



NORTH TAWTON TOWN COUNCIL

14a The Square
North Tawton
EX20 2EP

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**Minutes of a meeting of North Tawton Town Council held in the
Town Council Offices 14a The Square EX20 2EP
On Tuesday 1st September 2026**

Present: Cllr Lee (Chairman), Cllr S McKnight (Vice Chair), Cllr J Palfrey,
Cllr C Burrow, Cllr S Whiteley, Cllr M Kennedy, Cllr K Hodge, Cllr N Smith
Cllr H Hyde

In attendance: Dr Hannah Bruni – Deputy Clerk
Cllr Casbolt – West Devon Borough Council
Cllr Davies – Devon County Council
17 Members of the public

108:26/27 Apologies for absence – No apologies.

109:26/27 Declarations of Interest – Cllr McKnight declared an interest in 115:26/27 (II).

110:26/27 Public Participation – A resident requested that the Council identify loan grants for house repairs and this was noted as not an agenda item. A resident noted in relation to Minute Reference 111:26/27 the protected status of the land proposed for development as a solar farm, along with the 2021 referendum on neighborhood plan and the impact on the landscape should the application proceed. A resident noted Minute Reference 131:26/27 agenda confidentiality issue FOI policy and queried why this was in Part Two of the Agenda. A resident noted the objections towards the proposed solar farm development were directed to West Devon Borough Council, and confirmed to the Town Council that editing of its live stream film of council meetings was occurring due to footage they had witnessed. A resident asked if the proposed solar farm development would place the panels on the roof of the Taw Valley Creamery. A resident requested the Council noted how many in attendance at the meeting were there specifically to object to the proposed solar farm. Out of 17 in attendance, 15 objected. This resident also queried whether the proposed site was the right location for the development.

111:26/27 Due to the level of public interest, the Chair moved item 9 on the Agenda, forward to allow Members of the Public who were in attendance to hear the Council discussion.

*Cllr Whiteley, Cllr Burrow, Cllr Lee, Cllr Hodge, Cllr Kennedy,
Cllr Palfrey, Cllr McKnight, Cllr Smith, Cllr Hyde*

2103/26/FUL On the proposition of Cllr Burrow, seconded by Cllr Palfrey, the Council **RESOLVED** to object to the construction of a 5.4 MWac solar farm including inverters, transformers, cables, CCTV, access tracks, perimeter fencing and landscape works. Land south of Taw Valley Creamery, North Tawton.

Cllr Burrow gave a report on the history of the proposed site and how this related to the Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr McKnight wished to note that the Town Council had been very supportive of Taw Valley Creamery, and it was acknowledged how important the business was to the Town.

The Chair called for a short break to allow 14 Members of the Public to leave the Meeting.

112:26/27 Confirmation of the Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on the 4th August 2026 On the proposition of Cllr McKnight, seconded by Cllr Kennedy, the Council **RESOLVED** to accept the Minutes of the meeting held on the 4th August 2026.

113:26/27 Chairmans Report - The Chair noted the free of charge Defibrillator Training session was to be held the Council at the Rugby Club on the 3rd September 2026, and invited residents to attend.

114:26/27 Borough and County Council Reports – Cllr Casbolt spoke on the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), and noted there was uncertainty over who might appeal the proposed restructuring for Devon, and noted that Wards are likely to remain the same, with fewer Councillors allocated to each. He praised the ongoing work of Town and Parish Councils throughout the area. Cllr Burrow asked why a new Local Plan was being written, Cllr Casbolt explained this was a legality regardless of LGR.

Cllr Davies also discussed LGR, Ward arrangements and Divisions and reported the Judicial Review was likely to present issues of time and expense for Devon County Council. Cllr Davies also noted the launch of the Neighbourhood Health Survey and requested this be made available for residents to complete. She also noted that the Carers Support System has been removed. Advice was given for Carers to carry emergency contact details to alert emergency services to the care needs of a dependent reliant on them. The ongoing parking issues were acknowledged.

115:26/27 Finance –

- I. On the proposition of Cllr Kennedy, seconded by Cllr Hodge the Council **RESOLVED** to approve the budget reports, balances sheets, trial balance reports and the bank reconciliations
- II. On the proposition of Cllr Hyde, seconded Cllr Burrow the Council **RESOLVED** to approve the payment schedule and staff pay.
- III. On the proposition of Cllr Lee seconded by Cllr Kennedy, the Council **RESOLVED** to move £25,000 from Unity Trust Reserve account to CCLA (leaving a balance of £31,619.49, balance as at 31.07.2026)
- IV. There were no changes to the bank mandates. The Deputy Clerk was asked to check whether Cllr Lee was a signatory for the Unity Trust.

*Cllr Whiteley, Cllr Burrow, Cllr Lee, Cllr Hodge, Cllr Kennedy,
Cllr Palfrey, Cllr McKnight, Cllr Smith, Cllr Hyde*

- V. **Finance Committee Meeting** – it was noted that a Finance Committee meeting was to be held on 15th September 2026 at 7.15pm. Cllrs were requested to contact the Clerk before 7th September 2026 should they like to put forward any 2027/2028 budget proposals for consideration.
- VI. **Lych Gate quotation** – On the proposition of Cllr Hyde seconded by Cllr Hodge, the Council **RESOLVED** to accept the quotation from CH Jones & Son to make repairs to the Lych Gate – making gates level and open and close freely. £900.00 + VAT
- VII. **Play Equipment Quotation** – On the proposition of Cllr McKnight seconded by Cllr Burrow, the Council **RESOLVED** to accept the quotation from CH Jones & Son to repair swing hoops and replace all balance bridge supports and anchor points. £800.00 + VAT

116:26/27 External Audit 2024/2025 – The Council had received the formal response from the External Auditors in relation to the Objections to the 2024/25 AGAR return. The Chair reported the full response would be posted on the Council's website but gave a summary:

The External Auditors partially upheld one objection, relating to the lack of a 5-year forecast of reserves. The reason for this omission was the Council was without a qualified Clerk at the time, when the new Clerk started the priority was to bring all the financial records up to date, then prepare the Budget. It should be noted there is no legal requirement to prepare a reserves forecast and we are not including this in the Council's Financial Regulations for this year.

Five other Objections were not upheld:

- Objection relating to the change of telephone and broadband supplier
- Relating to the change in Accounting Software
- Hours worked by the former Clerk between June and October 2024 and paid in accordance with her contract of employment.
- Objection to Grants made to the Town Hall and Community Centre
- No provision in the accounts for potential legal action against the Council for discrimination. The legal action was withdrawn in November 2024.

The Council were currently awaiting the invoice from the External Auditors for the additional cost of processing the Objections.

117:26/27 Planning –

1341/26/FUL On the proposition of Cllr Smith seconded by Cllr McKnight, the Council **RESOLVED** to support the application for a garden room extension to northeast elevation. Oak Barn, Newland Mill, North Tawton EX20 2BB.

1342/26/LBC On the proposition of Cllr Smith seconded by Cllr McKnight, the Council **RESOLVED** to support the application for a garden room extension to northeast elevation. Oak Barn, Newland Mill, North Tawton EX20 2BB.

*Cllr Whiteley, Cllr Burrow, Cllr Lee, Cllr Hodge, Cllr Kennedy,
Cllr Palfrey, Cllr McKnight, Cllr Smith, Cllr Hyde*

118:26/27. Decisions from the planning authority – The Council noted the decisions of the planning authority:

0907/26/FUL Erection of a self-build dwelling. Land at SS 664 013 North Tawton. **Refusal**

1652/26/LBC Alterations to the two bathrooms on the first floor. Ginger Beer Cottage, 31 33 Essington Lane, North Tawton EX20 2DS.
Conditional approval

**119:26/27 Pre- application
1465/26/PR3**

- The Council noted the pre-application submitted by NTTC for the installation of two free parking signs in North Tawton Square.
- On the proposition of Cllr McKnight seconded by Cllr Smith, the Council **RESOLVED** to agree the payment of £87.00 for the application, with amendments to the application for one sign rather than two, with a potential second sign opposite the car park entrance.

120:26/27 Policies:

Due to time constraints, the Council **RESOLVED** to defer consideration of the policies listed until the next meeting.

- Disciplinary Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Health and Safety & CoSHH Policy
- Bereavement Policy

121:26/27 Granite Posts – Cllr Whiteley and the Deputy Clerk updated the Council on the need to move the granite posts around the cenotaph at the cemetery to allow access to the new cemetery extension. Cllr Whiteley described what was required to allow access, and as the posts are listed, the Deputy Clerk reported that a pre-application for planning had been made.

122:26/27 Filming of Meetings – Cllr Smith reported that protection software was available, and that Council filmed material may be copywritten, though requests to removed edited posts were likely to be unsuccessful. Cllr McKnight suggested that the filming continue, but with careful monitoring.

123:26/27 Memorial Application - On the proposal of Cllr McKnight seconded by Cllr Smith, the Council **RESOLVED** to accept the application for the memorial.

124:26/27 Swings – The Council noted the replacement swings have been installed. The post installation inspection was quoted at £400.00 + VAT but the Clerk negotiated and reduced the cost to £350 + VAT and this included all the play equipment being inspected at no extra cost.

125:26/27 Local Government Reorganisation – The Council noted the previously circulated document detailing the interim warding arrangements.

126:26/27 New Cemetery (Land Swap) – Cllr Burrow and Cllr Whiteley gave an update and advised that a meeting with the solicitor was required. The Council discussed the Land Covenant and access in relation to item 121:26/27 was noted.

*Cllr Whiteley, Cllr Burrow, Cllr Lee, Cllr Hodge, Cllr Kennedy,
Cllr Palfrey, Cllr McKnight, Cllr Smith, Cllr Hyde*

127:26/27 Councillors Progress Reports and Items for Future Agenda –

Cllr Whiteley reported that when an item of play equipment at the park had failed he had received a telephone call from TK Play, and repairs were discussed. TK Play obtained an independent report on the work necessary, and repairs were authorised through Cllr Whiteley as Chair of Finance, and agreed to by Cllr Lee as Chair and the Deputy Clerk, in the absence of the Clerk. A full report was arranged for the next meeting. Cllr Whiteley noted that the Emergency Plan was ready for printing and volunteers for the distribution of these were required.

Cllr Kennedy asked when the play equipment was last inspected given the failure of it, and Cllr Lee confirmed a week prior to its collapse.

Cllr Palfrey reported the planning and arrangements for the Christmas Lights Event was to begin in October and requested further help from the Council.

Cllr Hodge requested clarification over the tyres he removed from the park following the play equipment failure and was advised to store them at present.

Cllr Smith reported on the quotes made for the Lych Gate repairs and stated he would continue to look for further quotes.

Cllr Lee reported 47 FOI requests since the 1st June 2026. There were repeat requests and similar requests from various individuals. The requests have been refused under section 12 of the FOI Act due to the time the issue has taken and detracted from the Clerk and Deputy Clerk's working hours and duties.

128:26/27 PART TWO – CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS On the proposition of Cllr McKnight, seconded Cllr Burrow, it was RESOLVED that under section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items which are CONFIDENTIAL by virtue of relating to legal and/or commercial matters, staffing and/or the financial or business affairs of a person or persons other than the Council.

129:26/27 Disabled Parking Bays – The Deputy Clerk reported on applications for an increase in the Town's disabled bay parking. Cllr McKnight suggested adjustments to the existing provision in the car park. No additional bays were deemed necessary.

130:26/27 Planning Enforcement – The Deputy Clerk reported the planning enforcement notices.

The Chair proposed to suspend Standing Orders and the Meeting agreed.

131:26/27 Freedom of Information Requests – Cllr Lee again reported 47 FOI requests since June 1st 2026, and that these were refused under section 12 of the FOI Act. A discussion as to how the Council were to respond to FOI requests followed, and consideration of the Council's Vexatious Requests Policy would be adhered to. Cllr Whiteley pointed out that there was an outstanding unpaid invoice sent to a Member of the Public for paperwork for FOI requests. The Council agreed that until paid, further FOI requests from the individual would be withheld, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

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Cllr Palfrey, Cllr McKnight, Cllr Smith, Cllr Hyde*

The Chair reinstated Standing Orders and the meeting closed.

Meeting closed at 9.47pm

Councillor C Lee
Chairman

DATED:

*Cllr Whiteley, Cllr Burrow, Cllr Lee, Cllr Hodge, Cllr Kennedy,
Cllr Palfrey, Cllr McKnight, Cllr Smith, Cllr Hyde*