Ottery St Mary Town Council — MINUTES

Operations Committee — Thursday, 20 August 2026

Published: Thursday, 3 September 2026

Attendance

Present: Janice Aherne, Ben Feasey, Dean Stewart, Vicky Johns

Also present: Kerry Kennell — Town Clerk

There were no members of the public present.

Declarations of Interest

Vicky Johns: declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Item 2 — Declarations of Interest — Cllr Johns husband is completing a snagging list for the outdoor project at the Station.

Ben Feasey: declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Item 2 — Declarations of Interest — Cllr Feasey's Register of Interest reflects that his wife works for SPACE although she no longer does. Cllr Feasey will update his Register of Interests.

Janice Aherne: declared an other registrable interest in Item 16 — Allotments - to receive an update and to make decisions if appropriate — Allotment holder

Min. O/26/08 — 1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were noted from Cllr Grainger (Vice Chair).

Min. O/26/08 — 2. Declarations of Interest

Please see above.

Min. O/26/08 — 3. Exclusion of Public and Press

It was **RESOLVED** that, under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s.1(2), the public and press be excluded from the remainder of the Council by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. The following agenda items would be considered in Confidential Session: O/26/08/07 — to receive an update regarding the outdoor project and make recommendations and/or decisions as appropriate; O/26/08/11 — Council Offices, to receive an update and to make decisions (if appropriate); and O/26/08/11 — Museum, to receive an update and to make decisions (if appropriate).

Min. O/26/08 — 4. Public Participation

There were none.

Min. O/26/08 — 5. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of 28th May 2025 were approved and signed by the Chair as a true record of the meeting.

Min. O/26/08 — 6. Correspondence Received

Correspondence from Ottery St Mary Bowling Club of their intention to replace the roof on their building was **NOTED**.

Min. O/26/08 — 7. To receive an update regarding the outdoor project and make recommendations and/or decisions as appropriate

Under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, it was **RESOLVED** to exclude the press and public from the Council on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

NOTED that a snagging report had been completed and would be provided to the Council shortly, following which it would be forwarded to the designer and carpenter.

Vicky Johns left the meeting at 17:14 for a pecuniary interest and returned at 17:18.

Min. O/26/08 — 8. To receive an update from SPACE and to make decisions as appropriate

It was **NOTED** that a meeting with SPACE will be held in mid-September to discuss the proposed changes to the contract.

Min. O/26/08 — 9. To review expenditure at the Station Hub and make recommendations and/or decisions as appropriate

It was **NOTED** that this agenda item would be carried forward to the next meeting.

Min. O/26/08 — 10. To consider request from EDDC for a storage shed at the Station

It was **NOTED** that planning permission would be required for the proposed storage shed. The Council was awaiting a response from East Devon District Council (EDDC) to confirm whether they wished to proceed with the request.

Min. O/26/08 — 11. Council Offices - to receive an update and to make decisions (if appropriate)

Under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, it was **RESOLVED** to exclude the press and public from the Council on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

An update from the solicitor was received and discussed. It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Council submit an offer to purchase the land situated in front of the Council offices, including the adjoining grassed area.

The confidential session thereupon ended.

Min. O/26/08 — 12. Skatepark - to receive an update and to make decisions if appropriate

There was no update to report.

Min. O/26/08 — 13. Library - to consider recommendation from Fire Risk Assessment and make decisions as appropriate

It was **RESOLVED** that the recommendations arising from the Fire Risk Assessment would be reviewed in consideration of current requirements.

Min. O/26/08 — 14. Museum - to receive an update and to make decisions if appropriate

It was **NOTED** that the glazing work was due to be completed later in the month. The Heads of Terms had been found acceptable by the Heritage Society and the matter had been passed to the solicitors.

Min. O/26/08 — 15. To receive an update regarding the PlayZone for Strawberry Lane and to make decisions if appropriate

It was **NOTED** that new carpet was currently being fitted at the PlayZone, Strawberry Lane. It was further **NOTED** that a permanent solution to the entrance gate had been found which would enable ambulance access. It was **NOTED** that the fire brigade would not be able to access the site through the gate but would have the appropriate equipment to enter the site in an emergency. It was **AGREED** that the Council would monitor the situation regarding whether the lack of toilets impacts users of the PlayZone.

Min. O/26/08 — 16. Allotments - to receive an update and to make decisions if appropriate

The Council considered a proposal to run one community plot for a period of one year with a single community organisation, after which the arrangement would be reviewed to assess its success. It was **NOTED** that participants would be required to follow the existing allotment rules in the same way as all other plot holders, and that a separate waiting list would need to be established for community plots. It was further **NOTED** that any community grant associated with the arrangement would be considered in the same way as all other grant applications. It was **RESOLVED** to proceed with this proposal and to review progress after nine months.

The Council received information regarding the costs of hiring a portaloo for the allotment site. It was **AGREED** that Cllr Aherne would take this matter back to the Allotment Committee for further consideration.

Min. O/26/08 — 17. Cemetery - to receive an update and make recommendations and/or decisions as appropriate

It was **RESOLVED** that the dead elm trees at the Cemetery be removed on health and safety grounds.

Min. O/26/08 — 18. To review current Gazebo hire conditions and make recommendations as appropriate

There was a discussion regarding whether gazebo hire should be extended to members of the public. It was **RESOLVED** that the current policy of only lending the gazebos to community organisations will remain.

Min. O/26/08 — 19. Other Property and Operational Matters - to consider other matters raised by the Clerk

There were none.

Min. O/26/08 — 20. Matters Raised by Members Not Otherwise on the Agenda

There were none.

Min. O/26/08 — 21. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held at 5pm on Thursday 17th September 2026

The meeting closed at 09:42.

Signed: ________________________________

Chair of the Operations Committee

Date: ________________________________