

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF TAWSTOCK PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY
21st OCTOBER 2025 AT 7.00 p.m.**

Present: - Councillor Bowden (Chair)

Councillors Bates, East, Knight, Lofthouse, Norman, Needham and Short.

NDC Councillors Coombs, Knight and Norman

DCC Councillor Leaver.

M Isaac (Clerk)

In Attendance: Parishioner/Members of the Public – 2

103. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Jenkins and Mason and DCC Councillor Tyldesley Mason.

104. PUBLIC SESSION

A Parishioner asked when the Bus Gate camera's would be installed. It was stated that the question would be answered as part of DCC Councillor Leaver's report later in the agenda.

105. ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY

The Clerk reported the receipt of an email from the NDC Leisure and s106 Public Space Officer informing that as part of the for a S106 agreement for Oak Farm (79691) (approximately £14k) was available for projects in the vicinity of Tawstock Village and asking for suggested proposals as soon as possible.

A suggested proposal was the purchase of land to extend to the Tawstock Cemetery.

Councillor Short agreed to ascertain if there were other possible proposals.

Details of the s106 requirement were requested.

106. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations announced.

107. CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk reported the following correspondence:

a) NDC Peer Review - Town and Parishes Focus Group.

It was agreed that Councillor Needham be appointed to attend the Peer Group on behalf of Tawstock Parish Council.

b) NDC Parish Forum.

It was agreed that Councillor Bowden be appointed to attend the Parish Forum on behalf of Tawstock Parish Council.

108. FINANCIAL MATTERS.

a) Payments

RESOLVED that the following payments be approved:

i) North Devon Council - Clerks Salary + Admin Fee	£843.69
ii) Clerks Expenses	£14.39
iii) L. Evely – Grounds Maintenance	£979.05
iv) Microsoft Renewal (Debit Card)	£84.99
v) Refund Cemetery Overpayment – Andrewartha	£65.00
vi) Ucanstore.com – Storage	£58.62
vii) J. Needham – Bird Scarers	£62.67

Councillor Bowden reported that she had sought like for like quotes from other Insurance Companies who specifically provided insurance to Parish Councils.

Zurich the Councils present Insurers had quoted a 1 year price £746.47 and a 3 year agreement price of £688.34. She had also in light of the sudden awareness that the Council appointed a Trustee to the Tawstock Jubilee Almshouse Charity had requested a quote to cover the liability of the Trustee.

It was agreed that authority be delegated to the Clerk in consultation with Councillor Bowden to accept the lowest like for like quote.

b) Financial Position: Update

The current financial position at 3 October 2025 Current A/C £45,756.23 (includes £6,581.62 ringed fenced for Tower View Project) and Business Reserve A/C £16,611.06 and half yearly Bank Reconciliation was noted.

109. MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the meeting held on 16th September 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

110. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING NOT LISTED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

There were no issues raised.

111. COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Councillor Leaver reported the following:

- Bus Gate – Cameras. That HATOC had reconfirmed its support for the current location for the 'bus gate' on Old Torrington Road and the installation of the cameras. The timeframe for installation of the cameras was the end of this year/beginning of next year. The delay for the installation of the cameras was due to objections received and the General Election. Blue light services and Taxi's had been given an exemption to use the Bus Gate.
- Small Scale Parking Restrictions – That proposals for small parking restriction were required to be sent to her by the weekend. She had list of a number of proposals already to put forward for consideration/inclusion in the Capital Programme.

A question was asked regarding a road closure in February by Morrisons Daily, Bickington Road and the alternative diversions.

The Council noted a report by DCC Councillor Tyldesley that had been previously circulated to all Members.

112. DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS

a) NDC Councillor Knight

Councillor Knight reported the following:

- Buses stopping along Old Torrington Road.
That he had sought clarification as to what was happening regarding buses stopping along Old Torrington Road as it was dangerous for pedestrians coming out of the college and crossing behind buses to cross to the other side of the road, to the bus stops opposite the Garage just past the Wrey Roundabout. There was a list of buses that were excluded from stopping in Old Torrington Road between specified times. There was, previously a notice to all passengers to inform them that the buses would not stop at the top of OTR during these specified times and this information should be made available on the digital platforms.
- That he had raised a number of concerns regarding issues relating to the pathway to nowhere between Tawcroft and Sandringham Gardens, the provision of a play park, drainage issues and connection through Highgrove etc.
- That no Tawstock Parish Councillor took part in the discussions/decision regarding the Bus Gate at the HATOC meeting.
- That the dates for the Governance Review would be on the NDC website

Councillor Bowden stated that Barnstaple Town Council had invited Parish Council's individually, after the consultation deadline to meet them to discuss the reasoning behind their proposals. She had spoken to the Town Clerk and declined the invitation as it was considered pointless.

b) NDC Councillor Norman

Councillor Norman reported the following:

The Council noted a report by NDC Councillor Norman that had been previously circulated to all Members.

The following issues were highlighted:

- Council Owned Marine Facilities

North Devon Council owned three Marine Facilities, two were located on the River Taw those being Fremington Quay and Castle Quay with one being on the River Yeo, Rolle Quay. Slipways also need to be considered, of which there were four.

In April 2025, the new Port Marine Safety Code was released named the Port and Marine Facility Safety Code.

- Under the new code, there were now the requirement for Marine Facilities to become compliant with the key measures contained within it.
- The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) had announced that all Duty Holders were to report their respective compliance within a three-month window beginning January 2026. At this time, none of the Marine Facilities were found to be in full compliance with the Code.

A revenue budget allocation of £30,000 (£10,000 per site) to be funded from the Strategic contingency reserve for full structural surveys of each quay had been approved to determine the status of the Quay walls and the effects of removing the marine infrastructure and the level of work needed to reach compliance.

Councillor Needham stated that the Taw and Torridge Estuary Forum had raised concerns at lack of consultation of the proposals and asked if the Barnstaple Gig Club had been consulted.

It was agreed that NDC be requested to consult all stakeholders including the Barnstaple Gig Club

- Increasing Solar Generation on Council owned properties.

That it was proposed to prioritise four Council owned properties where energy use was high. These were Brynsworthy Environment Centre, Green lanes, Barnstaple Pannier Market and Barnstaple bus station. Consultants would be appointed to provide detailed costings for installing solar arrays on those four prioritised buildings

c) NDC Councillor Coombs

Councillor Coombs reported the following:

Local Government Review- NDC continued with supporting the 4,5,1 model. A draft report had been created along with the other District Councils for the modelling. A Northern Devon model which would include North Devon, Torridge and Mid Devon had not been taken off the table but had not had funding for a consultation finding report to be commissioned for as it was not supported by TDC or MDDC. The next step was for Councillors to get a copy of the report for the 4,5,1 model to consider the findings and vote upon for submission to the government. An Extra Ordinary Council meeting would take place on the 26th November at 6.30pm at BEC. It looked like DCC, Exeter, Torbay and Plymouth would be submitting a differing model to the other districts. The final decision would be made by the Government.

The issue regarding the signs by the garage at Roundswell was still on going.

113. HIGHWAY ISSUES

There were no highway issues reported

114. PLANNING MATTERS

- a) The Chair updated Council on the Planning Applications considered by the Planning Committee prior to the Council meeting.
- b) The Council noted the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment report.
- c) Playground/Pathway Tawcroft.

See minute 112 a) above. Councillor East reported that play equipment was now being installed in the Tawcroft play area.

115. VACANCY – CO-OPTION.

The Clerk reported that it had been confirmed that no election had been requested and therefore the Council could proceed with the co-option procedure.
It was noted that one person in the rural area had expressed an interest in the vacancy.

116. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW: UPDATE

Councillor Norman reported that the NDC Governance Committee would be meeting on 11th November to discuss the representations received. A report and timetable would be on the NDC Website.

117. PARISH SURVEY.

The Clerk reported that a draft survey questions had been previously circulated. It was noted that some numbers had no questions and that the document needed to be reformatted.

It was agreed that further consideration was required and that the sending of the survey be deferred until early in the new year.

118. TAWSTOCK JUBILEE ALMSHOUSE CHARITY: TRUSTEES

The Clerk reported the receipt of an email regarding the Tawstock Jubilee Almshouse Charity. The Trustees of Tawstock Jubilee Almshouse Charity wished to change their charity status to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. They planned to also change the objectives of the Charity. The original Constitution included a trustee nominated by Tawstock Parish Council and its objective was to provide for those of impoverished means within the Parish of Tawstock. However, this geographical restriction was no longer practical and the trustees wish to change the geographical restriction to those living in or with close relatives living in Northern Devon. As such it no longer seemed appropriate to have a Tawstock Parish Councillor as a nominated trustee. They have asked if the Parish Council would give its permission to remove this clause from the proposed new Constitution.

The Chair reported that she had obtained a copy of the Trust deed dated 1986 and following research had identified 9 Trustees none of which had been nominated by the Parish Council. Trustees were nominated/appointed every 4 years and there was a clause requiring that Tawstock nominated/appointed a Trustee.

She had spoken to the trust representative who had informed that the reason for the change to widen the area to Northern Devon (Torridge) was because they were struggling to fill the properties.

It was noted that Trustee had no personal liabilities as Trustees of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation Charity and therefore as previously mentioned in minute 108 a) above did not require liability insurance.

The Council questioned why it had not been contacted to nominate a Parish Council nominee to the Trust or made aware of meetings or that it was struggling to fill the properties. The Council could have assisted in advertising the vacancies on the website and social media

It was agreed:

- That Tawstock Parish Council continue to nominate/appoint a Trustee to the Tawstock Jubilee Almshouse Charity and seek to nominate/appoint a member to the trust.
- That Tawstock Parishioners be given first choice for any available accommodation with neighbouring Parishes the next choice.

119. GOVERNANCE WORKING GROUP.

Councillor Needham reported on the Working Group meeting held on 15th October 2025 (previously circulated).

Councillor Needham further reported the receipt of an e mail from Councillor Bates who was considering her position as a member of the Governance Working Group due to work commitments. He thanked her for her the work she had done on behalf of the Working Group.

It was agreed:

- a) That the notes and list of adopted policies (previously circulated) be noted.
- b) That the GDPR Policy (previously circulated) as recommended by the working group be adopted subject to the inclusion of reference to the future sustainability of the Parish Council or subsequent body that may take its place.
- c) That the Councillors Handbook (previously circulated) as recommended by the working group be adopted.

Councillor Bowden stated that it was not clear from Councillor Bates email that she was resigning from the Working Group only that due to work commitments she was unable to attend meetings at the usual meeting time of 4.30 p.m. and therefore suggested the following possible options:

- Meet at a later time
- Appoint another Member in place of Councillor Bates. (Following a request for a volunteer no additional Members wished to serve on the Working Group)

- Dissolve the Working Group and all Policies reviewed as required by the Council.

Following a lengthy discussion, it was agreed that the Governance Working Group meet quarterly as required and the Group consider its meeting time at the next group meeting.

120. PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE.

Councillor Bowden reported on the Committee meeting held on 14th October 2025 (previously circulated).

The recommendations of the Parks and Open Space Committee were agreed.

Councillor Needham reported that he had received the 3 bird scarers and would be happy along with the assistance the Fremington handyperson fix them for a small cost. Health and Safety issues were raised and it was agreed that a quote be sought from Lewis Evely to fix the bird scarers.

Councillor East stated that due to goal posts not being of the standard size the goal net that he had obtained was too big for the goal posts.

121. DEFIBRILLATOR – TAWSTOCK VILLAGE

Councillor Short reported that someone had donated a Cabinet for the Defibrillator owned by the school and the school had agreed to fix the defibrillator to the Village Hall for public use. He asked if the Parish Council would be willing to pay for its installation.

The Chair agreed to get a quote from the Electrician that installed the Harracott defibrillator.

122. REMEMBRANCE WREATH.

It was agreed that Councillor Short lay the remembrance wreath on behalf of the Parish Council and that a maximum of £50 be allocated for the purchase of a wreath. The Chair agreed to obtain the wreath.

123. TAW AND TORRIDGE ESTUARY FORUM.

Councillor Needham reported that the forum had expressed concerns regarding the issues relating to the new Port Marine Safety Code raised in NDC Councillor Norman report relating to the River Taw. He also reported that the Honorary Secretary was finishing at Christmas and he had agreed to act as secretary for the Committee meetings but not the main meetings. The Parish Clerk had agreed to ask NDC to include an advert in the Weekly Information Sheet seeking a new secretary. If no new secretary was found the forum would fold up.

124. ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETING

The Clerk reported that the Budget and Precept 2026/27 would be on the agenda for the next meeting.

125. DATE OF NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

It was noted that the next Parish Council meeting would be on Tuesday 18th November 2025
7.00 p.m.

Chairman The meeting ended at 9.37 p.m.