



**Minutes of the Full Council of Holsworthy Town Council
held in the Holsworthy Market Chambers, The Square,
Wednesday 15th January 2025 commencing at 7:00pm**

Present: Cllrs; N. Kenneally, D. De ste Croix, P. Brown, D. Cole, Ian Edwards,
H. Parker, S. Preston, L. Piper.

In attendance: Town Clerk (TC), Assistant to the Town Clerk (ATTC), V. Saunders,
DCC Cllr. J. Morrish,

Absentees: No Absentees.

5588. Apologies for Absence

Cllrs: J. Hutchings & J. Tadman.

5589. 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 (Unanimous)

5590. Public Question Time - To receive questions from the Public.

There were no members of public in attendance.

5591. County Councillor's Report

- Nine calls were received from Holsworthy residents, including issues with two potholes and five hunting-related concerns. Several calls were also regarding homelessness and TDC-related matters.
- County Hall is in a period of uncertainty. A letter from the minister discussed the White Paper, which proposes restructuring of local government. This suggests a shift towards more power for towns and parishes, likely the removal of County and District councils in about two years.
- DCC has voted to postpone County Council elections by 12 months. The County Council believe it's better to be involved in the restructure than not be. Many districts are opposed to the changes, with concerns about democracy being pushed from residents.
- For the next year, County and District councils will be working together during the transition phase, leading to their dissolution. A shadow council may be established. More details are expected by 29th January. Elections for a shadow board are planned for next year, but this could change depending on the situation in May.

- DCC Councillor J. Morrish supports the idea of a unitary council, as it could simplify governance and improve services. However, this would reduce the number of local representatives. Unitary councils may also be considered for Exeter and Plymouth. There is scepticism about whether the Government would approve a unitary system for Devon, though Exeter and Plymouth might be included. Last week, Steve Hearse gave a well-received and unbiased explanation of the potential changes.
- The role of a mayor in the unitary council system was discussed, with comparisons made to Andy Burnham in the North and concerns raised about the feasibility of having a mayor in Devon.
- JM mentioned the ongoing political dynamics, with the Conservatives potentially losing seats, while the Lib Dems are growing in strength, and Labour recently won the general elections.
- The meeting ended with some discussion on the future of local elections and the mayoral referendum process. JM also mentioned the possibility of stepping down in the future due to health priorities, but if elections were postponed, he would stay on for another 12 months to help shape the transition.

Q&A summary from Cllrs:

Cllr. D. Cole asked if Cornwall is seeking a mayor because of the unitary council discussions. They also noted that some potholes on Bodmin Street and Glebelands had been addressed.

Cllr. L. Piper asked about the potential for boundary changes, specifically regarding Exeter's expansion. JM clarified that, if a unitary system is established, boundaries will no longer be relevant after 12 months.

Cllr. H. Parker inquired about whether the voice of the people would be amplified or diminished under the unitary system. JM responded that it wouldn't necessarily increase; in fact, there would be fewer elected members. The population on the other side of the A30 would likely still have a stronger influence due to their larger population. The devolution deal, which must be decided by 29th January, could reduce staffing and make some jobs redundant.

Cllr. N. Kenneally asked what would happen to the unitary plan if devolution funds were received. JM responded that the unitary idea wouldn't proceed if devolution funds were allocated.

Cllr .S. Preston asked about the Link Centre. Cllr .J. Morrish was unable to provide new updates, mentioning that he has faced challenges in the Monitoring Officer's office. He also mentioned that Ofsted is reviewing adult and children's services and that, despite some confidentiality issues, he believes the Link Centre would benefit a lot of people. He has been in contact with senior figures about it.

5592. District Councillor's Report

Councillor Pete Shepherd

Cllr Pete Shepherd's report was read by Cllr L. Piper.

Torridge

Sorry for not being there in person this evening. I hope it's not too late to wish you all a Happy New Year.

Not much for me to report since our last meeting, the major talking point is obviously the Devolution White Paper release by the Government on the 16th of December.

It took some reading and I'm not sure I understand all of it to be honest! It seems to be rushed as the Government want to implicate this within their term.

The white paper sets out how the Government plans to transfer power away from Westminster through devolution.

Briefly: There is an option of a Mayoral Combined Authority with approx 1.5M residents made up of a number of unitary authorities each with a seat at the top table govern by a Mayor. This will only happen here if Cornwall and Devon combine so unlikely at the moment.

Next level down is unitary authorities made up of approx 500k residents (Devon without Plymouth and Torbay is about 800k). It's up to local authorities to decide who is in what 'team'.

Exeter seem want a unitary with parts of East Devon. Plymouth want to expand into South Hams. So it seems to me that there will be a large power base in South Devon and us up in North Devon will either be scrapping to get in with one of the above or forced into a unitary without one of our cities. There is no chance of a TDC/NDC unitary as there aren't enough residents.

Devon County Council voted to scrap the County Elections in May to 'fast track' getting a mayoral devolution sorted (whatever shape that might take) but Torridge voted last Thursday to write a letter to Government to say TDC aren't happy to proceed that way. The white paper states all parties need to be happy to fast track. It must be noted that a letter of agreement is not mandatory from District, however the 8 district do seem to be in agreement.

These are my views but it all seems a bit of a mess with everyone wanting the best deal for themselves. If we as a District/County do nothing then the Government will tell us what to do. Will Torridge lose its assets in a unitary authority? Quite possibly.

It's all very political, something I dislike at District level and it's being forced on us. Fewer Councils equals fewer councillor, a big money saving exercise.

I'm of the opinion that instead of handing us more power this will do the opposite and water down democracy, especially if Exeter, Torbay and Plymouth form/expand their unitary authorities as Labour tend to do better in these areas than others in the South West.

The Government will do as it pleases because of the massive majority it enjoys, one thing for almost certain is that myself and Cllr. Piper will be your last TDC representatives as we know it.

Councillor Lyndon Piper:

January Report Notes

Devolution

As you are all probably aware, White Paper released by the government looking at getting rid of two tier local authorities in favour of unitary authorities. How this will pan out for our more sparsely populated, less connected and less wealthy part of Devon – we are not sure. Our status as a deprived area is finally being recognised through Levelling Up funding coming to TDC. I personally believe that we have been overlooked in the past due to our association with the more affluent south and east of the county and watched the money come into Cornwall – a county (especially the north east) we here in Torridge probably have more in common with economically.

Talk of delay to the County Council elections – DCC and TDC meetings on 9th of January to bring discussions into the public spotlight.

Letter from District Council Leaders sent to councillors. A reasonable response at this stage.

The roles and responsibilities of Town and Parish councils will potentially change. As always, change can bring opportunities and I would urge this council to be as ready as it can be when the time comes.

Holsworthy Community Forum

Attended Zoom meeting where they were discussing a community survey. Unfortunately had to leave after an hour due to work.

An idea regarding use of digital screens to pass on community events / services was floated – seemed a good idea and perhaps worth exploring.

Christmas Lights

Pleased to help with the annual putting up and taking down. May be good to make it more of a community event involving general public volunteers?

S.106 monies

Article in Holsworthy Post

Requested a full breakdown of secured s.106 monies from TDC including those payable to DCC

Green Infrastructure Levies

Attended EGM of Magpie / RBL club

Good to see general support for progress and modernisation of community facilities

Attended Holsworthy Area Advisory Group Meeting

Letter from Trewin Design Architects reference bollard in Fore Street

See HTC correspondence

Liaising with user groups ref Playzones

Acting as conduit between community groups and TDC

Holsworthy Leisure Update

Partially open. Meeting this week to discuss potential changing room upgrades. Further disruption likely later in the year when swimming pool roof is upgraded and solar PV added.

The Chairman resumed Standing Orders (unanimous)

- 5593. Council Meeting Minutes** – To approve and sign the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 4th December 2024

Councillor S. Preston proposed that the Minutes of the meeting held on the 4th of December 2024 and be approved. This was seconded by N Kenneally and agreed. (5 For, 3 Abs)

- 5594. Matters Arising**

No matters Arose.

- 5595. Review Action Items (Appendix 1)**

Cllr. N. Kenneally met with Bowls and will be going up to turn the light off at the Bowls club for the Town Ranger to check.

- 5596. Mayor's Announcements** – *To receive a report from the mayor.*

Following next few years, these are going to be crucial, we need to be on our A game. Made sure our assets do not disappear. Make sure our residents get heard and to be a voice for them. I want to make that plainly Clear.

I began 2025 with a site visit at Stanhope Park with fellow Park Committee Members, Town Ranger & Academic Play. We discussed the play park equipment and the options for improving Stanhope Park's play equipment in the future. – This will be going through Parks then Full Council.

I held my Annual Coffee Morning on 8th January 2025 whereby I raised £154.56 after expenses for my Mayor's Charities: HATS & Friends of Holsworthy Primary School. HATS had a stall selling home baked cakes. Thank you to all that helped at the Coffee Morning.

At the Coffee Morning I also presented 3 cheques of £100, as agreed at the Full Council Meeting in December to thank Holsworthy Lions, Holsworthy Town Band and

Holsworthy Youth Club for their support and assistance at our Christmas Switch on Event.

Thank you everyone that helped take down the Christmas Lights on Sunday 12th January. And thank you Lyndon piper for taking down Fore Street.

I have my Mayor's Civic Event – A Night with Elvis on Saturday 29th March 2025. Physical tickets will be available from HATS Box office, White Hart & Manor Offices, however, we are also selling tickets online with Eventbrite which can be found through our Website, or Social Media.

I attended the Holsworthy Area Advisory meeting which they discussed location plan, housing and more that impacts Holsworthy.

I also attended the Carols around the Tree in the Memorial Hall in addition to the Christmas Civic Service at St Peter & St Paul's Church.

I would like to thank Councillor H. Dentlinger for his service at Holsworthy Town Council as you may know from emails, he has unfortunately resigned due to other commitments.

5597. Accounts due for payment and budget review

V. Saunders informed councillors that the final Christmas accounts will be sent to the Finance and General Purposes (F&GP) Committee next week. In April, a significant electricity bill was addressed, with a refund now completed, and VAT-related issues were noted. The financial software Scribe is scheduled to be implemented on March 1, 2025.

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

5598. To Receive and to Note, the Draft Minutes of the following Committee Meeting:

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| Planning & Highways | 11th December 2024 |
| Parks | 11th December 2024 |
| Markets | 18th December 2024 |
| Finances & General Purposes | 18th December 2024 |

5599. To discuss upgrade and agree costs of .GOV emails.

The TC has arranged for Acuiti to come to HTC's Full Council meeting in February to train Cllrs on the new email and calendar software.

5600. To approve a virement for Parks

Councillors discussed Virement number 9 regarding the tarmacking at Stanhope Park.

Councillor S. Preston proposed that Virement No.9 is agreed. This was seconded by H. Parker and approved. (Unanimous)

Cllr D De ste croix and V. Saunders exited the meeting at 20:30

5601. To appoint a new councillor to sub-committees. (Appendix 2)

Cllr. I. Edwards stated his interest in being on the Market Committee.

Councillor N. Kenneally proposed that Councillor I. Edwards is appointed to Markets Committee and be approved. This was seconded by Councillor L. Piper and agreed. (Unanimous)

5602. To discuss and approve the amended Social Media Policy (Appendix 3)

Cllr J. Tadman amended the Social Media Policy as previously discussed and provided councillors with an updated copy for review. Councillor N. Kenneally stated that they had read the policy but found conflicting items they disagreed with. The Town Clerk highlighted the importance of a social media policy, in light of recent news articles. Councillor L. Piper expressed concern about the history of individuals posting on behalf of Holsworthy Town Council and suggested posts from HTC are shared through official Holsworthy Town Council accounts which can then be shared by Councillors.

Councillor H. Parker proposed to agree the amended Social Media Policy and be approved. This was seconded by S. Preston and agreed. (7 For, 0 Abs, 1 Ags)

5603. To discuss and agree the location of the H44 Statue.

Councillor I. Edwards requested the Mayor to read correspondence from H44 regarding the statue's location. Councillor N. Kenneally noted that the agreed location was the Memorial Hall. However, extensive community feedback supported its current placement, leading to the decision to leave it as is. Councillor L. Piper recalled that various locations were considered, and community feedback was discussed in the Parks Committee. Despite this, Councillor L. Piper emphasized that the War Memorial is sacred and advocated for the statue to be placed at the Memorial Hall. A response to H44's correspondence is to be sent. Discussion ensued.

Councillor N. Kenneally proposed to be located at Holsworthy Memorial Hall and be agreed. This was seconded by Cllr. P. Brown and approved. (6 For, 1 Abs, 0 Ags)

5604. To inform the change of Parks/Maintenance Job Title.

The Town Clerk informed the committee that the formerly known Maintenance Operative will now be titled ' Town Ranger'.

5605. To discuss and approve the amended London Bridge Policy. (Appendix 4)

Cllr. J. Tadman amended the London Bridge Policy to include recent updates as per Government Guidance. This was given to Cllrs and discussed.

Councillor H. Parker proposed to agree the amended London Bridge Policy and be approved. This was seconded by S. Preston and agreed. (Unanimous)

5606. To discuss and agree the recommendation from F&GP to investigate the renovation options for the Market Hall & Chambers.

During the Finances & General Purposes meeting on 18th December 2024, Cllr. J. Hutchings proposed exploring renovation options for the Market Hall and Market Chambers to better align with the Council's current needs. A discussion followed.

There is a concern that shifting HTC's focus to the Market Hall too quickly could send mixed messages to TDC, especially if they have been considering works for the Manor Offices.

Cllr. H. Parker suggested an alternative approach—using the Market Hall for meetings and repurposing the Chambers for storage.

Councillor N. Kenneally proposed F&GP to investigate the renovation options further and be agreed. This was seconded by Councillor L. Piper and approved. (Unanimous)

5607. To nominate a Councillor for DCC Events

The TC informed the Committee that Holsworthy Town Council were asked for a representative to attend DCC Events in the new future. Discussion ensued.

Councillor N .Kenneally proposed to nominate Councillor L. Piper for DCC Events and be agreed. This was seconded by S. Preston. (Unanimous)

5608. To give an update on the Council's Earmarked Reserves

V. Saunders provided a brief update on the earmarked reserves. Councillor L. Piper inquired about the general reserves, to which V. Saunders explained that it is necessary to maintain reserves equivalent to 3-6 months of expenditure. Currently, the reserves stand at approximately 5.5 months, totalling approximately £41,000. Discussion ensued.

5609. To discuss and agree Holsworthy Town Council's Budget and associated Projects for the financial year 2025/26

Councillor N. Kenneally expressed support for maintaining reserves for park equipment, emphasising the importance of creating reserves for IT and play equipment, due to significant work required in Stanhope Park. Cllrs were satisfied with the allocated funds for the suggested Victory celebrations, highlighting its importance for connection, social morale, and community engagement. Cllrs noted that the bike trail in Great Torrington looked impressive and would like to progress with that project. Cllrs also stressed the necessity of replacing the Christmas lights and suggested involving the community more in the main event.

Councillor L. Piper requested clarification on the bicycle trail. Cllrs clarified that it would be a trail of bicycles along the bike trail, similar to the bicycle trail in Great Torrington due to Holsworthy being part of the National Trail, noting that community groups could decorate older-style bikes and Cllr. J. Tadman is investigating potential bicycle donations from the police. This was a suggestion from Cllr J. Hutchings, with the idea of making the bikes a permanent fixture. Cllr N. Kenneally confirmed, after speaking with Cllr Phil Cloke, that none of Great Torrington's bikes had been stolen.

Councillor L. Piper raised concerns about some projects lacking sufficient information, emphasising the need for detailed plans before funds are allocated to ensure they are well-directed. They proposed creating a general project fund or "pot" for ad hoc projects, allowing flexibility without locking funds to specific initiatives prematurely.

Councillor H. Parker rejected the idea that events like VE and VJ celebrations are "ego trips," stressing their importance in honouring the community's connections to war history. They argued these events should be marked as part of the Town Council's recognition of its history, a sentiment shared by Councillor S. Preston. The Town Clerk acknowledged these views but suggested the timing for further discussion might not be appropriate. Councillor L. Piper emphasized involving the community in decisions about such events, while the Town Clerk suggested creating a community engagement strategy within the year.

Councillor I. Edwards noted that private events, like those organized by H44, could help attract visitors to Holsworthy and boost local resources. Councillor L. Piper remarked that hosting multiple events can build community expectations but acknowledged there might be more pressing issues to address for residents.

V. Saunders shared guidance from the Pageant Master, highlighting that the upcoming event is considered significant and possibly the last of its kind. Councillor S. Preston suggested agreeing to allocate £5,000 in principle for the event, with unused funds to be reallocated afterward. Councillor N. Kenneally proposed dividing funds, allocating £2,500 for the Victory events and £2,500 to park reserves.

After much discussion Cllr. N. Kenneally proposed that the Council's Budget and associated projects option B for the financial year 2025/26 be approved.

Councillor N. Kenneally proposed that the Council's Budget and associated Projects for the financial year 2025/2026 be approved. This was seconded by Councillor L. Piper and agreed. (Unanimous).

5610. To discuss and agree Holsworthy Town Council's Precept for the financial year 2025/26

Brief discussion ensued.

Councillor N. Kenneally proposed that the Council's Precept of £212,800 for the financial year 2025/2026 be approved. This was seconded by Councillor I. Brown and agreed. (Unanimous).

5611. To receive External Committee Updates. (Appendix 5)

Cllr. J. Tadman – Councillor Advocate Seminar Meeting: Policing Update

Cllr. H. Parker informed Council that the next Specotts meeting will be next Monday.

5612. To receive a list of Correspondence.

1. Letter RE: Trewyn Design letter and request for support to erect bollards in front of Trewyn designs to prevent cars being parked half on pavement and half on the road. Cllr. L. Piper stated the dangers of this and agreed that it's a bigger problem

and has been reported to Devon County Council. N. Kenneally recommended we give support of the Full Council. And they are also struggling with the lorries for the Jhoots.

2. Primary school drainage. Water from Stanhope Park drains through school site onto the new play equipment. Response – looking into drainage in the park had a feasibility study though funds will need to be sourced. Cllr. L. Piper & D. Cole to visit the park and analyse the drainage.
3. Residents asking for support – To write to Westward Housing to request them to do the actions in the letter
4. Andrea Sleeman – to get memorial bench in skateboard park & cemetery. Cllr. N. Kenneally would like to donate £100 of his Mayor Allowance toward the bench.

5613. Town Clerk's Report – To receive a report from the Town Clerk

- Working to increase community engagement, as previously suggested by Cllr. L. Piper.
- HUC produces cookie tracking reports, and TDC has secured two years of funding, with Holsworthy as one of the tracked areas. The Square is monitored, and quarterly reports are sent to us. The Town Clerk asked if other areas could be tracked, suggesting the Cattle Market, Industrial Estate, Mole Valley, Waitrose, and Underlane.
- A meeting with Ken James and Steve Hearse is scheduled for Tuesday at 10:30 AM, attended by the Town Clerk and Mayor. Cllr. L. Piper is unavailable.
- Training on Friday in Barnstaple covering manual handling and risk assessments, attended by ATTC and TR.

5588. Close

Councillor N. Kenneally closed the meeting at 21:22

Signed

Dated