEDmQgYZsW0M70NLLpC9TzMDVxTtAEto5Dg,&typo=1)

On Great Torrington specific issues I have been contacted by residents in relation to speeding on Mill St, issues relating to the car park next to Lidl, and concern in relation to the auction of a piece of land at Holwill Drive.

If there are any safety defects or other highways type issues, please do report them here: [Report a problem - Roads and transport](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.devon.gov.uk%2froads-and-transport%2freport-a-problem%2f&c=E,1,Qp4alrLrCSXI06Nuu3tVErDpqVu4kLA3PhhISr5MVWVoGHeCFG6ITcVJ6y8tr6sFm1cgGb_9cnwDb10DXnhDse9P0TLNI3hjwhYg-nTnN4vSrcAjIw,,&typo=1)

### Appendix B: Torridge District Councillor’s Report

**The Globe**

We are really pleased to hear that the window for buying shares in The Globe has been extended to 18th August and that investors are continuing to come forward. This is such an important project for Great Torrington and we urge residents to support it if they can so that the £526,000 of Levelling Up funding promised by the Government does come to Torrington.

**The Plough**

We are also happy to report that TDC have committed to supporting The Plough Arts Centre with £45,000 of funding split over two years. Councillors at TDC’s Community and Resources Committee heard from The Plough’s CEO alongside members of the Youth Theatre, who spoke passionately about its immense social, cultural and economic importance, not only for Torrington but for the whole of the district. This funding package, in conjunction with support from Great Torrington Town Council, will provide a vital short-term financial buffer for The Plough as it continues to implement its longer-term revenue strategy. It has been wonderful to see the theatre packed at recent events and we look forward to seeing The Plough go from strength the strength with this local council backing.

**PlayZones**

At June’s meeting of Full Council, we heard that grant awards from the Football Foundation are now in place alongside partnership funding to move forward with three new PlayZones in Torridge, including one on the former tennis courts site behind Torrington Football Club. Councillors have agreed to support the PlayZones project with £155,000 from the Rural England Prosperity Fund and the Council’s Capital Reserves. You can find out more about the Football Foundation PlayZones programme online at https://footballfoundation.org.uk/playzones-programme.

**HAVE YOUR SAY on Local Government Reorganisation**

Discussions continue on the topic of Local Government Reorganisation. District and county councils across Devon are working on final proposals for what reorganisation should look like in our area ahead of the November 2025 deadline. TDC has expressed support for the 1-4-5 plan, which proposes:

1. Retaining Plymouth unitary authority.
2. A unitary combining the South Hams, Teignbridge and West Devon areas with Torbay.
3. A unitary including East, Mid, North Devon, Torridge and Exeter.

Although the Government will ultimately decide how local government is reorganised in Devon, you can help influence the final proposals. TDC has created a survey to gather the views of residents, partners and stakeholders, and you are able to add your comments until the consultation period closes on **11th August**. You can complete the survey online at https://www.torridge.gov.uk/lgr. If you need this survey as a paper version or large print you can request this by emailing customer.services@torridge.gov.uk or by calling 01237 428700 option 9. Paper copies are available at Riverbank House, Bideford.