



Ashburton Town Council

**Minutes of the Full Town Council meeting
held on Tuesday 14th April 2026 at 7.30pm
in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall**

Present: Cllrs. Coles, Distin, Giles, Pugh, Searight, Turner and Wood.

In attendance: Town Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Cllr. Rogers (DCC & TDC), and Cllr. Major (TDC).

Cllr. Wood opened the meeting and welcomed those present.

045.26 Apologies.

The Clerk reported that apologies had been received from Cllr. Bovey due to illness, Cllrs. Nutley and Snowsill due to prior commitments and Cllr. Harper due to a work commitment. Cllr. Giles proposed to accept these apologies; seconded by Cllr. Searight. All in favour.

046.26 Declarations of interest.

There were none declared.

047.26 Public comments and statements.

The Postmaster declared that the Libraries Consultation is now complete and that approximately 25,000 people had responded. There will be changes behind the scenes and possibly reduced opening hours.

048.26 To receive and approve the minutes of the previous meeting, 10th March 2026.

The actions from the minutes were complete. Cllr. Searight proposed that these minutes be accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting and be signed accordingly; seconded by Cllr. Coles. All in favour.

049.26 To receive the Chair's report.

Cllr. Wood presented the Chair's report (Appendix 1), firstly sending her thoughts to our Mayor, Cllr. Ann Bovey, who continues to be unwell. She reported that the recent Organisations Evening went very well and a follow-up meeting is planned for approximately a month's time.

050.26 To receive the Clerk's report

The Clerk presented her report (Appendix 2). The next Asset Management Working Group meeting was arranged for Monday 27th April at 7pm and Cllr. Turner stressed that as many Councillors as possible need to attend. A "no-dogs policy" was discussed and the Clerk suggested to take a draft to this month's GP meeting.

ACTION: Clerk's office to create a draft no-dog policy for the Town Hall and take to GP.

051.26 To receive the Police report.

The Clerk presented the Police report (Appendix 3), and noted that crime numbers are being collated by the office.

052.26 To receive the Devon County Council report.

(Appendix 4) Cllr. Rogers advised on –

- Rogue traders are operating around Devon.
- The Renters Rights Act.
- The appointment of an Executive Headteacher at Ashburton Primary School.

053.26 To receive the Teignbridge District Council report.

Cllr. Major advised that –

- Tetra-pak can now be recycled in household recycling
- Community Funding is now available again. Each TDC Councillor has £1,000 to distribute.

054.26 To receive the report from the Chair of the Finance Committee and to consider the financial position prior to receipt of the precept.

Cllr. Turner presented the actions from the previous meeting, all of which were complete. The Clerk listed payments that are still to be made taking the year end balance to around £5,000.

055.26 To receive the report from the Chair of the Planning Committee and respond to the following planning appeal notice:

- F/26/3378164 – Old Exeter Inn, 26 West Street, Ashburton, TQ13 7DU

Alleged breach – The painting of a mural above the main entrance door and the unauthorized change to the colour of the building by painting the exterior wall and gable on the southeast elevation black and the gold (“the Works”) have been executed in contravention of Section 7(1) of the Act. As such, an offence has been committed under Section 9(1) of the Act.

The Chair reported that actions from the previous meeting have been completed. The alleged breach was discussed in detail. Cllr. Wood proposed that we respond stating agreement with the Inspectorate’s findings; seconded by Cllr. Turner. All in favour.

ACTION: Cllr. Searight to compose response to the appeal. Clerk’s office to submit.

056.26 To receive the report from the Chair of the General Purposes Committee.

The Clerk explained the moveable timeline for completion of the Neighbourhood Plan and would seek further information at the planned meeting tomorrow. Cllr. Distin reported that new basketball nets had been installed at Home Park ball court.

057.26 To receive the Councillors’ reports of attendance at sub-committees and meetings of other organisations.

Cllr. Turner read a prepared report on Moorland Caring. (Appendix 5). Cllr. Wood reported on a very successful “tadpole event” where members of the public were invited to adopt frogspawn from Ashburton pool.

058.26 To suggest content for the Ashburton Town Council media post.

Include the news that tetra-pak can now be recycled.

044.26 Matters raised by Councillors for information only or on a future agenda.

Cllr. Turner reported on the mess in St Lawrence Lane consisting of weeds and litter. The Town Team may well concentrate on this area when they meet next. The Clerk showed a plaque that had been stored in the office remembering some of those killed in the World Wars. It was agreed to offer it to the church and to RBL if unwanted by the Church. Cllr. Searight reported on a successful RBL coffee morning that raised approximately £400.

Cllr Wood thanked those present and closed the meeting at 21.10

Signed (Chair) Date

Action Points Arising from the Full Council Meeting

Held on Tuesday 14th April 2026 at 7.30pm in the Council Chambers

050.26 To receive the Clerk's report

Clerk's office to create a draft no-dog policy for the Town Hall and take to GP.

055.26 To receive the report from the Chair of the Planning Committee and respond to the following planning appeal notice:

Cllr. Searight to compose response to the appeal. Clerk's office to submit before 22nd April.

Firstly, our thoughts are with Cllr Bovey, who is unable to be with us this evening.

I recently met with ACE to agree terms of reference. This was a very positive meeting, and I am hopeful it will lead to a mutually supportive relationship going forward. This aligns closely with our Natural Environment & Biodiversity goal, which commits us to protecting and enhancing Ashburton's natural assets for future generations. We anticipate working in partnership with ACE to help deliver this.

We also held a well-attended organisations meeting, with representatives from 11 different charities and community groups present. There was strong agreement that this should continue, with a shared interest in supporting one another and exploring opportunities to share resources. This is a positive step towards our Community Engagement priority, particularly our aim to establish a quarterly Community Forum supported by the Council to share ideas, resources, and priorities.

Finally, a brief update on the Asset Working Group. This group is contributing to our wider goal of strengthening local democracy and ensuring that all residents have opportunities to shape the future of Ashburton.

Cllr Lucy Wood

Clerks Report – Full Council, Tuesday 14th April.**Staffing update**

Cllrs. Coles, Turner and I conducted three interviews on 1st April. Following the interviews, we decided to offer the position to the second candidate subject to references. After receiving them yesterday, the HR committee agreed with this decision.

Today, I have been in touch with the candidate who has said she is very pleased and able to join us on Monday.

Maintenance update

The Main Hall floor is due its annual clean and varnish re-coat at the end of May. The Chambers will also be sanded and varnished at the same time. Jane has raised a concern that the casters on the council tables are metal and lock regularly, this has caused damage to the floor over time. I would like to look into replacing these castors prior to the floor being done.

Additionally, we are getting more and more people bringing dogs into the Town Hall resulting in scratches on the floors. We have always had an unwritten rule that no dogs were allowed in the halls unless they are assistance or guide dogs, but nothing formal. For clarity's sake and to prevent any conflict, I would like to introduce a formal policy to adopt at the May Full Council meeting.

Councillor committees update

Next month is the Annual meeting where you will be agreeing membership to each committee again. If any Councillors are interested in joining another committee they do not currently sit on, please do not hesitate to get in touch with any questions.

Councillor representative update

At the same meeting, you will be agreeing councillor representatives for many groups in the town. The current organisations and representatives are set out on the screen here:

ACE / Community Fridge	Cllr. Coles.
Ashburton Community Land Trust	Cllr. Searight.
Ashburton/Cleder Association	Cllr. Searight.
Ashburton Museum	Cllr. Turner
Ashburton Swimming Pool	Cllr. Searight.
Bank Youth Project	Cllr. Nutley.
Cancer Research Campaign	Cllr. Giles.
Carnival Committee	Cllr. Pugh.
Chamber of Trade & Commerce	-
Glendennings Liaison	Cllr. Distin.
Moorland Community Caring	Cllr. Turner.
Royal British Legion	Cllr. Searight.

For those of you that have not been a representative before, this involves attending the groups meetings and act as the 'go between' person between them and the council, and reporting to Full Council meetings. Additionally, please consider whether there are any other groups the council could, or should, represent.

Annual Town Meeting

The Annual Town Meeting must be held prior to the 1st June. This meeting is not classed as a council meeting but is to be organised by us. Previously the council have arranged speakers from local organisations or a talk regarding local issues. Last year, we incorporated this meeting into the Organisations Day. If anyone has any ideas for this meeting, please let me know.

Asset Management Working Group

Cllr. Harper and I have discussed holding another Asset meeting towards the end of the month. He has suggested Tuesday 28th April at 7pm. This is an important meeting to attend as an initial proposal of the desired assets would need to be agreed at the May Full Council meeting to be able to inform Teignbridge District Council of our intentions. If agreeable, the agenda will be circulated shortly to allow time for the word to get out.

Thank you.



Ashburton & Chudleigh Neighbourhood Police Team

☎ 101 Non-urgent
 ☎ 999 in an emergency
 🌐 www.devon-cornwall.police.uk
 📧 101@dc.police.uk

📍 DevonAndCornwallPolice
 📍 @DC_Police
 📍 dc_police.999
 📍 DCPolice

ASHBURTON TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

10TH MARCH 2026

This report covers the parish of Ashburton including its road network. The Parish has the Police beat code of JA2C. The Parish is served by the Neighbourhood Police team working out of Ashburton Police Station and Chudleigh Police Office. The Parish forms part of the Teignbridge Coastal & Rural Policing sector. The team is led by Police Inspector Sean Roper and Sergeant Ryan Cook Neighbourhood Team Leader and PC Claire Hurrell is the Neighbourhood Constable (Neighbourhood Beat Manager) and is supported by PCSO Tina Jordan.

Although every effort has been made to produce an accurate representation of the figures included in the report there may be a slight discrepancy in the totals shown.

For the period 1/02/2026 to 28/02/2026 in the Ashburton beat area there has been a total of 50 Incident Reports of a varying nature logged resulting 23 Occurrence Reports being raised that required further investigation under the following categories:

Public Safety and Concern for Welfare: 3
 Public Order: 1
 Violence less serious: 4
 ASB Personal: 1
 ASB Nuisance: 1
 Fraud & Forgery: 2
 Theft From Motor Vehicle: 1
 Suspicious Circumstances: 1
 Drug Related: 1
 GBH: 2
 Police Generated & Administration: 6



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Friday 27 March 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

Appointment of Executive Head Teacher

I am pleased to inform you that we have appointed a dynamic and experienced school leader to take on the role of Executive Head Teacher of Ashburton Primary School. Following a rigorous recruitment process which attracted a field of excellent candidates, we have appointed Mrs Natasha Brooks as Executive Head Teacher.

Mrs Brooks joins us from St Budeaux CE Primary Academy in Plymouth where she is currently Head of School. She impressed the panel with her professionalism, expertise, and clear determination to give children the very best primary school experience. Having taught in Devon for a number of years, she has an excellent understanding of the local community and of the needs of our pupils.

As previously communicated, Mrs Brooks will become Executive Head Teacher of both Ashburton and Buckfastleigh Primary Schools. She will work very closely with Mrs Annette Layland who, as Deputy Head, will support Mrs Brooks with the smooth running of the school and will continue to be the senior school leader you see every day, providing a familiar and consistent point of contact for parents and carers. Mrs Brooks will continue the work to drive standards across both schools in all areas, supported by the respective leadership teams and staff.

Whilst Mrs Brooks will spend time getting to know the pupils, she will not have any teaching responsibilities, which means she will be able to dedicate all her time to the leadership of the schools. With Mrs Brooks setting the strategic direction of the school and Mrs Layland continuing in her senior leadership role, we are confident that we now have in place the strong and stable leadership needed to accelerate improvement across the school.

Mrs Brooks will take up her post in September, but we hope to arrange opportunities in the Summer Term for her to spend time in the school meeting with pupils, staff, and parents. I am sure you will join me in extending a very warm welcome to Mrs Brooks and also in offering thanks to Mrs Layland and the team of dedicated and committed staff who have worked so hard to support the school in recent months.

Thank you, as a community, for your continued support of Ashburton Primary School.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nat Parnell'.

Nat Parnell
Chief Executive Officer

Good evening, everyone .

The DCC , TDC , DNP meeting is confirmed for the 24th of April 2026 , 2.30 pm at Buckfastleigh Town Hall to conclude by 4.30 pm .

Colleagues in Highways are advising on a status of reports status on Highways .

It is essential that faults / defects are reported.(link below)

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem/>

Ashburton & Buckfastleigh Primary School are to have a new combined Executive Head from September 2026.

The Conflict in the Middle East is s affecting household budgets

I am attending a meeting regarding the Crisis Resilience fund and will update you following a meeting on Tuesday afternoon.

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/news/devon-county-council-sets-plans-new-crisis-resilience-fund-2/>

The Renters Rights Act, effective from May 1, 2026, introduces significant reforms to enhance tenant protections, abolish nofault evictions, and create more stable rental agreements in England.

Key Changes Under the Renters Rights Act

1. **Abolition of Section 21 Evictions:** Landlords will no longer be able to evict tenants without a valid reason. This change aims to provide greater security for renters, allowing them to stay in their homes without the fear of arbitrary eviction.
2. **Introduction of Assured Periodic Tenancies:** All existing and new assured shorthold tenancies (ASTs) will automatically convert to assured periodic tenancies. This means that tenancies will roll on from month to month, providing tenants with more flexibility and stability.
3. **Rent Increase Regulations:** Landlords will be limited to raising rent only once a year, and tenants will have the right to challenge any rent increases they believe are unfair. Additionally, landlords cannot demand more than one month's rent in advance.
4. **Pet Ownership Rights:** Tenants will have the legal right to request permission to keep pets, and landlords must consider these requests fairly.
5. **Protection Against Discrimination:** It will be illegal for landlords to refuse tenants based on their receipt of benefits or if they have children, promoting fairer access to housing.
6. **Private Landlord Ombudsman:** A new ombudsman will be established to help resolve disputes between tenants and landlords quickly and fairly, without the need for court proceedings.
7. **Improved Living Conditions:** The Act aims to enhance the quality of rented homes, with future regulations focusing on energy efficiency and safety standards. Landlords will be required to address serious hazards promptly.

Implementation Timeline

- **The majority of the Act's provisions will come into force on May 1, 2026.** This includes the abolition of Section 21 notices and the introduction of new tenancy structures and rent regulations.

- [Future phases will include the establishment of a Private Rented Sector database and the introduction of a Decent Homes Standard by 2030.](#)

These changes are designed to create a more balanced and fair rental market, benefiting both tenants and responsible landlords while addressing long-standing issues in the private rented sector.

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[GOV.UK blogs](#)

<https://mhclgmedia.blog.gov.uk/2026/04/01/one-month-to-go-know-your-rights-before-the-renters-rights-act-kicks-in/>

If you identify any residents with issues, please advise them to contact TDC 01626 361101 (Option 5) during office hours.

Moorland Community Caring - Ashburton Town Council Report - 2025-2026

We would like to start by thanking Ashburton Town Council for its continued support, both financially with use of the Town Hall twice a month for our Moor Social and by collaborating with us to support Ashburton with specific clients and the community as a whole. We look forward to continuing to work closely with Ashburton Town Council.

Ashburton Moor Socials

Between the beginning of April 2025 and the end of March 2026 we will have held 20 Moor Socials in Ashburton, on average 18 clients attend each Social (meaning approximately 360 separate interactions over the year). We have an average of 6 volunteers that help facilitate the Socials by transporting clients, catering, providing activities, welcoming clients and hosting tables to create conversation. The clients that attend our Socials are socially isolated with the majority of them living alone and having one if not multiple health conditions. We have been told that our Socials offer a lifeline to many and that it is often the only opportunity for them to socialise with others and leave their home.

Key highlights were our Christmas party, musical entertainment for The Sisters, visits from Growing Space, and ECOE. One of our clients share, "I have always enjoyed my Moorland as it got me out after not going out for 10 years and to chat and help others. I will be forever grateful."

We want to say thank you to Jane for always ensuring that the town hall and kitchen is always set up, clean and ready for use; it makes the hiring process so much easier and the room is always well presented and hygienic for our Socials.

Ashburton Memory Café

We are still operating the Ashburton Memory Café is a great support for those with memory loss and their carers; a great place to meet others experiencing similar issues, enjoy a fun activity and get greater support from the Anna Chaplains (who we work with) and David Garland our Dementia Wellbeing Co-ordinator.

One to one Wellbeing Programme

Our Wellbeing Programme continues to support the residents of Ashburton; we have seen an increase in referrals in Ashburton with them doubling from 2 to 4 per month from March to December in 2025. There has also been an increased level of complexity as other services are strained, reduced or discontinued; including safeguarding concerns, complex mental health conditions, and domestic abuse. Our outcomes from the programme make a huge difference to our clients, practical support including increased access to financial support, connecting to statutory services, and supporting procurement of personal assistants, cleaners and gardeners. We also see reduced social isolation via linking clients to our Social events, phone groups and volunteer befrienders. We connect clients to other statutory services such as community physios, adult social care and occupational therapists to reduce the risk of falls, hospital admissions and an increased level of support for our clients. We advocate for our clients and ensure they are empowered to make decisions for themselves, coaching them and linking them to our funded programmes like HOPE and Live Longer Better as well as external training providers like Learn Devon.