

OTTERY ST MARY TOWN COUNCIL

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30 September 2025

Dear Councillors

I hereby give you notice that the **Full Council Meeting [In-person]** of **OTTERY ST MARY TOWN COUNCIL** will be held at **19:00** on **Monday, October 6, 2025**, at **Tipton St John Community Hall**.

All members are hereby summoned to consider the matters detailed on the agenda below.

Yours faithfully

Kerry Kennell

Town Clerk

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC/PRESS:

The law requires that public access is possible and not restricted, unless in the case of an agreed confidential session.

1. If you wish to comment on an item on this agenda (but don't wish to speak at the meeting) please submit this in writing by **12 noon Monday, October 6, 2025**. This will be read out under public participation for members to consider.
2. For members of the public/press that wish to speak at the meeting, under public participation, please raise your hand and wait for the Mayor to prompt you.
3. For those who have no visual access to the meeting, Members will state their name before speaking and voting.
4. For those who are unable to hear, the agendas and the minutes of the meeting will be available on the Council's website.

Note: Under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, any members of the public are allowed to take photographs, film and audio record the proceedings and report on all public meetings (including on social media). If you are recording the meeting, you are asked to act in a reasonable manner and not disrupt the conduct of meetings for example by using intrusive lighting, flash photography or asking people to repeat statements for the benefit of the recording. You may not make an oral commentary during the meeting. The Mayor has the power to control public recording and/or reporting so it does not disrupt the meeting

Mobile Phones, Pagers and Similar Devices – All persons attending this meeting are required to turn off Mobile Phones, Pagers and Similar Devices. The Mayor may approve an exception to this request in special circumstances

Table of contents

06/10/2025 19:00 - 21:30

C/25/10/1 - Apologies for Absence 6

C/25/10/2 - Declarations and Disclosable Pecuniary Interests 6

C/25/10/3 - Admission to Meetings 6

C/25/10/4 - Public Participation 6

C/25/10/5 - Minutes 6

Attachments

2025-09-01 - Full Council Meeting [In-person] - Minutes 9

C/25/10/6 - To receive Reports from the EDDC and DCC Councillors 6

C/25/10/7 - To consider concerns raised by Fairmile residents in relation to volume and speed of traffic and to make recommendations/decisions as appropriate 6

C/25/10/8 - Planning 6

C/25/10/8.1 - To note the Minutes of 30th September 2025 (minute refs P/25/09/01-P25/09/10) 6

C/25/10/9 - Finance and Strategic Planning Committee 6

C/25/10/9.1 - To note the minutes of the meeting of 9th September 2025 (minute refs FSP/25/09/01 - FSP/25/09/16) 6

Attachments

2025-09-09 - Finance _ Strategic Planning Committee [In-person] - Minutes	16
C/25/10/9.2 - To consider (and approve if appropriate) recommendations from the Committee	6
C/25/10/10 - To note the External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2024/25 and decide what action is required	7
Attachments	
Limited Assurance Review 31 March 2025	21
C/25/10/11 - Community Infrastructure Committee	7
C/25/10/11.1 - To note the Minutes of 15th September 2025 (minute refs CI/25/09/01-025/09/19)	7
Attachments	
2025-09-15 - Community Infrastructure Committee [In-person] - Minutes	25
C/25/10/12 - Operations Committee	7
C/25/10/12.1 - To note the Minutes of 25th September 2025 (minute refs O/25/09/01-025/09/17)	7
C/25/10/12.2 - To consider (and approve if appropriate) recommendations from the Committee	7
C/25/10/13 - To receive an update regarding the proposal to transfer Tipton St John Church of England Primary School to Thorne Farm, Ottery St Mary	7
C/25/10/14 - To note the current situation regarding Local Government Review and make decisions as appropriate	7
C/25/10/15 - To consider what action the Council can take to ensure protection of the conservation area within the Town and make decisions as appropriate	7
C/25/10/16 - To receive an update from the Safe Cycle and Pedestrian Access Working Group and make decisions as appropriate	7

C/25/10/17 - To consider whether to complete the Expression of Wish form for funding from the OPCC to extend CCTV coverage within the town	7
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C/25/10/18 - To agree a response to the EDDC Town and Parish Council communication survey	7
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Attachments

Have Your Say Today - Communications and engagement survey - Town And Parish	30
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C/25/10/19 - To consider correspondence from the DCC Neighbourhood Highways Officer regarding Ridgeway and make decisions as appropriate	8
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C/25/10/20 - To consider applications for the Town ward Councillor vacancy and to co-opt to fill the vacancy as appropriate	8
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C/25/10/21 - To receive an update on the EV chargers at the Station and to consider whether the gate to the Station Hub should remain unlocked to allow access to the EV chargers	8
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C/25/10/22 - To consider whether the Council will purchase sand to fill the sandbags if required and make decisions as appropriate	8
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C/25/10/23 - To consider next steps to agree proposed areas for installation of 20mph zone outside of the town and to make decisions as appropriate	8
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C/25/10/24 - Confirmation of decisions made under the Scheme of Delegation	8
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C/25/10/25 - Financial Matters	8
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C/25/10/26 - To consider Report from the Mayor	8
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C/25/10/28 - To note any specific correspondence received	8
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Attachments

Susan Davy letter appendix 29 Sept 2025	35
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Susan Davy River Otter letter 29 Sept 25	40
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C/25/10/29 - To note any reports previously e-mailed by Councillors of Meetings attended	8
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C/25/10/30 - Councillors Questions on Councillors Business	8
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C/25/10/31 - Date of the next meeting: Monday 3rd November 2025	8
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Appendices	8
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AGENDA

C/25/10/1 Apologies for Absence

To receive apologies for absence

C/25/10/2 Declarations and Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

To receive Declarations of interest for items on the Agenda and receipt of requests for new Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs) dispensations for items on the Agenda

C/25/10/3 Admission to Meetings

In consideration of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted): to agree any items to be dealt with after the public and press have been excluded

C/25/10/4 Public Participation

To allow members of the public present to submit questions/comments for consideration
Individual contributions will be limited to 3 minutes

C/25/10/5 Minutes

To receive the Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council of 1st September 2025 (*minute refs C25/09/01-C25/09/22*) and to approve the signing of the Minutes by the Mayor as a correct record

C/25/10/6 To receive Reports from the EDDC and DCC Councillors

(if any)

C/25/10/7 To consider concerns raised by Fairmile residents in relation to volume and speed of traffic and to make recommendations/decisions as appropriate

C/25/10/8 Planning

C/25/10/8.1 To note the Minutes of 30th September 2025 (minute refs P/25/09/01-P25/09/10)

C/25/10/9 Finance and Strategic Planning Committee

C/25/10/9.1 To note the minutes of the meeting of 9th September 2025 (minute refs FSP/25/09/01 - FSP/25/09/16)

C/25/10/9.2 To consider (and approve if appropriate) recommendations from the Committee

It was RECOMMENDED that the Council:

- Award £700 to Friends of Ottery Library
- Award £500 to Ottery St Mary Handbell Ringers and that a condition of the grant offer is that it stipulates that their fleeces should be purchased locally
- that all Committees consider whether they have any larger projects planned for the next financial year.

C/25/10/10 To note the External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2024/25 and decide what action is required

C/25/10/11 Community Infrastructure Committee

C/25/10/11.1 To note the Minutes of 15th September 2025 (minute refs CI/25/09/01-025/09/19)

C/25/10/12 Operations Committee

C/25/10/12.1 To note the Minutes of 25th September 2025 (minute refs O/25/09/01-025/09/17)

C/25/10/12.2 To consider (and approve if appropriate) recommendations from the Committee

It was RECOMMENDED that the Council:

- that Girl Guiding are given notice on their licence to use the Portacabin for storage and are offered 50% of the space in the adjacent portacabin if they pay 50% of the Council rates for the portacabin.
- The remainder of Portacabin 2 is used by the Council for storage of gazebos and tables
- The Council proceed with the survey recommendations for works at the Library and instruct South West Concrete Repairs (SWCR) to carry out the repairs liaising with Libraries Unlimited to confirm suitable dates for completion of the works
- that the Council write to the Heritage Society to state that the survey by Orchard Masons shows that the works required are not structural and should therefore be carried out by the Heritage Society under the terms of their lease
- that the Council responds to the correspondence from OSM Bowling Club to give permission (as landlord) for the installation of solar panels and to confirm that the Club can make grant applications to both the Council and EDDC.

C/25/10/13 To receive an update regarding the proposal to transfer Tipton St John Church of England Primary School to Thorne Farm, Ottery St Mary

C/25/10/14 To note the current situation regarding Local Government Review and make decisions as appropriate

C/25/10/15 To consider what action the Council can take to ensure protection of the conservation area within the Town and make decisions as appropriate

C/25/10/16 To receive an update from the Safe Cycle and Pedestrian Access Working Group and make decisions as appropriate

C/25/10/17 To consider whether to complete the Expression of Wish form for funding from the OPCC to extend CCTV coverage within the town

C/25/10/18 To agree a response to the EDDC Town and Parish Council communication survey

C/25/10/19 To consider correspondence from the DCC Neighbourhood Highways Officer regarding Ridgeway and make decisions as appropriate

C/25/10/20 To consider applications for the Town ward Councillor vacancy and to co-opt to fill the vacancy as appropriate

C/25/10/21 To receive an update on the EV chargers at the Station and to consider whether the gate to the Station Hub should remain unlocked to allow access to the EV chargers

C/25/10/22 To consider whether the Council will purchase sand to fill the sandbags if required and make decisions as appropriate

C/25/10/23 To consider next steps to agree proposed areas for installation of 20mph zone outside of the town and to make decisions as appropriate

C/25/10/24 Confirmation of decisions made under the Scheme of Delegation

C/25/10/25 Financial Matters

To consider and approve the August 2025 Receipts and Payments and Reconciliation Report (except the Current Account) and to consider and approve September 2025 Receipts and Payments and Reconciliation reports

C/25/10/26 To consider Report from the Mayor

C/25/10/27 To consider Report from the Town Clerk

C/25/10/28 To note any specific correspondence received

To note open letter sent from Richard Foord, MP to Susan Davy, SWW regarding the River Otter

C/25/10/29 To note any reports previously e-mailed by Councillors of Meetings attended

C/25/10/30 Councillors Questions on Councillors Business

C/25/10/31 Date of the next meeting: Monday 3rd November 2025

Reports & Appendix 1

[2025-09-01 - Full Council Meeting \[In-person\] - Minutes.pdf](#)

[2025-09-09 - Finance Strategic Planning Committee \[In-person\] - Minutes.pdf](#)

[Limited Assurance Review 31 March 2025.pdf](#)

[2025-09-15 - Community Infrastructure Committee \[In-person\] - Minutes.pdf](#)

[Have Your Say Today - Communications and engagement survey - Town And Parish~.pdf](#)

[Susan Davy letter appendix 29 Sept 2025.pdf](#)

[Susan Davy River Otter letter 29 Sept 25.pdf](#)



Ottery St Mary Town Council

Minutes of the ORDINARY MEETING OF the Full Council [In-person] held on **Monday 01 September 2025** at **19:00**. The meeting was held in the **Ottery St. Mary Town Council Offices, 8 Broad Street, Ottery St Mary EX11 1BZ**.

Present: Cllrs Dean Stewart, Peter Faithfull, Richard Grainger, Vicky Johns (Mayor), Nick Sneller and Sarah Martin
In Attendance: EDDC Cllr Bethany Collins and Kerry Kennell, Town Clerk
Minute Taker: Kerry Kennell, Town Clerk

C/25/09/1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were noted from Cllrs Aherne, Feasey, Copus, Lucas and DCC Cllr Jess Bailey.

C/25/09/2 DECLARATIONS AND DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

To receive Declarations of interest for items on the Agenda and receipt of requests for new Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs) dispensations for items on the Agenda

Cllr Grainger	No interests were declared.
Cllr Martin	No interests were declared.
Cllr Stewart	Agenda item C/25/09/8.2 Cllr Stewart declared an ORI in relation to the grant application for the Ottery Larder.
Cllr Johns	Agenda item C/25/09/8.2 Cllr Johns declared an ORI in relation to the grant application for the Ottery Larder.
Cllr Sneller	No interests were declared.
Cllr Faithfull	No interests were declared.

C/25/09/3 ADMISSION TO MEETINGS

In consideration of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted): to agree any items to be dealt with after the public and press have been excluded

It was **RESOLVED** that the following agenda items would be discussed in Confidential session if any information relating to the organisations finances was discussed: C/25/08/8.2 To consider (and approve if appropriate) recommendations from the committee.

C/25/09/4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Chair's initials _____

To allow members of the public present to submit questions/comments for consideration
Individual contributions will be limited to 3 minutes

There are none.

C/25/09/5 MINUTES

To receive the Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council of 4th August 2025 (*minute refs C25/08/01-C25/08/25*) and to approve the signing of the Minutes by the Mayor as a correct record

The minutes of 4th August 2025 were approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record of the meeting.

C/25/09/6 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM THE EDDC AND DCC COUNCILLORS (if any)

EDDC Cllr Bethany Collins and EDDC Cllr Vicky Johns sent written reports.
EDDC Cllr Peter Faithfull reported that at a recent EDDC Planning Committee meeting he had identified an insufficient water tank size in relation to a planning application. The size of the tank was not questioned by EDDC. Cllr Faithfull reiterated the need to check any information that is provided with an application. A Local Devolution meeting was held by EDDC with town and parish Council representatives.
Cllr Jess Bailey was delayed at another parish and will send a written report.

C/25/09/7 PLANNING

C/25/09/7.1 TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF 18TH AUGUST 2025 (MINUTE REFS P/25/08/01-P25/08/10)

To note the Minutes of 18th August 2025 (minute refs P/25/08/01-P25/08/10) and 28th August 2025 (P/25/08/11 -P/25/08/20)

The planning minutes of 18th August 2025 and 28th August 2025 were noted.

C/25/09/8 FINANCE AND STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

C/25/09/8.1 TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 12TH AUGUST 2025 (MINUTE REFS FSP/25/08/01 - FSP/25/08/17)

The minutes of the Finance and Strategic Planning Committee of 12th August 2025 were noted.

Under s.1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the council resolved to exclude the press and public from the meeting since publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

C/25/09/8.2 TO CONSIDER (AND APPROVE IF APPROPRIATE) RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COMMITTEE

Chair's initials _____

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council:

- arrange a second meeting is held with Project Food to gather more supporting information

Cllrs Stewart and Johns left the meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** that a £2,000 community grant is awarded to Ottery Larder.

Cllrs Stewart and Johns joined the meeting.

The Confidential Session closed.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council will write to EDDC to request a lease of land at Land of Canaan.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council adopts the updated Standing Orders.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council adopts the updated Financial Regulations.

C/25/09/9 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

C/25/09/9.1 TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF 18TH AUGUST 2025 (MINUTE REFS CI/25/08/01-025/08/18)

The Community Infrastructure Committee meeting minutes of 18th August 2025 were noted.

C/25/09/10 OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

C/25/09/10.1 TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF 28TH AUGUST 2025 (MINUTE REFS O/25/08/01-025/08/15)

The Operations Committee meeting minutes of 28th August 2025 were noted.

C/25/09/10.2 TO CONSIDER (AND APPROVE IF APPROPRIATE) RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COMMITTEE

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council:

- should give notice to SPACE on the use of the portacabin as an office
- SPACE should be offered Office 2 at a rental of £130 per month
- the Carnival and Tar Barrel Committee have sole use of Portacabin 1 (for storage only) on the agreement that they will pay the annual cost of the rates for that portacabin. A licence will be drawn up to this effect
- that the Gazebos and Tables available for hire will be moved from the cellar to Portacabin 2 when it is available
- that the Clerk will review what is being stored in Portacabin 1
- the Clerk will write to Action East Devon giving permission for them to put up a plaque on the wall (subject to approval from the Council) to show it is their registered office

Chair's initials _____

A letter from the OSM Bowling Club was noted. It was AGREED that the Clerk will carry out further investigation before responding to the letter.

C/25/09/11 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE REGARDING THE PROPOSAL TO TRANSFER TIPTON ST JOHN CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL TO THORNE FARM, OTTERY ST MARY

There is no update.

C/25/09/12 TO NOTE THE CURRENT SITUATION REGARDING DEVOLUTION AND MAKE DECISIONS AS APPROPRIATE

EDDC held a meeting for Towns and parishes to provide an update on the local government review. The slides have been circulated to Councillors and detailed potential assets that could be transferred to the Councils through Community Asset Transfer. The Clerk has requested a meeting with EDDC to discuss this further and to obtain some associated costs with the assets mentioned.

C/25/09/13 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE REGARDING BRIDGES AND THE FOOTPATH AT THE LAND OF CANAAN AND TO MAKE DECISIONS AS APPROPRIATE

It was noted that the Coleridge Bridge is expected to open by mid to late September. It was noted that EDDC will be replacing the existing wooden footbridge at the Land of Canaan.

It was noted that the DCC footpath bridge was replaced recently.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the possible reinstatement of the removed footbridge at the Land of Canaan. EDDC did not feel it was a beneficial use of public money as it was located so close to an existing footbridge. However Councillors felt it would change the dynamic of the area. It was AGREED that the Council will revisit this once a decision has been made regarding whether any community assets will be transferred to the Council.

C/25/09/14 TO CONSIDER NEXT STEPS TO AGREE PROPOSED AREAS FOR INSTALLATION OF 20MPH ZONE OUTSIDE OF THE TOWN AND TO MAKE DECISIONS AS APPROPRIATE

There is no update.

C/25/09/15 CONFIRMATION OF DECISIONS MADE UNDER THE SCHEME OF DELEGATION

Cllrs Johns, Grainger and Stewart gave delegated authority for a survey to be carried out at the Library.

C/25/09/16 FINANCIAL MATTERS

To consider and approve the August 2025 Receipts and Payments and Reconciliation reports

Chair's initials _____

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Receipts and Payments and Reconciliation reports for the Current Account and Petty Cash Account for August 2025. The remaining accounts will be approved at the October meeting as the bank statements were not available due to the timing of the meeting.

C/25/09/17 TO CONSIDER REPORT FROM THE MAYOR

The Mayor sent a written report.

The Mayor opened the (in)visible photographic display by Theo Moye in association with Action East Devon at the Ottery St Mary Library and encouraged Councillors to visit.

C/25/09/18 TO CONSIDER REPORT FROM THE TOWN CLERK

The Clerk thanked the Councillors that had already completed the online survey and encouraged those that have not already done it to do so! The Clerk reiterated the importance of sending apologies to a meeting as soon as possible to ensure that a meeting is quorate. It was noted that the Council Administrator is on two weeks' leave so there will only be the Clerk staffing the office.

C/25/09/19 TO NOTE ANY SPECIFIC CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

Correspondence regarding World Otter Day 2026 was noted.

C/25/09/20 TO NOTE ANY REPORTS PREVIOUSLY E-MAILED BY COUNCILLORS OF MEETINGS ATTENDED

There are none.

C/25/09/21 COUNCILLORS QUESTIONS ON COUNCILLORS BUSINESS

In his personal capacity Cllr Faithfull had arranged a meeting of local conservation groups to discuss Himalayan balsam clearance for next year.

It was AGREED that the Clerk will report to EDDC that at the Land of Canaan Play Park the safety mats are lifting in places which could cause a tripping hazard and that the installers have put turf behind the fence and this is not being maintained.

Cllr Grainger had previously suggested the installation of cycle racks at the play area. The Clerk will ask EDDC for an update.

C/25/09/22 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING: MONDAY 6TH OCTOBER 2025

Reports & Appendix 1

It was noted that the October meeting is being held in Tipton St John.

Chair's initials _____

Meeting concluded at 20.31

Draft

Chair's initials _____

Draft

Chair's initials _____



Ottery St Mary Town Council

Minutes of the ORDINARY MEETING OF Finance & Strategic Planning Committee [In-person] held on **Tuesday 09 September 2025** at **17:00**. The meeting was held in the **Ottery St. Mary Town Council Offices, 8 Broad Street, Ottery St Mary EX11 1BZ**

Present: Cllrs Dean Stewart, Richard Grainger (Vice Chair), Ben Feasey and Vicky Johns (Mayor)
In Attendance: Kerry Kennell, Town Clerk
Minute Taker: Kerry Kennell, Town Clerk

FSP/25/09/01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were noted from Cllr Aherne. During the meeting Cllr Lucas gave his apologies.

FSP/25/09/02 DECLARATIONS AND DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

To receive Declarations of interest for items on the Agenda and receipt of requests for new Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs) dispensations for items on the Agenda

Cllr Stewart	No interests were declared.
Cllr Grainger	No interests were declared.
Cllr Feasey	No interests were declared.
Cllr Johns	No interests were declared.

FSP/25/09/03 ADMISSION TO MEETINGS

In consideration of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted): to agree any items to be dealt with after the public and press have been excluded

It was **RESOLVED** that Agenda Item F/25/09/06 Consideration of Community Grant Applications would be discussed in Confidential Session as they include information relating to the organisations finances.

FSP/25/09/04 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To allow members of the public present to submit questions/comments for consideration
Individual contributions will be limited to 3 minutes

There were none.

FSP/25/09/05 MINUTES

Chair's initials _____

To receive the Minutes of the Finance and Strategic Planning Committee meeting of 12th August 2025 (FSP/25/08/01 - FSP/25/08/17) by the Chair as a correct record

The minutes of the Finance and Strategic Planning Committee meeting of 12th August 2025 were approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of the meeting.

FSP/25/09/06 CONSIDERATION OF COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATIONS

Grant applications received from Friends of Ottery Library and Ottery St Mary Handbell Ringers and any further applications received

Under s.1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the council resolved to exclude the press and public from the meeting since publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Representatives from Friends of Ottery St Mary Library discussed their grant application.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that £700 is awarded.

Representatives from Ottery St Mary Handbell Ringers discussed their grant application.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that £500 is awarded and that the grant offer stipulates that their fleeces should be purchased locally.

The Confidential Session ended.

FSP/25/09/07 TO REVIEW THE COUNCILLOR SURVEY RESULTS FOR INCLUSION INTO THE STRATEGY DOCUMENT AND TO MAKE DECISIONS AS APPROPRIATE

The survey results were noted. The feedback will be incorporated into the Strategy Document and put forward to the next Finance Committee for their comments before being presented to the Full Council.

FSP/25/09/08 TO ENSURE THAT THE COUNCIL HAS A YOUTH STRATEGY AND MAKE DECISIONS AS APPROPRIATE

The Council are awaiting the results of the Youth Survey which closes on 12th September.

FSP/25/09/09 TO REVIEW THE UPDATED INVESTMENT POLICY AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS AS APPROPRIATE

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the updated Investment Policy.

It was **AGREED** that the Clerk will speak to the accountant regarding the current savings arrangements.

FSP/25/09/10 TO CONSIDER BUDGET FOR 2026/27 AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS AS APPROPRIATE

Chair's initials _____

It was **RECOMMENDED** that all Committees consider whether they have any larger projects planned for the next financial year.

Consideration will need to be given to any community asset transfers through local government reorganisation and the associated costs.

DCK Accounting Services will be visiting the Council Offices on 17th November and will meet with the committee.

FSP/25/09/11 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE REGARDING S106 MONIES AND MAKE DECISIONS AS APPROPRIATE

Following feedback from the EDDC Section 106 Officer it was noted that the improved Skatepark access cannot be included as an option for the S106 as no members of the public mentioned this – any comments relating to the skatepark were for a new skatepark in a new location and the funds available would not cover the cost of a new park.

It was noted that improvements to Winters Lane Playing Field can be included in the survey. The Clerk is awaiting information from EDDC regarding the costs. The survey will then be published for a four week period.

FSP/25/09/12 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE CLERK REGARDING ANY OUTSTANDING ISSUES AND MAKE DECISIONS AS APPROPRIATE

It is anticipated that the outstanding insurance claim should be resolved shortly.

FSP/25/09/13 TO NOTE ANY SPECIFIC CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

An email correspondence was noted. The Clerk will respond to advise that the Council do not fund individuals but will provide some signposting of other funding opportunities.

FSP/25/09/14 TO RECEIVE ANY FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS FROM MEMBERS

There were none.

FSP/25/09/15 TO RECEIVE COUNCILLORS QUESTIONS

It was noted that both the Coleridge Bridge and the Land of Canaan Footbridge will now open together.

FSP/25/09/16 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING: 14TH OCTOBER 2025

Reports & Appendix 1

Chair's initials _____

Meeting concluded at 18:40

Draft

Chair's initials _____

Draft

Chair's initials _____

Ottery St Mary Town Council

Notice of conclusion of audit

Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2025

Sections 20(2) and 25 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014

Section 16 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234)

	Notes
1. The audit of accounts for Ottery St Mary Town Council for the year ended 31 March 2025 has been completed and the accounts have been published. 2. The Annual Governance & Accountability Return including the auditor's certificate and opinion is available for inspection and copying by any local government elector of the area of Ottery St Mary Town Council on application to: (a) <u>KERRY KONNELL</u> <u>TOWN CLERK AND RFO</u> <u>COUNCIL OFFICES, 8 BROAD STREET</u> <u>OTTERY ST MARY, EX11 1BZ</u> (b) <u>10AM - 1PM MONDAY TO FRIDAY</u> <u>BY APPOINTMENT ONLY</u> <u>TEL: 01404 812252 EMAIL: clerk@otterystmary-</u> <u>tc.gov.uk</u> 3. Copies will be provided to any local government elector of the area on payment of £ <u>1</u> (c) for each copy of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return. Announcement made by: (d) <u>KERRY KONNELL</u> <u>TOWN CLERK AND RFO</u> Date of announcement: (e) <u>30/09/2025</u>	This notice and Sections 1, 2 & 3 of the AGAR must be published by 30 September. This must include publication on the smaller authority's website. The smaller authority must decide how long to publish the Notice for; the AGAR and external auditor report must be publicly available for 5 years. (a) Insert the name, position and address of the person to whom local government electors should apply to inspect the AGAR (b) Insert the hours during which inspection rights may be exercised (c) Insert a reasonable sum for copying costs (d) Insert the name and position of person placing the notice (e) Insert the date of placing of the notice

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

OTTERY ST MARY TOWN COUNCIL

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025, that:

	Agreed		‘Yes’ means that this authority:
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	☒	☐	<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	☒	☐	<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	☒	☐	<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors’ rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	☒	☐	<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority’s accounts.</i>
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	☒	☐	<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	☒	☐	<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	☒	☐	<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	☒	☐	<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A
	☐	☐	☒

*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each ‘No’ response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

23/06/2025

and recorded as minute reference:

C/25/06/30

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair

Clerk



www.otterystmary-tc.gov.uk

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

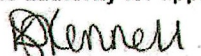
OTTERY ST MARY TOWN COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 £	31 March 2025 £	
1. Balances brought forward	301,725	350,723	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	256,383	282,510	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	97,170	135,365	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	73,361	75,904	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	14,311	14,311	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	216,883	237,055	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	350,723	441,328	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	350,487	441,071	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	2,167,155	2,167,155	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	149,964	143,036	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)		✓		The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			✓	The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2025 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval



Date

23/06/2025

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

23/06/2025

as recorded in minute reference:

C/25/06/31

Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved



Section 3 – External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2024/25

In respect of

Ottery St Mary Town Council - DV0279

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/>

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2025; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2024/25

Except for the matters reported below, on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with *Proper Practices* and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Section 1, Assertion 5 has been incorrectly completed. Information received from the smaller authority highlights that risk management arrangements were not reviewed and approved by the authority as a whole during the year. As a result, this assertion should have been answered 'No'

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

None

3 External auditor certificate 2024/25

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2025.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature

Date

13/09/2025



Ottery St Mary Town Council

Minutes of the ORDINARY MEETING OF the Community Infrastructure Committee [In-person] held on **Monday 15 September 2025** at **17:00**. The meeting was held in the **Ottery St. Mary Town Council, 8 Broad Street, Ottery St Mary EX11 1BZ**

Present: Cllrs Dean Stewart (Chair), Nick Sneller (Vice Chair), Sarah Martin, Stewart Lucas and Richard Copus

In Attendance: Emma Grainger, Joe Williams and Kerry Kennell, Town Clerk

Minute Taker: Kerry Kennell, Town Clerk

CI/25/09/01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were noted from Cllr Johns (Mayor).

CI/25/09/02 DECLARATIONS AND DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

To receive Declarations of interest for items on the Agenda and receipt of requests for new Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs) dispensations for items on the Agenda

Cllr Stewart	No interests declared.
Cllr Copus	No interests declared.
Cllr Sneller	No interests declared.
Cllr Martin	No interests declared.
Cllr Lucas	No interests declared.

CI/25/09/03 ADMISSION TO MEETINGS

In consideration of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted): to agree any items to be dealt with after the public and press have been excluded

There were none.

CI/25/09/04 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To allow members of the public present to submit questions/comments for consideration
Individual contributions will be limited to 3 minutes

CI/25/09/05 MINUTES

To receive the Minutes of the Meeting of the Community Infrastructure Committee of 18th August 2025 (*minute refs CI/25/08/01 - CI/25/08/18*) and to approve the signing of the Minutes by the Chair as a correct record

Chair's initials _____

The minutes of 18th August 2025 were approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

CI/25/09/06 VISIT OTTERY

- A. To receive an update regarding the Visit Ottery website

Several more businesses have provided links to their websites. The posts from Visit Ottery have been more frequent.

- B. To receive an update regarding updating the Visit Ottery guide

The Clerk is still waiting to hear from local business owners who have expressed an interest in updating the guide and will arrange a meeting with interested parties.

- C. To consider any other issues in relation to the Visit Ottery project

There are none.

CI/25/09/07 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM CALLIDUS AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NEXT STEPS

The Callidus report was reviewed, with particular attention to Figure 6.3.

The Committee expressed a preference for a roundabout-free solution that maximises pedestrian space.

It was noted that the DCC is not considering shared space designs.

It was AGREED that the next steps would be to:

1. Contact Callidus to:
 - Clarify their stance on Option 3 and footway widening.
 - Request a redrawn version of Figure 6.3 if needed.
2. Engage with DCC to:
 - Review the contradiction and advise on feasible solutions.
 - Explore roundabout-free options with maximum pedestrian space.
 - Provide indicative costs for proposed changes.
 - Advise on bus prioritisation possibilities.
3. Continue planning for pedestrian crossings, prioritising zebra crossings at key locations (namely Jesu Street and Broad Street).

CI/25/09/08 TO REVIEW AVAILABLE GRANTS AND PROGRESS APPLICATIONS IF SUITABLE FOR COMMITTEE PROJECTS

The Clerk will resend the information on the available grants and Cllrs Stewart and Martin will meet to discuss whether any are appropriate for the Council projects.

CI/25/09/09 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE WAYFINDING PROJECT FROM LHC

Chair's initials _____

LHC have completed a spreadsheet showing the locations for signage throughout the town. It was AGREED that all Councillors on this committee will review the spreadsheet and advise the Clerk or any omissions or errors. The Clerk will then summarise the feedback for the next meeting.

CI/25/09/10 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE REGARDING BECOMING A COACH FRIENDLY TOWN

It was noted that Coach Friendly Town status has been awarded. Thanks were noted to John Green for his work on this project. This information will be shared to the wider community once EDDC completes the resurfacing and line marking at the Canaan Way car park.

CI/25/09/11 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE EMERGENCY PLAN WORKING GROUP

There was none.

CI/25/09/12 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE REGARDING THE POSSIBILITY OF LOCKERS AT THE STATION HUB AND MAKE DECISIONS AS APPROPRIATE

It was AGREED that a question will be added to the survey being sent to Kings Reach residents to ask whether they would find a parcel locker beneficial at The Station Hub. It was AGREED that this will be considered once the installation of the EV lockers is complete.

CI/25/09/13 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE REGARDING THE OTTER RIVER CATCHMENT ACTION (ORCA) CAMPAIGN

It was AGREED that the Clerk should write to EDDC to request that development in Ottery St Mary should be stopped until such time that the river pollution levels are acceptable in the same way that they have done in Axminster.

CI/25/09/14 TO CONSIDER THE IMPACT ON THE PARISH FROM THE PROPOSAL FROM EXETER CITY COUNCIL AND MAKE DECISIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS AS APPROPRIATE

It was noted that the proposal from Exeter City Council which includes West Hill makes no sense as they use shared facilities in Ottery.

CI/25/09/15 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE REGARDING FOOTPATH 46

There is no update.

CI/25/09/16 TO NOTE ANY SPECIFIC CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

It was noted that EDDC have confirmed that EV chargers will be installed in Canaan Way car park and Brook Street car park but they are unable to confirm timescales.

It was noted that Keir had written to the Council to offer a bench but that the bench has already been installed and they will be fitting a plaque to say bench is to celebrate work carried out by the Environment Agency.

Chair's initials _____

CI/25/09/17 TO RECEIVE ANY FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS FROM MEMBERS

It was discussed that the area by the reinstated footpath would benefit from the planting of bulbs. The Clerk will seek clarification of what is planned for this area.

The Clerk will request that the bushes at Strawberry Lane are cut back by the grounds maintenance contractor.

It was AGREED that protection of the Conservation Area will be included on the next Full Council agenda.

CI/25/09/18 TO RECEIVE COUNCILLORS QUESTIONS

There were none

CI/25/09/19 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING: 15TH SEPTEMBER 2025

Reports & Appendix 1

Meeting concluded at 18:20

Chair's initials _____

Draft

Chair's initials _____

Town and Parish Council communication survey

East Devon District Council are working on a new strategy to improve how East Devon District Council communicates and collaborates with Town and Parish councils across the district.

In the survey we want to know the types of information that are most useful to your council, your preferred methods of contact, how frequently you would like to receive updates and the kind of information you would like to receive.

The survey closes **31 October 2025 at 5pm.**

What Town and Parish Council do you represent?

This question is required.

What is your most up to date Town and Parish council email address?

This question is required.

1. Would you find it useful to receive a Town and Parish newsletter?

Select one option

Yes

No

2. How often would you like to receive the Town and Parish newsletter?

Select one option

Fortnightly

Monthly

Six weekly

3. What types of topics would you like covered in a Town and Parish newsletter?

Select one or more options

Local Government Reorganisation

Devolution

Planning

Enforcement

Neighbourhood Planning

District Council budgets

Consultations/surveys

Community Asset Transfers

Other

3.b Other (please specify below)

4. How do you prefer to receive information from us?

Select one or more options

Email

Newsletters

Social media

Website updates

In-person meetings

Online meetings

Other

4.b Other (please specify below)

5. Was there any engagement in the past that the council did that you would like to see again?

6. How satisfied are you with the current level of communication from the District Council?



Very dissatisfied



Unhappy



Neutral



Happy



Very satisfied

7. Please explain the reasons for your response.

8. How satisfied are you with the clarity and accessibility of the communications you receive?



Very dissatisfied



Unhappy



Neutral



Happy



Very satisfied

9. Please explain the reasons for your response.



Validate your response

By adding your email, you'll ensure that your contribution will be published and included in the evaluation

☒ **We'll send you an email with a link to confirm your response**

Email address



Receive updates and replies about Town And Parish Communication Survey and hear about Commonplaces in your area. We'll never publish your personal data. See our [privacy policy](#) and [organisations involved](#).

Next

APPENDIX – LETTER TO SUSAN DAVY, CEO SOUTH WEST WATER

29 SEPTEMBER 2025

RE: PLANNED SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS UPGRADES – RIVER OTTER

We appreciate the level of care and detail which has gone into producing the Appendix to your letter of 14th August. There are however a number of statements in your reply and in Richard Price's Appendix, which we would like to comment on, or to request clarification.

As there are many elements to your sewage infrastructure, we would like to **focus mainly on the issues causing greatest ecological harm, and understand clearly how SWW will deliver improvements to these assets, the impact these improvements will have on the river and when they will be delivered.**

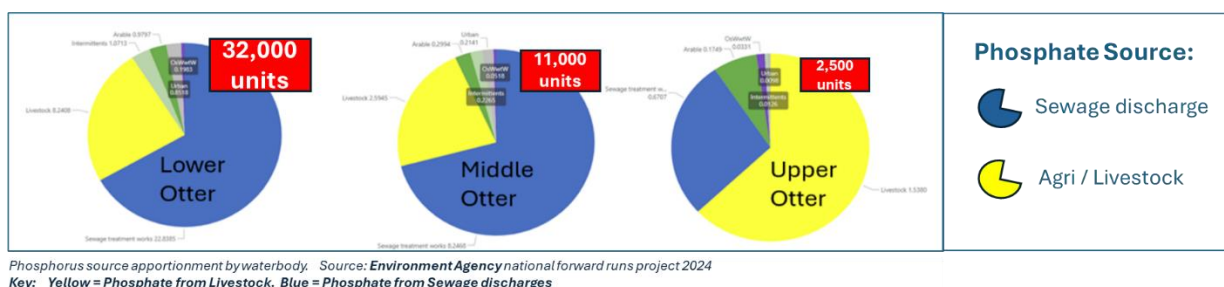
Lower River Otter – 'Poor' ecological status

Given your introductory statement, it seems clear that any key causes of 'Poor ecological status' must constitute 'assets causing environmental harm'.

As you are aware, the Lower Otter is classified as 'Poor' based on the health of 'Macrophytes and Phytobenthos', and one specific cause for this is identified as 'Phosphate', 'Point sources', from 'Sewage discharge (continuous)'. In other words, high levels of Phosphate being discharged into the river from treated effluent from SWW's sewage treatment works.

It's good to see that we all agree on the critical nature of high Phosphate levels in the Lower Otter being a primary driver of the Poor ecological status.

As you may be aware, the latest report ('*National Forward Runs 2024*') on Phosphate in the River Otter by the Environment Agency includes a determination of Phosphate sources in the Upper, Middle and Lower Otter. See extract below:

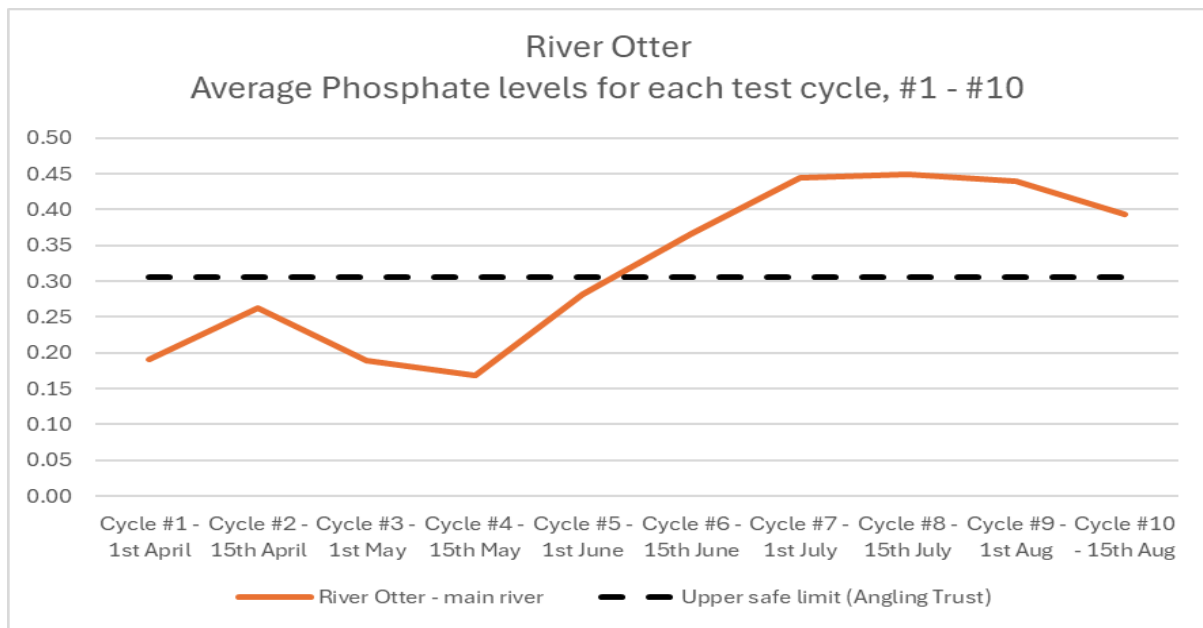


This shows the levels of Phosphate and attribution as follows:

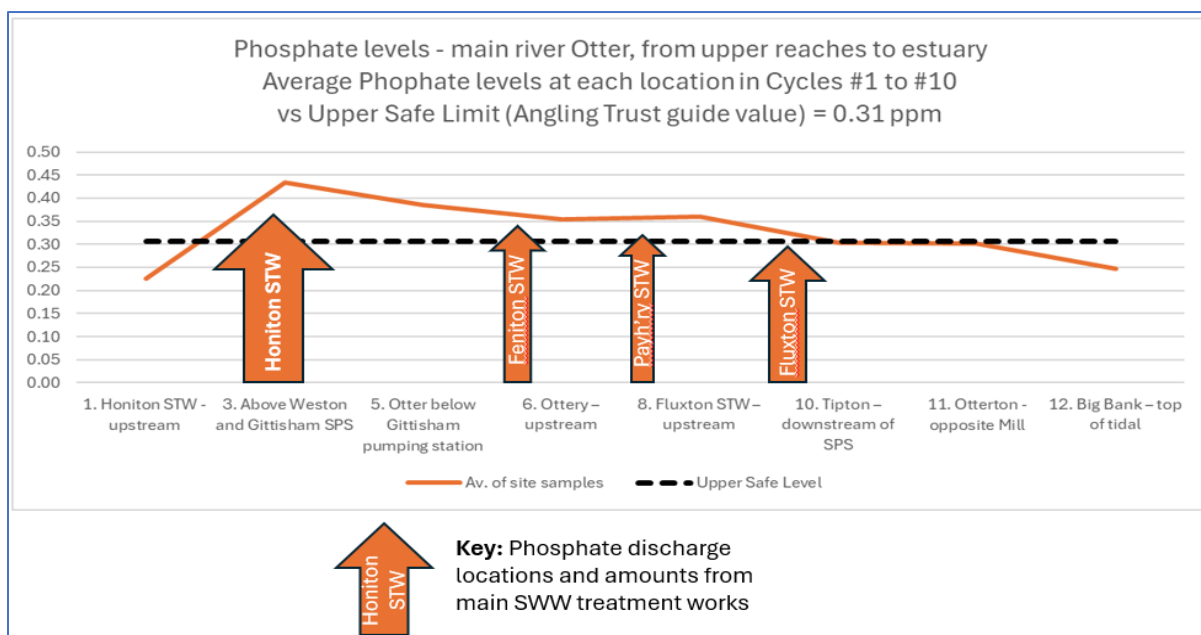
- Upper Otter: Relatively low levels of phosphates, with Agriculture (primarily Livestock) contributing 75% and sewage treatment works approx. 25%
- Middle Otter: Higher levels of phosphates than the Upper Otter, with Sewage treatment works contributing 72% and Agriculture (primarily Livestock) approx. 27%
- Lower Otter: Higher again levels of phosphates, with Sewage treatment works contributing 70% and Agriculture (primarily Livestock) approx. 28%

This attribution is also supported by the OVA's water quality testing program, where they have been checking 2025 Phosphate levels every two weeks throughout the Otter catchment as part of their ORCA test program.

The data clearly shows that the Phosphate levels from Honiton downwards have increased throughout the Spring and Summer, now maintaining a level well above the Upper Safe Limit for Phosphate in rivers (the dotted line in the chart below). The value used as the orthophosphate 'upper safe limit' is based on guidance from the Angling Trust and is a general equivalent to the Environment Agency 'Moderate' threshold.



There is also a dramatic increase in phosphate levels between the point above Honiton sewage treatment works (STW) and the sampling locations below Honiton STW. In fact, our measurements in the section below Honiton STW (located in the EA 'Middle Otter' catchment) have regularly showed levels far higher than this USL.



Based on the data set, it seems highly likely that the increase in Phosphate concentration in this section of the river is a result of excessive levels of phosphate within treated effluent discharged by SWW into the river during times of low summer river flow. It's worth noting that we believe there has been very little agricultural run-off during the recent dry weather.

As can be seen by the gradually reducing phosphate levels in the downstream samples, the excess phosphate is slowly absorbed by the water flora and also deposited in the gravel bed. However, the data also shows the impact of additional Phosphate discharges from other SWW sewage works, at Feniton (enters just above sample site 6), Payhembury (discharges to the River Tale and empties into the Otter above sample point 8), and Fluxton (2nd largest Phosphate discharge works, enters just above sample point 10).

To put these Phosphate levels in context, this value means that the **River Otter has the highest Phosphate levels of any major river system in Devon and Cornwall**, as sampled by Devon Wildlife Trust and the Westcountry Rivers Trust as part of your award-winning 'Upstream Thinking' program.

DWT / WRT 'Upstream Thinking report – 2024'

River catchment	Mean annual Phosphate level (Orthophosphate)
Fowey	0.08 ppm
Dart	0.06 ppm
Tamar	0.08 ppm
Tavy	0.06 ppm
Yeo	0.12 ppm
Exe	0.16 ppm
Otter	0.31 ppm (Orca April to August mean = 0.32)

It is important to note that this issue has been recognised and in 2023 the River Otter was designated a 'UWWTR - Sensitive Area (Eutrophic)'. The purpose of UWWTR designation is to protect sensitive water bodies from eutrophication by requiring more stringent treatment of wastewater. PR24 is the first investment round since this designation, so we would expect some remedial action to be included in this round.

Whilst Honiton STW may be physically located in the Middle Otter, it is clear that the large amount of Phosphate discharged from Honiton STW is a major contributor to the high phosphate levels in both the EA 'Middle Otter' as well as the 'Lower Otter', which begins just a few miles downstream.

I would also quickly comment on your assertion "Middle River Otter – Poor ecological status (**not Water Industry**)". Whilst there may not be a direct attribution to the Poor designation of the Middle Otter, it is made clear that continuous treated discharges are a direct cause of 'Not achieving Good' for both Phosphate levels and for 'Macrophytes and Phytobenthos'.

It seems clear then that “SWW’s assets are causing environmental harm” to the Otter, so what “priority improvements” are SWW taking to reduce Phosphate levels?

The major contributors of Phosphate in treated discharge come from four key treatment works, all of which discharge directly - or indirectly via the Rived Tale - into the Middle and Lower river Otter. The table below summarises our understanding of the actions that SWW are proposing for the main discharging STWs, based on the recently published PR24 investment plan, along with Richard’s statements in your letter.

STW name	Permit: last update	Dry flow capacity (m3 / day)	Phosphate limit in permit. (See note)	SWW PR24 / AMP8 PROPOSED action. // Plus Richard Price comment on action.
Honiton STW	19/03/2020	3,115	0.8mg/l	“Phosphate removal installed in PR14 WFD will require monitoring only ”. Proposed annual average Phosphate level set at ‘ 2mg/l ’ - the max allowed legal limit . // Richard Price : “treatment process will be upgraded by 2035 to achieve new treated effluent parameter limits.”
Fluxton STW	14/10/2020	1,620	0.6mg/l	“Move to 2-minute flow monitoring ” // Richard Price : already upgraded in 2017. No further action noted.
Feniton STW		400		2-minute monitoring , and Phosphate annual average discharge set at 1.0 Monitor only, no removal actions? // Richard Price : Nitrate reduction only, not Phosphate
Payhembury STW (via R Tale)		132		“Move to 2-minute flow monitoring ” // Richard Price : scheduled updates by 2035

Note: Target for Phosphate in treated STW discharge in areas designated ‘UWWTR - Sensitive Area Eutrophic’ is 0.25 mg/l.

In summary:

- We all agree that high levels of Phosphate are a key contributor to the Poor classification of the River Otter downstream from Honiton
- High levels of Phosphate in treated effluent from SWW sewage treatment works is a major source of Phosphate in the river, particularly from the four key sewage treatment works identified above
- **There appear to be NO scheduled actions by SWW to remove significant Phosphate from their treated discharge until 2035**



Richard Foord MP

Member of Parliament for Honiton & Sidmouth
East Devon Business Centre, Honiton, EX14 1SF

020 7219 8349

Richard.Foord.MP@parliament.uk

Our Ref: RF21009

Susan Davy
Chief Executive
South West Water
Peninsula House
Rydon Lane
Exeter, EX2 7HR

30 September 2025

Dear Susan

RE: PLANNED SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS UPGRADES – RIVER OTTER

We are writing in response to your letter of 14 August 2025, setting out the detailed actions that South West Water is taking to improve the water quality in the River Otter.

We welcome your statement that you and your team will “*always prioritise improvements where our assets either do not meet legislative requirements and/or are causing environmental harm.*”

We also note your press statement in July, in which SWW promised to deliver “*a cleaner river within the 2025–2030 investment programme, including targeting improvements across the Otter catchment to reduce storm overflow use and lower phosphate in our treated discharges.*”

Having carefully reviewed the actions detailed in your letter and Appendix, we see no evidence that SWW will deliver the improvements necessary to meet those public claims.

We also suspect in your statement that the word ‘or’ is doing a lot of work, and question whether you are genuinely interested in acting to prevent environmental harm.

Untreated sewage discharges from SWW storm overflows

In 2024, South West Water discharged over 15,000 hours of untreated sewage into the River Otter and its tributaries. It’s good to see some recent tactical actions being planned or completed, to reduce storm overflows within the next five years.

However, we note that there are no strategic investments scheduled in this investment round - meaning that, **as you confirm, the critical polluting assets will not achieve their targets for**

Website - www.richardfoord.org.uk **Facebook** - Richard Foord MP

Whilst Richard Foord MP will treat as confidential any personal information that you pass on, he will normally allow staff and authorised volunteers to see it if this is needed to help and advise you. He may pass on all or some of the information to external agencies if this is necessary to help with your case. Richard Foord MP may wish to write to you from time to time to keep you informed on issues which you may find of interest. Please let him know if you do not wish to be contacted for this purpose.

untreated sewage discharges until 2035-2040.

We find it totally unacceptable to have to wait a further 10 to 15 years just to achieve basic levels of untreated sewage discharges.

Environmental harm caused by treated sewage effluent

We all agree that high levels of phosphate are a key contributor to the ‘Poor’ classification of the River Otter downstream of Honiton. High levels of phosphate cause algal blooms, eutrophication, and decreased oxygen levels in the water, leading to severe consequences for plant life, wildlife and fish populations.

According to the Environment Agency, approximately 70% of the phosphate entering the middle/lower river is a result of sewage discharges from SWW (Source: ‘*National Forward Runs 2024*’).

The Otter Valley Association has been checking phosphate levels every two weeks throughout the Otter catchment through their ORCA test program. The data clearly shows that the phosphate levels from Honiton downwards have increased throughout the spring and summer, now maintaining a level well above the Upper Safe Limit for phosphate in rivers (the dotted line in the chart in the appendix attached). The charts in the appendix all relate to Orca 2025 test program.

This data, along with similar sampling by Devon Wildlife Trust and the Westcountry Rivers Trust as part of your SWW-funded ‘Upstream Thinking’ program (also see appendix), identifies the Otter as a prime candidate for the worst affected river in the South West.

There is also a dramatic increase in phosphate levels at sampling locations below Honiton sewage treatment works (in the EA ‘Middle Otter’ catchment), which is by far the largest treatment works by capacity on the river. In fact, the OVA/ORCA measurements in the section just below Honiton have regularly showed levels much higher than the Upper Safe Limit.

The data shows the impact of additional phosphate discharges from other SWW sewage treatment works (STW) at Feniton, Payhembury and Fluxton.

From this analysis, it seems **highly likely that the increase in phosphate concentration in this section of the river is a result of excessive levels of phosphate within treated effluent discharged by SWW** into the river during times of low summer river flow.

It’s worth noting that we believe **there has been very little agricultural run-off during the summer’s dry weather.**

Based on this evidence, we ask you to consider your statement that you and the team will **“always prioritise improvements where our assets ... are causing environmental harm.”**

When we review your detailed list of SWW investment plans for phosphate removal at key

treatment works, it's clear that **there are actually no planned actions which will reduce this clear harm before 2035.**

This appears to be a direct contradiction of your commitment to prioritise actions where your assets are causing environmental harm.

Thank you for your invitation to meet to discuss the situation and how your plans will deliver (as your press release stated), *“a cleaner river within the 2025–2030 investment programme, including targeting improvements across the Otter catchment to reduce storm overflow use and lower phosphate in our treated discharges.”*

We would be pleased to meet **your team and representatives from the Environment Agency**, at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely



Richard Foord MP
Member of Parliament for Honiton and Sidmouth

Co-signed Otter Valley Association
Co-signed River Otter Fisheries Association

CC Mark Rice – Area Director of Environment Agency – Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly
CC David Reed MP
CC Local media
CC Feniton Parish Council
CC Gittisham Parish Council
CC Honiton Town Council
CC Ottery St Mary Town Council