



Ashburton Town Council

Minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting
held on Wednesday 27th May 2026 at 7.30pm
in the Ashburton Information Centre

Present: Cllrs. Coles, Distin, Giles, Nutley, Turner and Wood.

In attendance: The Deputy Clerk and the Administration Assistant

Cllr. Distin opened the meeting and welcomed those present.

016.26GP Election of Chair

Cllr. Turner proposed Cllr. Distin as Chair, seconded by Cllr Giles.

RESOLVED.

017.26GP Election of Deputy Chair

Cllr. Distin proposed Cllr. Coles as Deputy Chair, seconded by Cllr Giles.

RESOLVED.

018.26GP Apologies.

The Deputy Clerk noted that apologies had been received from Cllr Searight due to a prior commitment.

Cllr. Distin proposed to accept these apologies; seconded by Cllr. Giles.

RESOLVED.

019.26GP Declarations of interest.

There were none received.

020.26GP Public comments/statements.

There were none.

021.26GP To approve the minutes of the previous meeting of 25th March 2026.

Cllr. Distin confirmed that the minutes had been circulated. He proposed that they be accepted and signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting; seconded by Cllr. Giles. It was noted that bike racks are on the agenda.

RESOLVED.

022.26GP To consider a 'no dogs in the town hall' policy.

The Deputy Clerk outlined that the 'no dogs' policy is intended to give clarity to circumstances in which dogs can be brought into the Chambers, Kitchen or Main Hall areas of the Town Hall. The Deputy Clerk then read the policy in full. (Appendix 1).

Cllr. Wood asked that the word 'allowed' to be changed to 'permitted'.

Cllr. Giles stated that the newly sanded floors look good and checked that stiletto shoes are still banned from the Town Hall. The Deputy Clerk confirmed that this is still Council policy.

Cllr. Turner asked that signs are put up to make it clear to people that assistant dogs are permitted

but other dogs are not, and any queries to be directed to the Clerks Office.

ACTION

Cllr. Distin proposed that once amended, this policy be recommended for adoption at Full Council; seconded by Cllr. Wood.

ACTION

023.26GP To receive an update on acoustic measures being taken in the Main Hall.

The Deputy Chair reported that a specialist is booked for 28th May to advise on types of board and positioning. Cllr. Wood asked about budget and was advised by the Deputy Clerk that none had been set. This item will be taken to a future Finance Committee meeting once quotes are received.

ACTION

024.26GP To consider measures the council can take to work towards being 'green'.

Cllr. Coles presented his report after viewing the National Emergency Briefing. He advised that if any community group would like to watch it they can request a private screening. There is a summary available on the National Emergency Briefing website which Cllr. Coles has used for his report. He stated that there are areas that can be addressed as a Town Council and achievable things that we can do to make a difference. He feels that the public need to see civic engagement on this matter.

Cllr. Turner asked that the Council investigate undertaking a carbon audit and from that get a list of actions that the Council can address.

ACTION

Cllr. Coles suggested that consideration should also be given to other environmental factors, such as the Council's energy supplier and banking arrangements.

Cllr. Nutley reported that decarbonisation can be costly. He offered to investigate possible funding or support for this.

ACTION

Discussion ensued about ways to decarbonise and how this could be funded. Cllr. Coles was asked to look into what kind of 'environmental audit' we can get and then provide recommendations on how the council can become more environmentally friendly; seconded by Cllr. Wood.

Cllr Wood proposed that the film be shown to the Full Council – perhaps before or after a Full Council meeting. Cllr Coles added that MP Mel Stride be invited , even if he is unable to attend as this will raise awareness; seconded by Cllr Distin.

ACTION

ACTION: Cllr. Coles look into what kind of 'environmental audit' we can get and provide recommendations on how the council can become more environmentally friendly.

025.26GP To receive an update regarding the installation of town bike racks

The Deputy Clerk reported that a local contractor can fit the bike racks but not until October. Cllr. Coles confirmed that a risk assessment has been carried out.

ACTION

Cllr. Nutley reported that the town council gave Ashburton Medical Centre two bike racks which are currently being installed.

Cllr. Turner asked if another contractor could install the bike racks sooner so that the racks may be used over the summer. She suggested that the Clerk's Office get two additional quotes and add this item to the next Finance Committee meeting agenda.

ACTION

The discussion covered the recent installation of a new bollard in one of the locations reserved for the bike racks. Cllr. Distin to ask Cllr Rogers (TDC/DCC) which agency is responsible for the bollard being placed as it will need to be removed before installing the bike racks.

ACTION

026.26GP To discuss the next steps to obtain a cardboard recycling bank

Cllr. Turner explained that the social supermarket currently have to undertake a 5-mile round trip to dispose of their cardboard as Ashburton currently has no cardboard recycling bank. In addition, often when they get to the recycling centre, the bin is full and they are unable to dispose of their cardboard.

She requested that the council strongly petition TDC for an additional recycling bank in the Kingsbridge Lane car park, particularly one for cardboard.

ACTION

Cllr. Nutley noted that TDC has previously been asked for this and responded that it is not possible as it would mean the loss of car parking spaces which are at a premium in the town. TDC recommended that residents use their household recycling bins for cardboard. There was further discussion as to whether additional banks could be located in another location in the town. It was proposed that the Clerks Office draft a firmly worded letter stating that there needs to be a resource for community groups to dispose of their cardboard in Ashburton.

027.26GP To receive an update on the following:

a) New noticeboard at Balland Lane

The Deputy Clerk reported that the notice board has now been installed on Balland Lane. The contractor who carried out the installation provided a photograph of the completed work, which has been circulated to the GP Committee.

An invoice for the installation has been received by the Clerk's Office which will be taken to the Finance Committee for approval. The notice board currently remains unlettered. Cllr. Distin and Cllr. Nutley advised that they are aware of local residents who may be willing to undertake the lettering free of charge. They will make enquiries and report back to the Committee.

ACTION

b) New wooden planter outside Town Hall

The Deputy Clerk reported that an offer has been made by a member of the public to make a planter to replace the rotten one currently outside the Town Hall. The council would only need to pay for the wood. The Deputy Clerk requested volunteers to empty the old planter of soil and bulbs so that she may take it to the member of the public to use as a template to create the new one. Cllr. Coles offers to remove the soil. This was proposed by Cllr. Distin and seconded by Cllr. Giles.

ACTION

028.26GP Matters raised by Councillors for information only or possible inclusion on a future agenda.

Cllr. Coles raised concern about the amount of mowing that has been carried out in 'no mow May'. He also expressed dissatisfaction with the standard of the mowing that has been done, with cuttings being left and not cleared. He stated that cutting the grass so short in the current heat could kill the grass and is not good for insects and birds. He asked if the council could organise a cross-agency response with all departments agreeing to follow 'no mow May'.

Discussion ensued about recognising that some areas do need to be cut, such as plants that obstruct traffic visibility and also that some mowing needs to be done to keep the town looking tidy for visitors such as those that came recently from Cleder. The suggestion was made that the Council put up signs asking the council not to mow in areas that can be safely left which has been done by Dartington Parish Council. Cllr. Coles suggested that the council organise an audit to decide which areas need to be cut and which can be left and then speak to TDC/ land owners to implement a reduced mowing regime in these areas. He will liaise with the Clerk's Office to organise.

ACTION

Cllr. Giles asked what is happening about the Relief Caretaker and Town Warden roles. The Deputy Clerk confirmed that two councillors and the Clerk need to attend the interview. The day of Wednesday 3rd of June was offered as a potential interview date and Cllr. Giles and Cllr. Distin confirm availability after 4pm.

ACTION

Cllr. Giles reported that a member of the public asked about getting a zebra crossing for the crossing

point between Glendinnings and Starbucks. Many children cross here due to the proximity of South Dartmoor College and cars often approach fast having just left the dual carriageway. Cllr. Distin noted that a risk assessment had previously been carried out by Devon Highways and a zebra crossing would not be possible but agreed that we should still make the request.

Cllr. Giles asked why the food bank is currently closed. Cllr. Turner responded that she understood they will re-open in June. Cllr. Nutley noted that they have recently been given several grants.

Cllr. Giles requested that the Council write to DNP asking them to consider providing a single weekly parking ticket that is valid for all their carparks. **ACTION**

Cllr. Distin thanked those present and closed the meeting at 20.52

..... Date:
Chair

ACTIONS ARISING FROM GENERAL PURPOSES MEETING – 27th May 2026

022.26GP To consider a ‘no dogs in the town hall’ policy.

Clerks Office to put up signs in council building advising people of the new policy

Clerks Office to email amended dog policy to GP committee before taking to full council.

024.26GP To consider measures the council can take to work towards being ‘green’.

Cllr. Coles look into what kind of ‘environmental audit’ we can get and provide recommendations on how the council can become more environmentally friendly.

Town Council to agree a date to show the film via councillors WhatsApp Group and then to invite MP Mel Stride.

Cllr. Nutley to look into whether the town council may be able to get any funding or support for decarbonisation.

025.26GP To receive an update regarding the installation of town bike racks

Clerks office to book local contractor to install bike racks for October which can then be cancelled if needed

Clerks office to obtain two additional quotes (with timescales) for installing the bike racks before the Finance Committee meeting on the 16th June.

Cllr Distin to ask Cllr. Rogers (TDC/DCC) which agency is responsible for the appearance of the bollard in approved bike rack location.

026.26GP To discuss the next steps to obtain a cardboard recycling bank

Clerks office to draft letter to TDC on recycling and circulate to GP committee for approval.

027.26GP To receive an update on the new noticeboard at Balland Lane

Cllr. Distin and Cllr. Nutley to contact the aforementioned residents to ascertain whether they are able to undertake the lettering of the notice board.

027.26GP To receive an update on the new wooden planter outside Town Hall

Cllr Coles to remove soil from old planter, DC to take the empty planter to the member of the public and collect once done.

028.26GP Matters raised by Councillors for information only or possible inclusion on a future agenda.

Cllr. Coles to liaise with the Clerk’s Office about creating a mowing audit.

Clerks Office to organise interview with candidate for relief caretaker role on Wednesday 3rd of June at 4pm.

Clerks Office to draft a letter to Devon highways requesting a crossing and circulate for approval.

Appendix 1

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy aims to clarify Ashburton Town Council's approach to dogs in the Chambers, Main Hall and Kitchen areas of the Town Hall. This policy takes into consideration the concerns of customers and employees, whilst focussing on the highest possible standards of safety and care of people who visit the premises.

2. AIMS AND SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

To give clarity to customers, councillors and staff concerning the circumstances in which dogs can be brought into the Chambers, Main Hall and Kitchen areas of the Town Hall.

To ensure that a safe environment for customers, councillors, staff and visitors is provided within the Chambers, Main Hall and Kitchen areas of the Town Hall.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

Assistance dogs are permitted in the Town Hall to support their owners to navigate and use the premises.

Ashburton Town Council recognise that assistance dogs are an essential means to some customers, councillors and staff to access our services.

Non-assistance dogs are not permitted within **the Chambers, Main Hall and Kitchen** areas of the Town Hall.

The definition of an assistance dog is a dog that has been specially trained to live with and accompany a disabled person, carrying out tasks to assist their owner.

Well behaved dogs on short leads are welcome in the rest of the town council buildings, excluding the areas mentioned above.

4. MONITORING AND REVIEWING THE POLICY

A member of staff, councillor or visitor maybe challenged if it is not evident that a dog in the Chambers, Main Hall and Kitchen areas of the Town Hall is an assistance dog i.e. a dog trained by Guide Dogs Association, Dogs for the Disabled, Support Dogs, Canine Partners for Independence and Hearing Dogs Association.

This policy will be reviewed after one year initially and thereafter every 3 years.

The policy will be monitored through feedback.

For further clarification please speak to a member of staff or a Councillor.

