



**Minutes of the Full Council of Holsworthy Town Council
held in the Holsworthy Market Chambers, The Square,
Wednesday 4th December 2024 commencing at 7:00pm**

Present: N. Kenneally, D. Cole, J. Hutchings, H. Parker, L. Piper, S. Preston, J. Tadman.

In attendance: Town Clerk (TC), Assistant to the Town Clerk (ATTC), V. Saunders,
Mr I. Edwards, Mr J. Jones, Holsworthy Football Club (x3) & Adrian Avery.

Absentees: No absentees.

5563. Apologies for Absence

Cllrs: D. De ste Croix, P. Brown, W. Dentlinger & TDC Cllr. P. Shepherd

Councillor Nigel Kenneally made a notice at the beginning of the meeting to inform Full Council that the Market's Committee was cancelled and stated if any further cancellations occur, Markets will take place at the beginning of Full Council.

5564. Declaration of Interest - To receive declarations of personal and prejudicial interests in respect of items on this agenda.

The Mayor asked Councillors to declare any relevant interests as they arise.

The Chairman suspended Standing Orders

5565. Public Question Time - *To receive questions from the Public.*

Jason J from Holsworthy Youth Football introduced himself and informed the Council that he is here to seek financial support to progress with the construction of a machinery shed which would be erected to the rear of the Pavilion. Jason expressed that the machinery shed would benefit the community groups that utilise the pavilion. Currently, machinery and equipment are stored inappropriately, including in a side room designated for the heating system, ladies changing rooms or left outside. The use of the pavilion is steadily increasing due to current user groups growing. The main tenants are the football and cricket groups which have been working hard to maintain the playing surfaces however, when accessing the machinery further workload is added as large equipment must often be moved to reach the required items. They plan to keep the existing storage containers unless the machinery shed provides enough space which aligns with the growing needs and machinery & equipment demands. In addition to this they are working to improve community engagement and expand access to sports in collaboration with Torridge District Council, and Active Torridge.

Currently, the finances are: £6,600 ring-fenced for a steel- frame & £3,500 allocated toward the total cost which is estimated to meet the sum of £20,000.

This project aims to provide safe and accessible storage for machinery, equipment and opportunity for acquiring upgraded tools. With appropriate storage, the ladies' changing room will also be cleared and more accessible for users. We plan to have the machinery shed's work carried out in early 2025.

Q&A summary from Cllrs:

J. Hutchings inquired about the final project cost, and Jason Jones estimated it at around £20,000, noting that only draft budgeting, not detailed costings, had been prepared. J. Hutchings also asked about the status of levelling the pitch, to which N. Kenneally responded that updates would be provided on the action list, with rough costings at approximately £140,000. S. Preston raised concerns about potential damage to the grass between the proposed new building and the pitch from machinery, and Jason Jones clarified that this area would be hard standing. Preston also asked about the duration of the storage units' presence, and Jones explained that they would be moved to the rear of the machinery if still needed. L. Piper suggested fencing to hide the relocated storage.

5566. Presentation by the TDC Community Engagement Project Officer Adrian Avery about the proposed MUGA/Play zone

Adrian Avery presented a video and a detailed overview of the Play zone project to the Council, explaining that he is now leading the initiative, which was handed over by Sean Kearney. The project involves a 20m x 30m organised Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) prioritising disabled individuals, women, and diverse groups. Unlike an open recreational space, the Play zone will be a structured, bookable facility. Avery highlighted Torridge's need for increased physical activity, citing a 2022 live survey showing the district as the most inactive in Devon. The project aligns with the Playing Pitch Strategy, which is nearing completion and confirms a significant demand for such facilities, including in Holsworthy.

The proposed MUGA location is Stanhope Park, with a site cost estimated at £275,000. Holsworthy's Play zone would have a tarmac surface focused on netball, potentially reducing costs compared to the 2G sand-based surfaces planned for other sites. Avery is requesting a £34,000 contribution (25%) from Holsworthy Town Council, noting that funds won't be required until after construction begins. He aims to submit the funding application before Christmas, with a mid-January deadline, though success is not guaranteed as only 90 applications will be approved.

Holsworthy, East-the-Water, and Great Torrington are the three remaining sites out of an initial twelve. Active Devon is collaborating on the project, which has had positive feedback from surveyors. Prefabricated facilities will require planning approval, and environmental and property teams are involved in the design process. While HASP was identified as a potential key driver for site management, maintenance and bookings may instead be overseen by Active Torridge, though this is not finalised.

The Play zone is expected to be a valuable sports hub, accommodating local community needs, including Holsworthy Primary School, which struggles with capacity and drainage issues from Stanhope Park. Avery emphasised that while the Play zone would not meet competitive netball standards, it would still provide significant benefits.

Q&A Summary

Adrian Avery confirmed that floodlight costs for the Play zone project would be covered by Torridge District Council (TDC). There was discussion about adding cameras, with Cllr. L. Piper noting that it would be easy to install one if necessary. Cllr. D. Cole praised the local sports scene, while Mr A. Avery clarified that the Play zone is not for competitive sports but for free play, particularly on weekends and after school.

Cllr. J. Hutchings queried why the project was reduced to one site instead of two, and Mr A. Avery acknowledged a lack of data on the matter. Cllr. J. Hutchings mentioned reduced football use on the Holsworthy astro pitch. Cllr. L. Piper explained that the Netball club pushed for the project, and Cllr. N. Kenneally sought clarification on the free play concept, which JH confirmed would be open to all after school. Cllr. L. Piper suggested closer collaboration with the steering group, praising Torridge's community engagement.

N. Kenneally thanked Adrian Avery for his presentation.

5567. County Councillor's Report

Apologies and report were not received prior to the meeting. Cllr. N. Kenneally requested an email is sent to DCC Cllr. J. Morrish to request apologies and a report to be sent.

5568. District Councillor's Report

Councillor Lyndon Piper:

Housing issues

Dealt with two safeguarding issues regarding inadequate housing – thanks to TDC Officers for their timely and helpful assistance.

Local Plan Workshop

Attended Joint Local Plan Workshop. Spoke in favour of growing our villages to create sustainable communities and against continued expansion of our main towns in Torridge in the short and medium term. Also spoke in favour of utilising our disused railways as multi-use trails. I was not the only one!

Scale of growth set out by central government:

26,140 dwellings across northern Devon over 20 years (NDC & TDC areas)

Increase in building stock of 31%

For context:

A new Holsworthy every 1.2 years

(Targets were 14k but recently increased to 26k)

Community & Resources Meeting

Argued against adoption of plant-based foods only policy at council events. Argued for supporting local producers instead. Motion was dismissed.

DCC LCWIP Consultation

Gave responses through TDC on the DCC LCWIP consultation. Delighted to see the Hatherleigh to Holsworthy section of the Ruby Way on the radar – good work at a local level aided by HTC financial contribution. Raised concerns over suggestions of using even small sections of the A road when the route will be a recreational / tourism route.

Also raised disappointment that the link between Hatherleigh and the Tarka Trail at Meeth is omitted. Tarka Trail is the longest purely off-road route in England and connection of the Ruby Way to this is a high priority and huge opportunity. Also raised disappointment that the connection to Bude is not included and asked if this is due to the section crossing the County boundary

DCC Transport Plan Consultation

Gave responses through TDC to the DCC Transport plan consultation. Highlighted the importance of the new Okehampton rail hub to our region and issues regarding linking up bus and train services especially for our local students who travel to Exeter colleges. Raised concerns that the Transport plan should react to TDC Local Plan and how this is somewhat cart before horse. Ie Growing villages would rely upon improved access in and out of villages on at least one route. Other routes could then be more legitimately continue to be left as a lower priority therefore rationalising pothole repair.

JHoots Pharmacy update

National issues with pharmacy provision – Richard Foord MP taking SW specific issues up at Westminster. Will follow up following TDC Ext Overview and Scrutiny event

Back British Farmer's rally at Kivell's Livestock Market

Attended. Good to listen and show support for our farming community.

Active Torridge Directors Meeting

Potential disruption to services at Holsworthy Leisure Centre in 2025 as and when decarbonisation works are carried out. Details to follow but an early heads up. Suggested that Active Torridge look at reinvigorating the Ruby Run event and suggested working with Holsworthy and Okehampton running clubs.

Holsworthy Hospital Beds

Permanent closure of Holsworthy Hospital Beds being discussed at DCC committee level? Query for our County Councillor?
3 beds at Stratton and 3 at Halwill currently?

Housing Strategy Full Member Briefing

Argued for self-build as a delivery method for rural housing
Meeting with potential MUGA user groups on 19th November and 27th November

Met with RBL ref Upcott Field development

Holsworthy Sports Hall – asbestos issue and closure – gave representation regarding upgrades to changing rooms whilst the facility use is disrupted. Exercise classes moved to the scout hut.

Play zone community meeting with stakeholders

- Holsworthy Primary School – additional feedback on need for the facility.
- Holsworthy Community College
- Bradworthy & Holsworthy Netball Club
- Active Devon
- Active Torridge
- HASP
- Holsworthy Youth Club
- TDC
- HTC
- TTVS

Follow up meeting with netball club and positive response. Meeting notes available from Active Devon. On agenda tonight.

Meeting with Holsworthy Primary School reference Children's Centre Closure / Handover to HPS

Issues regarding drainage from Stanhope Park onto Holsworthy primary School. Restricting use of playground and preventing grant funding for resurfacing from DCC. HTC perhaps need to look at addressing this and in the first instance liaise with the school.

Improving the appearance of our town – HTC, TDC and DCC joint effort

Considerable thought if not action on this. Somewhat inspired by the view from the top of my ladder when putting the lights up.

The condition of our Conservation Area is pretty bad and annual maintenance is desperately needed.

Idea:

A yearly co-operative approach involving HTC, TDC, DCC, Business owners, local organisations and public to Make Holsworthy Beautiful. Use taxpayer money to provide tools, plant and machinery to do the big jobs (hedge trimming – access to gutters etc) and enable volunteers. Engage with local professionals to further enable volunteers. Look at funding pots and get EVERYONE on board. Look at helping each other – break down our silos. Organisations go and work on other organisations buildings – building relationships. Orchestrated by who? Take personalities out of it – faceless drive to improve where we live. Photo board to inspire. Use social media – stay positive and accept that we won't be able to sort everything in year one but promote patience and long-term thinking.

Full Council on Monday 2nd December

Proposal for a Reserves Policy rejected. Issues with lack of flexibility and seen as unnecessary due to regular monitoring / scrutiny in place. Issues comparable to recent discussions regarding reserves at HTC level.

Due consideration given to:

- Sinking Funds
- Ring fenced / ear marked reserves
- General reserves

Thoughts - Too complex or stringent a policy would tie the hands of councillors who I am sure agree feel somewhat hand tied by the mechanisms of local government anyway!

No. ref CCTV in Victoria Park. Triggered me to think about adding to our CCTV network to cover the Play zone if this goes ahead.

Health and Well Being Local Plan Workshop (Friday 29th Nov) Speech Notes:

Health and Well Being thematic workshop – The Local Plan

Attended as ward member and lead for leisure. Gave a 5min speech as invited by policy officers.

Connection to countryside and planning for leisure

We live in an area famed for its beautiful natural landscapes, but we often lead busy lives detached from the fresh air and calming tranquillity around us. Our countryside provides endless opportunities for exercise, escape and the nourishment of our souls that modern life seems so adept at eating away at.

Many of our larger cities seem arguably better connected to such spaces of sanctuary. City parks with tube connections, bus lanes and cycle ways all providing for year-round use and ease of access. I'm not suggesting we need a Hyde Park in Halwill but our countryside is largely off limits to most.

We do have some good starting points Forestry Commission land, The Burrows, footpaths and bridle ways, Common land such as in Bradworthy and Torrington, The Tarka Trail and of course our glorious Southwest Coast Path.

But access to these resources is limited, often without adequate parking and most certainly difficult to access for those with disabilities or who rely on public transport. Urban development's often focus on vehicle access with active travel connections seemingly a secondary consideration. Pavements running beside roads are the most depressing of places – noise, dirt, danger and fumes – what a lovely place to walk or ride. I explored safe walking routes from Northam and Westward Ho! Into Bideford between meetings once and was shocked at the standard of footpath connecting two of our largest urban areas, despite sections being part of the SW Coast Path, and the level of recent higher end residential development dotted along the route.

We seem to finally be getting our act together with Green Infrastructure levies on new development and perhaps we should be looking to improve connection for all to our greatest leisure facility of all – the great outdoors.

We also have a fantastic opportunity to create our own HS2 – I'm not talking about a needless business connection to conduit more wealth and power into London – but the greenest of highways linking up our rural market towns and villages via our disused railway lines. If the Local Plan can do one thing it can confidently and positively cement the aspiration of so many, protect the routes and give a vital push to the grassroots up movement to get our, not so distantly historic, travel infrastructure back into use as multi-use active travel routes. Connecting communities, bolstering tourism and perhaps giving high quality diversification opportunities to our smaller family farms. Providing mental and physical health spaces which can also act as much needed wildlife corridors crisscrossing our region. The bones are all there and they spread further than you might think.

Our leisure provision certainly needs more structure and long-term planning. Community leisure through sport often depends upon facilities to fulfil demand and potential. The facilities are nearly always lagging or prevented due to hope value put on land surrounding our built environments. Can Planning (in the truest sense of the word) empower our policy makers to set aside the RIGHT land for leisure provision. Not just in our larger towns – like the Winsford development in Bideford / Abbotsham, but also in our villages. We designate land for housing and economic uses, passing on disproportionate riches to the few, why can't we be more prescriptive with recreation land.

Break up the ever-increasing rings of soulless and community void residential and industrial land with well-connected new parks, green spaces and sports facilities. Sport and leisure bring communities together, gets people out of their homes, inspires the young and entertains the old. It creates rivalries and friendships that last generations. Can we plan to protect these traditions in a world where an Englishman's home is becoming his prison? I do hope so. A brave and prescriptive local plan led by our planners, not the money obsessed developers and land bankers, is perhaps one of our greatest opportunities.

Timesheets – 45 hours for month

L. Piper highlighted the unexpected closure of the sports hall, which was attributed to asbestos issues. L. Piper noted he needed to be cautious about what information could be disclosed. J. Hutchings suggested the swimming pool could operate similarly to its use during COVID, where visitors only use the pool and exit through the fire exit. L. Piper agreed to query this option with the relevant parties.

H. Parker reported that Stratton has three hospital beds, as does Halwill, but Holsworthy has very fewer beds compared to Braunton, Ilfracombe, and Northam. L. Piper mentioned he had heard verbally about the permanent closure of Holsworthy Hospital and would seek clarification from the County Councillor. J. Hutchings clarified that Stratton had three beds, Deer Park had three initially, but these were later removed.

A detailed discussion followed about the lack of hospital beds for Holsworthy.

Cllr. L. Piper suggested the Town Council to write to Devon County Council to address this issue.

The Chairman resumed Standing Orders

5569. Council Meeting Minutes – To approve and sign the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 6th November 2024

**Councillor H. Parker proposed that the Minutes of the meeting held on the 6th of November 2024 and be approved. This was seconded by L. Piper and agreed.
(7 For 1 Abs)**

5570. Matters Arising

Cllr. J. Hutchings requested to comment on an item from Item 1996 which is a part 2 item. Cllr. N. Kenneally confirmed Cllr. J. Hutchings can comment in part 2 on this item.

5571. Review Action Items

Cllr. J Tadman has completed the social media policy, TC confirmed this will be discussed and agreed at the next Full Council Meeting.

5572. Mayor's Announcements – *To receive a report from the mayor.*

I attended the Remembrance Day parade which was a lovely service and well attended. Monday we went to the park to lay the wreath after the service. I'm happy to say the CCTV at skateboard park is now up! I'd like to thank the staff and Jonathon Hutchings for organising the Christmas Switch on, alongside the volunteers. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend. But I hear, the real Santa was there!

5573. Accounts due for payment and budget review

TC noted that there is a misc. payment for printing, however this has been reimbursed. Discussion ensued.

Councillor H. Parker proposed that the accounts for payment be approved. This was seconded by Councillor S. Preston and agreed. (Unanimous)

5574. Committee Minutes

Cllr. N. Kenneally spoke to Bowls regarding the light. The solution is for MO to check the light and instruct if a replacement bulb is required. Light to then be checked regularly.

5575. To discuss and agree on the amount of contribution for the MUGA/Play zone.

Discussion ensued. Cllr. J. Hutchings felt it was important to include Free Time in the agreement. Cllr. S. Preston agreed with this statement. Further discussion ensued regarding HTC being on the steering group for this project.

Councillor H. Tadman proposed to make the contribution of £35,000 and confirm that we will be on the steering group. This was seconded by H. Parker (5 For, 2 Abs, 0 Against)

5576. Update on the Upcott

Cllr. J Hutchings proposed to defer item 5576 to part 2 and be agreed. This was seconded by Cllr. N. Kenneally and approved. (Unanimous)

Cllr. J. Hutchings gave a brief update on the meeting held with the Football Club (FC) and the Royal British Legion (RBL).

5577. Christmas Switch On

Cllr. Hutchings gave a brief update on the Christmas Switch on and stated the event went well, the finances are still being updated due to items that will occur from taking lights down and final figures will be in January. Cllr. Hutchings thanked everyone for their support and assistance. Cllr. Hutchings also stated that there are 3 organisations which have helped with the event and should receive a token gift from Holsworthy Town Council. Discussion ensued regarding grant funding. Cllr. Hutchings also noted that lights will need to be budgeted for next year as many lights are no longer working. The figure of 2-3k was suggested. Cllr. Parker suggested preparing for the Switch on in the Spring in 2025 and erecting the frame for the pump during a Market Day to improve efficiency.

Councillor J. Hutchings proposed that Hols Lions, Hols Youth Club & Hols Town Band are given a donation of £100 each and be approved. This was seconded by Councillor N. Kenneally and agreed. (7 For, 1 Abs)

5578. To discuss and agree implementation of financial software

Cllr. N. Kenneally deferred this item to F&GP

5579. To give an update on the Council's Earmarked Reserves and approve a number of virements.

7. Grounds work at Station Close

8. Ground investigations at Stanhope Park – Paying 50%

9. Tarmacking at Stanhope Park – out of town centre regeneration.

Discussion ensued and Cllrs would like to clarify virement no.9 prior to approval. This is to be revisited.

Councillor H. Parker proposed that virements 7 & 8 are approved and 9 to be revisited and be agreed. This was seconded by Councillor. J. Tadman and approved. (Unanimous)

5580. To discuss the Draft Budget for 2025/26

Councillors were given a draft budget

Cllr. J. Hutchings queried if it is a part 2 item. VS clarified that the paper was marked as confidential to prevent people seeing the draft budget as an approved budget. Items that have been increased are salaries, National Insurance and training.

5581. To discuss possible projects for the council may wish to undertake for Financial Year 2025/26

During the meeting, several topics were discussed regarding ongoing and proposed Town Council projects. It was noted that projects in black are funded from the precept, while those in red require decision-making and would be funded from reserves. The council's average monthly expenditure is £20,000, with £9,000 allocated to wages. There was a discussion on appropriate reserve levels, suggesting a minimum of three months' complete expenditure, estimating reserves to be around £80,000 to £90,000. Questions arose regarding VE and VJ Day commemorations. It was suggested to label the events as "Victory Day" and seek funding for related plans. Some projects, like the bicycle trail, lack detailed plans. Ideas include displaying bikes around town for visual appeal, though there's ongoing communication with the police about their involvement. Machinery-related expenditures and the football club's funding request of £70,000 were reviewed. While pitch improvements are not urgent, the S106 rules will need checking for compliance. The allotment project was suggested to be managed outside of the town centre regeneration budget. Estimates are pending but are being organised through Parks. Completed projects like the Skatepark Event and CCTV await final billing. There was a proposal to create a flexible project fund for the year and establish reserves for IT upgrades. It was also noted that a machinery storage shed could significantly benefit HASP and the community.

Cllr J. Hutchings proposed that Holsworthy Football Club be allocated £19,630 being £12,000 from the Earmarked Reserve for the MUGA/ Parks and £7,630 from the Earmarked Reserve for the S106 Rydon V Pitch Improvements and that £8,000 be allocated towards the Equipment Storage with £5,000 coming from the Earmarked Reserve for the MUGA/ Parks and the remaining £3,000 to be found from existing reserves. This was seconded by J. Tadman. (5 For, 2 Abs)

The discussion addressed pitch resizing and the equipment store project. Concerns were raised about community awareness, particularly ensuring that Holsworthy Youth Football Club (HYFC) is informed about funds being allocated to the Football Club. It was suggested that a consultation takes place with both parties before moving the money. Cllr. J. Hutchings expressed support for the proposals in principle, including Cllr. L. Piper's amendments and recommended that LP handle the discussions regarding HYFC's awareness of fund reallocations. Cllr. J. Hutchings inquired about the general reserves, noting the importance of maintaining reserves to cover 3–6 months of total expenditure, while also accounting for funds already committed to various projects. Current figures include £196,330 from MUGA and Section 106 Rydon pitch allocations, with an additional £8,000 proposed for the storage shed. VS was tasked with reviewing potential sources for these funds. Cllr. L. Piper suggested splitting the HYFC pitch resizing funds in half to address the funding needs more equitably. Discussion ensued.

5582. To receive External Committee Updates.

No public items arose. To be discussed in Part 2.

5583. To receive a list of Correspondence.

- A resident expressed concerns that the Memorial Hall's Christmas Market wasn't advertised effectively.
- Cllr. N. Kenneally confirmed speaking with "Food on the Go" about their Christmas tree.
- Sarah Pennington was mentioned in relation to food concessions. HTC's initial stance was that there was no demand for the concession. Concerns were raised about litter from the concession and accountability for managing it. Cllr. J. Hutchings emphasised that Holsworthy is smaller than Bideford or Torrington, with local businesses struggling, and need to support them.
- A TDC councillor noted that TDC ward members were not informed about the concession.
- Councillors, except D. Cole and L. Piper, expressed dissatisfaction with the situation and wanted the issue raised with TDC. There was a majority agreement, though no formal vote occurred.

5584. Town Clerk's Report – To receive a report from the Town Clerk

The Town Clerks report was deferred to Part 2 due to an update on Insurance.

V. Saunders & I. Edwards exited the meeting at 21:04

Councillor J. Tadman proposed that in view of the special or confidential nature of the following business to be transacted, it is advisable, in the public interest, that the public and press temporarily be excluded and they will be instructed to withdraw. This was seconded by Councillor L. Piper and agreed (Unanimous)

5585. To discuss and ratify, if appropriate the co-option of a new Councillor

The candidate was interviewed for co-option to become a Councillor.

Ian E. exited the meeting at 21:12

Councillor N. Kenneally proposed that Ian Edwards is co-opted. This was seconded by Councillor D. Cole and agreed, (4 For ,1 Ags, 2 Abs)

5586. To discuss and agree on HTC staffing for 2024/25

Discussion ensued. 2 days a week until April (new financial year).

Councillor J. Hutchings Proposed that VS is kept on 2 days a week until end of march and agreed. This was seconded by Councillor N. Kenneally and approved. (Unanimous)

5587. Close

Councillor N. Kenneally closed the meeting at 21:28

Signed

Dated