



Minutes of the General Purpose Committee meeting held on Wednesday 22nd July 2026 at 7.30pm, in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall.

Present: Cllrs. Distin (Chair), Bovey, Coles, Giles, Nutley, Snowsill and Turner.

In attendance: The Deputy Town Clerk, Admin Assistant and one member of the public.

029.26GP APOLOGIES

The Deputy Clerk noted that apologies had been received from Cllrs. Searight and Wood due to prior commitments.

Resolution

ACCEPTED:

Proposed: Cllr. Turner

Seconded: Cllr. Giles

030.26GP DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None Received.

031.26GP PUBLIC COMMENTS / STATEMENTS

A member of the public expressed his frustration at the lack of response of DNPA on planning issues.

032.26GP TO RECEIVE THE PREVIOUS MINUTES OF 27th MAY 2026.

The Deputy Clerk updated the committee on work undertaken.

Cllr. Coles updated members on research undertaken into ways the Town Council could enhance its environmental credentials. He recommended that the Council consider Unity Trust Bank and suggested that the Town Clerk contact the Clerk at Buckfastleigh Town Council for feedback on their experience of using the bank. He also reported that he had investigated environmental audits. The Energy Trust has advised that no funding is currently available and that an audit could cost in the region of £2,000. As technical difficulties were experienced in opening the report during the meeting, it will be circulated to members after the meeting.

ACTION

Cllr. Coles also updated members on his work to create a land ownership map identifying responsibility for Ashburton's green spaces. Cllr. Turner advised that she has several parish maps which may assist and agreed to pass these on. From the research undertaken, Cllr. Coles reported that the recently installed bollard is the responsibility of Devon County Council and that as the Town Council has permission from DCC to install cycle racks at the location the bollard can be removed. The Clerk's Office was asked to obtain three quotations for the installation of cycle racks, including removal of the bollard.

ACTION



Cllr. Nutley had sent an email to the Clerk's Office regarding decarbonisation, which will be circulated to members.

ACTION

Cllr. Turner advised that she will plant bulbs in the new planter later in the year, as the current season is not suitable for planting.

Cllr. Distin agreed to approach Glendinning to explore whether part of its land could be used for a cardboard recycling bank.

ACTION

Resolution

ACCEPTED: The minutes were duly signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Proposed: Cllr. Giles

Seconded: Cllr. Coles

033.26GP DISCUSS TRAFFIC CONCERNS ON NORTH STREET & RECOMMEND NEXT STEPS

The Deputy Clerk reported that the Clerk's Office had received complaints about vehicles parking on Cleder Place. Members discussed possible measures to prevent vehicles mounting the kerb and parking in the area. It was agreed that the Town Council would write to Teignbridge District Council to request consideration of double yellow lines, appropriate signage or the installation of boulders. Cllr. Rogers (TDC) is to be copied into the correspondence.

ACTION

034.26GP TO DISCUSS AND APPROVE THE DRAFT BIODIVERSITY POLICY

Cllr. Coles suggested a number of minor amendments to the wording of the policy. Subject to these amendments, members were content to approve the policy.

ACTION

Resolution

APPROVED: The Council to adopt the Biodiversity Policy (with amendments suggested by Cllr. Coles)

Proposed: Cllr. Turner

Seconded: Cllr. Coles

035.26GP TO DISCUSS THE FUTURE OF THE INFORMATION CENTRE SERVICE

Members discussed the future of the Information Centre and explored a range of options. Cllr. Giles advised that footfall at the Information Centre has fallen by an estimated 25% in recent years as more people use the internet to access information about the town and surrounding area. She also noted that shop sales are low and that it is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit volunteers to staff the centre. Members heard that, if the service were relocated, the existing Information Centre building could potentially be let to generate additional income for the Town Council.

Members acknowledged the important role the Information Centre plays in providing face-to-face contact for residents, particularly those who are lonely or vulnerable, and as a central point of information for visitors to the town. Members agreed that this service should be retained, although its future location and method of delivery could be reviewed.



The discussion also considered the wider use of the Town Hall buildings and the potential to reorganise council services and tenancies to make more efficient use of the available space as the Council prepares to take on additional assets. Current uses include the Clerk's Office, commercial rentals, hall hire, council storage and the Information Centre. Members also noted the ongoing issue of intermittent drain odours within the Clerk's Office and that this may need to be considered as part of any future review of the use of the Town Hall buildings and could necessitate the relocation of the Clerk's Office. Cllr. Turner suggested the council undertake a drain survey ASAP to see if the problem can be fixed.

ACTION

Members agreed that a decision on the future of the Information Centre could not be made until the Council has greater clarity on which assets will transfer from Teignbridge District Council. In the meantime, Cllr. Giles will reassure Information Centre volunteers that there are currently no plans to close the service.

ACTION

To help recruit additional volunteers, it was agreed that the Council should approach South Dartmoor Community College to explore whether sixth form students could volunteer as part of their Duke of Edinburgh's Award (noting that volunteers must be aged 15 or over to operate the till).

036.26GP MATTERS RAISED BY COUNCILLORS FOR INFORMATION ONLY OR POSSIBLE INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA.

None Received.

Cllr. Distin thanked those present and closed the meeting at 20.49

SIGNED _____ DATE _____



Action Points Arising from the General Purpose Committee Meeting
Held on Wednesday 22st July 2026 at 7.30pm in the Council Chambers of the Town
Hall

Agenda Item	Actions	Responsible
032.26GP	Clerk's Office to contact Buckfastleigh Town Clerk to ask for feedback on their experiences with Unity Trust Bank	Clerk's Office
032.26GP	Cllr. Coles to send his 'enhancing green credentials' report to Members.	Cllr. Coles
032.26GP	Clerk's Office to obtain three quotes for bike rack installation	Clerk's Office
032.26GP	Cllr. Distin to ask Glendinning if part of their land might be used for a cardboard recycling bank.	Cllr. Distin
032.26GP	Cllr Turner to pass on parish maps she has to Cllr. Coles so that he may create a base map of responsibility for green spaces in Ashburton.	Cllr. Turner & Cllr. Coles
032.26GP	Clerk's Office to circulate information about decarbonisation grants Cllr. Nutley previously emailed.	Clerk's Office
033.26GP	Clerk's Office to write to TDC about placing yellow lines and signage to stop people parking illegally on Cleder Place, cc Cllr. Rogers (TDC) on email.	Clerk's Office
034.26GP	Clerk's Office to make amendments suggested by Cllr. Coles to the Biodiversity policy then circulate to Members for approval.	Clerk's Office
035.26GP	Clerk's Office to organise a drain survey or plumber for the Clerks Office to see if the problem of unpleasant smells can be fixed.	Clerk's Office
035.26GP	Cllr. Giles to reassure Information Centre staff that there are no plans to close the service in the near future.	Cllr. Giles
035.26GP	Cllr. Giles to contact South Dartmoor College 6 th form to seek additional volunteers for the information centre – could be part of their DofE award.	Cllr. Giles