



**Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held in the Market Hall, The Square, Holsworthy on
Wednesday 4th March 2026 at 19:00**

Present: Councillors; J. Hutchings, H. Parker, J. Allen, P. Brown, D. Cole, D. De ste Croix,
I. Edwards, N. Kenneally, J. Tadman

In attendance: Assistant to the Town Clerk (ATTC),
TDC Cllr. P. Shepherd, Tracey Horton & Lesley Source (Holsworthy Medical Centre).

5811. Apologies for absence.

TC, Councillors: G. Mardle, L. Piper & S. Preston

5812. Declaration of interests - *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.

5813. Public Open Question Time

No members of public were present.

5814. Presentation and Questions: Holsworthy Medical Centre – *Practice Manager, Lesley Source*

Holsworthy Medical Centre is funded at a maximum rate of £125 per patient, per year. This funding is required to cover all operational costs, including nursing staff, administrative support, stationery, utilities such as electricity and water and general day-to-day running expenses. The practice serves a geographically remote community, with limited access to nearby hospital services. The local hospital does not offer a full range of services, which puts additional strain on Holsworthy Medical Centre. This is also affected by the demographic of the area, where approximately 30% of patients are aged over 65, resulting in higher and more complex healthcare needs.

To manage demand, the practice is encouraging patients to consider appointments with pharmacists or nurse practitioners where appropriate. However, demand remains high, with an average of 800 telephone calls received per day across Holsworthy and Hatherleigh surgeries, not including Stratton.

A recent patient survey provided positive feedback, although the practice continues to face challenges. For example, access to specialist diagnostic equipment, such as spirometry machines is limited. If specialist equipment was available, the practice would be able to offer more services locally, improving patient care and reducing reliance on external providers. Limited funding presents a challenge, for example blood tests, hospitals receive funding to carry out these services, whereas if the medical centre provides them, no additional funding is allocated and funding remains with the hospital. This creates an imbalance and limits the medical centre's ability to increase services available.

There is a growing need for the community's voice to be heard. A patient-led petition or increased engagement could help raise awareness of the challenges faced by the practice and the limitations in accessing services at the local community hospital.

The working environment has also become more difficult, with staff reporting increased levels of abuse, including instances of racism directed at nurses and GPs. Holsworthy medical centre operates from a leased building, which is owned by Quagmire rather than the practice

itself. As a result, there is no opportunity to expand the premises despite demand. While the site benefits from a reasonable amount of free parking, physical capacity remains a limiting factor.

The practice continues to deliver a high standard of care but is operating beyond its intended capacity. For example, home visits should typically account for around 1% of activity, however, Holsworthy practice is currently at 4% . In addition, the centre processes around 3,000 clinical letters each week, further highlighting the administrative workload. Safeguarding responsibilities, prescription requests and appointment demand all contribute to the increasing pressure on staff and systems. The practice recognises that public awareness is key to helping patients understand how to access services appropriately and manage expectations. New technology is being introduced and trial, "Emma," an AI-based system will go live in April 2026. This system will allow patients to book appointments via telephone, with calls typically answered within three rings. Requests will be triaged automatically and if the system detects any difficulty or complexity, the call will be transferred to a staff member. Conversations with Emma will also be transcribed to support record-keeping. The practice is keen to ensure that, while triage systems are in place, patients can still speak to appropriate healthcare professionals when necessary. Urgent cases will be directed to an emergency queue, while non-urgent cases will be placed on a call-back list. In addition to Emma, the practice is trialling Ambient Voice Technology (AVT), including systems such as Heidi and Tortoise. These tools allow clinicians to focus more on patient interaction by automatically transcribing consultations in real time. The medical centre also works with social prescribers, supporting patients with non-medical needs that impact their health and wellbeing.

Overall, the practice remains committed to delivering high-quality care but acknowledges that it does not currently have the resources to provide all services locally. Service provision has evolved over time, and continued adaptation will be necessary to meet future demand.

5815. County Councillors' Report

Councillor Lynne Rowsell's Report

No report received.

5816. District Councillors reports

Councillor P. Shepherd's Report

Apologies for no report or being there in person last time, it couldn't be helped.

Torrige

You may be aware Torrige had a budget special finalising the Council Tax rate. It was agreed to increase the rate by £5.84 (2.99%), a figure lower than inflation (and lower than County, P&C commissioner and others have raised) but a rise all the same.

External O&S was last week, we had presentations from One Northern Devon and Active Torrige with positive discussions happening. I was particularly impressed by the steps being made by Active Torrige and their plans ahead especially when comparing them with the previous company involved in running our Leisure Centre.

There is a South West Water local briefing on their Business Plan 2025-30 coming up later this month and I'm hoping to attend remotely. SSW have given us councillors a dedicated email

address so we can get in touch with them. I'm not sure if Parish councillors have been given the email address so if there are any issues with SSW feel free to email me and I'll pass it on.

It wouldn't be a TDC report without talking about Local Government Reorganisation. The formal consultation has launched for LGR by the Government, it runs for 7 weeks up to the 26th of March. Everyone is free to comment and the link can be found online, sorry my TDC iPad won't let me paste the link!

Correspondence

This month I've received higher than normal correspondence about fly tipping/waste issues. More about council tax enquiries, planning issues and my annual invite to the kebab awards!

Other

This year's Torridge Councillor grant has now been spent, I'll get another £1000 next financial year so if you Councillors know of any worthwhile groups or causes please get them to reach out to me on councillor.shepherd@torridge.gov.uk

Regards, Cllr. Pete Shepherd
(Holsworthy Ward)

Cllr H. Parker queried whether the precept would be sufficient to cover all current expenses. Cllr N. Kenneally responded that reserves are being utilised this year in preparation for the transition to a unitary authority.

5817. Council Meeting Minutes – To approve and sign the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on the 4th February 2026.

Councillor H. Parker proposed to sign the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on the 4th February 2026 and be agreed. This was seconded by Councillor J. Tadman and approved. (Unanimous).

5818. Matters Arising - To consider matters arising from the Minutes of the 4th February 2026 Meeting. For information only.

No additional matters arose from the Minutes of the meeting held on 4th February 2026.

5819. Review Action Items from Full Council Meetings.

Councillors reviewed the action list noting that the pre-planning application for allotments at Glebelands has been submitted and Cllr N. Kenneally noted he will be unable to attend the NDRDA event. Cllr. D. Cole will visit the office to receive a map detailing the location of the event.

5820. Mayor's Announcements – To receive a report from the Mayor.

The Mayor attended a local nursing home to present a cake and birthday card to a resident celebrating their 100th birthday. The works relating to the bus shelter have been completed by TDC. However, it was noted that someone had sat on the wet paint. An update was provided regarding parking in the Square. A short-term solution is currently being explored rather than a long-term fix. Devon County Council has confirmed that the matter has been added to its annual list of works, although it is anticipated that this could take up to 18 months to progress.

The Mayor is hosting a coffee morning on Wednesday 18th March and asked for volunteers and raffle prizes. Finally, the mayor attended the recent Pantomime. He enjoyed watching the show and met with some of the cast members afterwards.

TDC Councillor P. Shepherd exited meeting at 20:00

5821. To Review payments and budget – To receive and approve the accounts

Councillors reviewed the finances. Cllr J. Allen noted that the Earmarked Reserves presented do not necessarily match the budget, it may be useful to use the Earmarked Reserves from the Summary of receipts and payments.

Councillor N. Kenneally proposed the Finances for January 2026 are a true record and be agreed. This was seconded by Councillor D. De ste Croix and approved. (Unanimous)

5822. To Receive, and to Note, the Minutes of the following Committee Meetings:

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| A) Planning & Highways | 11 th February 2026 |
| B) Parks Committee | 11 th February 2026 |
| C) Finance & General Purposes Committee | 18 th February 2026 |
| D) Market Committee | 25 th February 2026 |

The F&GP Committee raised concerns regarding the accuracy of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting minutes and requested they be rewritten to provide an accurate record of the meeting. Cllr J. Hutchings raised concerns that the Committee meeting minutes were not sent prior to the meeting and the agenda item requested by F&GP was not included on the agenda, to appoint an internal auditor.

5823. To nominate a member to speak at the Holsworthy Community District Forum meeting on March 18th, 2026.

Councillors did not vote on a member and suggested Cllr. L. Piper as a representative.

5824. To discuss and agree the format of the 2026/27 AGM.

Councillor J. Hutchings briefed the committee on the original layout of the AGM noting that the presentation and photographs would be the first Wednesday of May and the second meeting in May (adjourned) would be business.

Councillor N. Kenneally proposed to amend the format of the AGM to agree business items on 6th May 2026 and the Mayor making & grant presentations on 13th May 2026 and be approved. This was seconded by Councillor D. De ste Croix and agreed. (Unanimous).

5825. To discuss and agree a speaker for the Annual Towns Meeting in April 2026.

Cllr J. Hutchings suggested investigating the legalities of holding the Annual Towns Meeting on 13th May prior to the Mayor making ceremony. Cllr. N. Kenneally raised concerns over number of attendees if they have questions. It may be strenuous on the office staff to confirm the attendees asking questions are part of the electoral roll in Holsworthy. Discussion ensued. Cllrs discussed holding the Annual Towns meeting at 6.30pm on 13th May 2026 followed by the Mayor Making ceremony at 7pm. The office investigate the Standing orders, legislations and legalities to see if the Annual Town's meeting can be held on the same day at the Mayor's Making Ceremony.

Councillor N. Kenneally proposed that no speaker is agreed for the Annual Towns Meeting in April 2026 and be approved. This was seconded by Councillor J. Hutchings and agreed. (Unanimous).

5826. To discuss and agree the contractor expenditure for green space management in the absence of the Town Ranger as recommended by the Parks Committee.

Councillors reviewed 3 quotes for the green space management tender. Cllrs. were concerned that the process was not completed appropriately and raised concerns regarding a contractor. Several councillors were in agreement that if the contractor approved is linked with the recent email trail advertising the company and with poor history with the council they would not vote for them.

Councillor H. Parker proposed to approve Contractor 3 for the green space management tender and be approved. This was seconded by Councillor D. De ste Croix and agreed. (5 For, 2 Abstentions, 1 Against).

5827. To discuss and agree a contractor for the removal of the Tennis Courts in Stanhope Park as requested by the Parks Committee.

Councillors reviewed the contractor quotes briefly and suggested combining the removal of the Tennis Courts with reinstating the path. Further discussion ensued. Councillors did not feel they had sufficient information to decide at this time.

Councillor N. Kenneally proposed to defer the decision to the Parks Committee and be approved. This was seconded by Councillor I. Edwards and agreed. (Unanimous)

5828. To agree the Badock Sunlounge Private Use Policy as recommended by the Parks Committee.

The council reviewed the amended Badock Sunlounge Private Use Policy as recommended by Parks committee.

Councillor H. Parker proposed to approve the Badock Sunlounge Private Use Policy as recommended by Parks Committee and be agreed. This was seconded by Councillor P. Brown and approved. (Unanimous).

5829. To discuss and agree the press release for the HTC Market as recommended by the Market Committee.

The Council reviewed a draft Market Press release and agree for the Chairman to amend the wording for the office to publish.

“On Wednesday 28th January 2026, the Market Committee held a meeting to discuss and agree the Market re-launch. It was agreed by the Market Committee to defer the re-launch of the market until further notice due to, possible relocation & permissions, staffing levels and in the process of revamping for a new style market.

During the meeting, the committee also discussed the future vision for Holsworthy Market, including the opportunity to relocate and revamp to reflect a new style market. The committee acknowledges that this would prevent the market from reopening by Easter 2026 and endeavour to continue to work with other markets to review current structures in place to enhance the overall outlook and presentation of Holsworthy Market.

Further updates will be provided in due course.”

Councillor D. De ste Croix proposed to agree the market press release and publish on HTC website and social media with amendments by the Chair of Markets and be agreed. This was seconded by Councillor I. Edwards and approved. (Unanimous).

5830. To Receive External Committee Updates.

There were no external committee updates.

5831. To Receive Correspondence – To receive correspondence and make decisions on any actions

There were no correspondence to action.

5832. Town Clerk's Report - To receive a report from the Town Clerk for information only.

The TC was not present to provide a report.

5833. Exchange of information -- With permission of the mayor, to exchange information only on any other subject.

The ATTC informed the councillors that the TDC Dog warden team will be visiting Holsworthy to do a Check a microchip day on 18th March 2026.

Councillor N. Kenneally read his letter of resignation to the Council.

“ Dear Mayor, Cllr Jon Hutchings,

I would like to start by saying what a great honour it has been to serve on Holsworthy Town Council and it's mayor for 2 terms. I would also like to thank all the councillors and staff I have worked with during my time on the council.

However, with my current commitments and another child on the way, I don't feel I can give the role of town councillor the time and dedication it deserves.

So I intend to resign the day after the towns AGM (Part 1).

I have chosen this date as I believe it will give you and the Town Clerk the time needed to remove me form any banking responsibilities I currently hold. It also gives enough time to remove me as a trustee for Stanhope Park and Badock Gardens.

On a personal note, I'd like to thank Cllr Jon Hutchings and his father Richard Hutchings for many years ago telling me to put my "money where my mouth is" as those words led to my journey as a councillor.

I wish Holsworthy town council all the very best for the future, I know it is in good hands!

Kind Regards

Cllr Nigel Kenneally”

Councillor J. Hutchings made a motion to move this agenda item into Part 2 due to the confidential nature of the discussions. This was seconded by Councillor H. Parker and approved. (Unanimous)

Councillor J. Hutchings 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 H. Parker and agreed. (Unanimous)

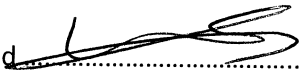
Councillor N. Kenneally proposed that the ATTC is appointed at Temporary RFO in the TC/RFO's absence and be agreed. This was seconded by Councillor J. Hutchings and approved. (Unanimous)

5834. To update on 2017 HASP Lease and agree any costs and/or updates required.

Councillor N. Kenneally proposed to approve the signatories for the 2017 HASP Lease remain the same and be agreed. This was seconded by Councillor H. Parker and approved. (Unanimous)

5835. Close

Councillor mayor closed the meeting at 21.29

Signed 

Dated 1/4/26



Part Two – CONFIDENTIAL

**Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held in the Market Hall, The Square, Holsworthy on
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I. Edwards, N. Kenneally, J. Tadman

In attendance: Assistant to the Town Clerk (ATTC),

5833. Exchange of Information

Councillor J. Hutchings informed the committee that the Town Clerk will be on sick leave for 2 weeks.

Councillor N. Kenneally proposed that the ATTC is appointed at Temporary RFO in the TC/RFO's absence and be agreed. This was seconded by Councillor J. Hutchings and approved. (Unanimous)

5834. To update on 2017 HASP Lease and agree any costs and/or updates required.

The ATTC informed the committee that the TC had advised the agreement it to approve the signatories on the lease which were confirmed to remain the same. Discussion ensued.

Councillor N. Kenneally proposed to approve the signatories for the 2017 HASP Lease remain the same and be agreed. This was seconded by Councillor H. Parker and approved. (Unanimous).

5835. Close

Councillor J. Hutchings closed the meeting at 21:29.

JH