

GREAT TORRINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

# Environment Committee held on Tuesday 16th September 2025 at The Council Committee Room

## 

## MEMBERS PRESENT:

Cllrs L Bright (Chair), B Callaghan-Martin, P Cloke, D Maisey and D Parish

### **ALSO PRESENT:**

Jennie Smithson (Town Clerk) and Kate Cooper (Office Administrator), Andy Smale (GTTC Technician 7pm-7.20pm)

### Apologies

Cllr J Insull

### 10-minute period for public contributions.

None

### Correspondence and other business brought forward by the direction of the Chair

Appoint to the role of Vice Chair for the Environment Committee. Cllr Parish nominated Cllr Callaghan-Martin, Cllr Cloke seconded. A vote was taken: all in favour.

### Declarations of Interest

Cllr D Parish re item 14: Flagpole

### Minutes: confirmation of the minutes of the following meeting:

Draft minutes of the Environment Committee: 8th April 2025

Cllr Cloke proposed to approve the minutes: Cllr Callaghan-Martin seconded the proposal; a vote was taken – three in favour, two abstentions.

### Matters Arising:

None

### Andy Smale (GTTC Technician) Presentation

Cllr Bright proposed to suspend Standing Orders, seconded by Cllr Maisey. Vote: unanimous

Andy Smale presented a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the work undertaken by the maintenance team in the town.

Councillors appreciated having an insight into the work and it was suggested that the presentation be shown at the Annual Parish Meeting and other public meetings.

Andy Smale commented that the technicians also address a variety of work in the town and try and be flexible to accommodate local need.

**Action:** **Present PowerPoint at Annual Parish Meeting and other public meetings**.

Cllr Parish proposed Standing Orders to be reinstated; Cllr Maisey seconded. Vote: unanimous

### Weed Spraying – Policy, JPK

The use of pesticides was discussed. GTTC uses an herbicide which has a very low level of glyphosate compared to standard weed killer. Normally 2 sprays per year are administered in the town centre and are targeted: one spray per year for residential outlying areas.

Whilst it is desirable to use as little herbicide as possible for environmental reasons, large weeds do obstruct pavements and damage roads and pathways. Councillors will continue to look at alternative methods including using different equipment.

In response to a letter received, councillors discussed the reasons for using the herbicide and agreed that it is not just a cosmetic concern. There is a public safety element too and weeds can cause structural damage.

Cllr Parish proposed that the council continue to manage weeds by spraying once a year in residential areas and twice, in a targeted manner, in the town centre. Cllr Bright seconded the motion. Vote: unanimous

**Action: a reply will be sent to the member of the public who wrote in on this issue.**

### Great Torrington Town Council Environmental Policy

Cllr Bright proposed that the draft policy be adopted with an added point concerning weed management. Cllr Parish seconded the motion. Vote: unanimous.

**Action: JS to amend Environmental Policy**

### Windy Cross

JS gave an update explaining that the council will carry out maintenance work on the structure once investigations into the well have been completed by an interested party.

### Jubilee Wood – Grant application to Wild About Devon

Cllr Bright proposed that the application to train someone to scythe and buy a new scythe be actioned. Cllr Parish seconded the motion. Vote; unanimous.

### Wildflower update

JS gave an update. Over the last three years the project has not been a great success. Advice was taken and followed but with disappointing results.

After discussing various options, Cllr Parish proposed that the council continue with the project and wait to see how a different planting method at Jubilee Wood develops; Cllr Cloke seconded the motion. Vote: unanimous

### Annual Memberships

Subscriptions to Campaign to Protect Rural England, Devon Communities Together and the National Allotment Society were discussed.

Cllr Bright proposed that membership to these advisory organisations continues; Cllr Cloke seconded the motion. Vote: unanimous.

1. **Flagpole**

Cllr Parish declared an interest as a trustee of the Town Hall committee.

Issues concerning the higher flagpole on the Town Hall were discussed along with options for repairs, using alternative locations, using just the flag holders situated lower down on the Town Hall.

Repairs would incur considerable costs.

Cllr L Bright proposed that the town council inform the Town Hall that there are no plans to use the higher flagpole due to safety concerns and the ongoing costs of maintenance checks and complications with insurance. The council will investigate use of the lower flag holders at the Town Hall as an alternative; this will include costings for safety checks for the brackets, the appropriate size flags and insurance costs.

Cllr Maisey seconded the motion. Vote: four in favour, one abstention.

**Action: JS to follow-up with Town Hall & investigate flag costs.**

1. **Emergency Planning**

Cllr Bright thanked JS for her update on the Torridge District Council meeting concerning emergency planning.

The need for rest centres and emergency assembly points in Torrington was discussed in the light of the recent fire on the Commons.

Cllr Bright proposed that JS arrange a debrief meeting to understand the implications of the recent fire. Cllr Cloke seconded the motion. Vote: unanimous.

**Action: JS to request a debrief meeting to include the fire brigade and TDC**

1. **Future Planning – Budget 26/27**

Money required for additional costs, such as the adaptations to flags and possible changes to weed management were discussed.

1. **Trafalgar Drive Play Park Update**

Following episodes of vandalism to the play equipment in the park, councillors discussed whether they should continue to research new equipment for this area.

It was agreed that they would persist with the project, investigating vandal-proof materials.

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

Cllr L Bright proposed to move into the Items to be discussed which exclude the press and the public. Cllr Maisey seconded the motion. Vote: unanimous

1. **Trafalgar Drive Play Park**

Quotes for Trafalgar Drive Play Park were discussed. Current quotes are over budget.

**Action: JS to continue to try and get more quotes. To include quotes for a different location re the zipwire for comparison. Plus, prices for metal benches etc.**

Cllr Bright proposed moving out of the items to be discussed which exclude the press and public. Cllr Parish seconded the motion. Vote; unanimous

Future planning will be discussed at the next meeting.

### Date of next meeting: 20th January 2026, 7pm.

### Meeting Closed 8:49pm

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