



Ottery St Mary Town Council — MINUTES

Full Council — Monday, 7 September 2026

Published: Wednesday, 30 September 2026

Attendance

Present: Councillors Johns (Chair), Copus, Faithfull, Feasey, Martin, Sneller, Stewart

Also present: Kerry Kennell — Town Clerk, Jessica Bailey — Cllr

Members of the public present: 3

C/26/09/029 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were noted for Cllrs Aherne, Peka and Grainger.

C/26/09/030 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Nick Sneller declared a DPI in relation to agenda item C/26/09/09 To consider (and approve if appropriate) recommendations from the Committee.

C/26/09/031 Exclusion of Public and Press

It was **RESOLVED** that the following agenda items will be discussed in Confidential session: Agenda item 26/09/09.1 that the Council submit an offer to purchase the land in front of the Council offices; Agenda item 26/09/10 and 10.1 as they relate to Human Resources; Agenda item 26/09/11.1 in relation to the quote to resurface the Winters Lane tennis courts and the subsequent decision to agree signing the Section 106 funding agreement; Agenda item 26/09/14;

*Please note the meeting order was changed: Agenda item C/26/09/16 To consider concerns with regards to hedgerow removal within the Parish and to make decisions as appropriate was brought forward to follow agenda item 6 to allow DCC Cllr Bailey to take part in the discussion; Confidential agenda items were delayed until the end of the meeting to enable the members of the public to remain present until that point. *

C/26/09/032 Public Participation

No items were raised.

C/26/09/033 Confirmation of Town Council Minutes of 3rd August 2026 (minute refs C26/08/01-C26/08/25)

The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 3 August 2026 (minute references C26/08/01–C26/08/25) were received. It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes be approved as a true and correct record, and they were duly signed by the Mayor.

C/26/09/034 To receive Reports from the EDDC and DCC Councillors

Reports were received from East Devon District Council (EDDC) and Devon County Council (DCC) representatives as follows.

EDDC Cllr Vicky Johns had submitted a written report. It was **NOTED** that the Government had announced earlier that day that Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) had been paused pending a review of its legality.

EDDC Cllr Peter Faithfull had nothing to report.

It was **NOTED** that EDDC Cllr Bethany Collins had not submitted a report.

DCC Cllr Jessica Bailey reported as follows:

- Mill Street had been reopened. Devon County Council (DCC) have issued National Grid with a fixed penalty notice for breaching their permit. Cllr Bailey had written to National Grid to suggest that businesses affected by the closure should be compensated, and she remained of the view that the traders impacted ought to receive compensation. Cllr Bailey had also requested that she be notified in advance of any future closures.
- Cllr Bailey had visited Sandhill Street and had requested that the road surface be inspected.
- Talewater Bridge is due to reopen by the end of the week.
- Cllr Bailey had also visited West Hill Road, which was due to be inspected later this week.
- The outline planning application for Tipton School was expected to be submitted in September. Preparatory work had been ongoing and drop-in sessions held with residents had been received very positively.
- Regarding LGR, Cllr Bailey expressed that she was glad the process had been paused, having raised concerns about West Hill and Aylesbeare not being placed within the same area as Ottery St Mary.
- Cllr Bailey has chaired the Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee, which had been examining the decision to pause maternity services at North Devon Hospital, taking the role of a critical friend. The Committee was also considering matters relating to unpaid carers, dentistry, and Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspections.

A member of the public asked when the Council had become aware of the proposals concerning Tipton St John School. It was **NOTED** that the Council had been informed two days before the public announcement was made.

C/26/09/035 To note the Planning Committee Minutes of 17th August 2026 (minute refs P/26/08/01-P/26/08/10)

The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting of 17 August 2026 (minute references P/26/08/01–P/26/08/10) were **NOTED**.

C/26/09/036 To note the Minutes of the Community Infrastructure Meeting of 17th August 2026 (minute reference CI/26/08/01-CI/26/08/22)

The minutes of the Community Infrastructure meeting held on 17 August 2026 (minute references CI/26/08/01 to CI/26/08/22) were **NOTED**.

C/26/09/037 To consider (and approve if appropriate) recommendations from the Committee

The Council considered recommendations from the Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** that Devon County Council (DCC) be instructed to carry out feasibility assessment at a cost of £10,000 to establish the viability and cost to install a pedestrian crossing at Broad Street.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council proceed with the Wayfinding project as detailed in the proposal.

Jess Bailey (DCC) left the meeting at 19:40.

Cllr Nick Sneller left the meeting at 19:41 for a pecuniary interest and returned at 19:45.

C/26/09/038 To note the Minutes of the Operations Committee Meeting of 20th August 2026

The minutes of the Operations Committee meeting of 20 August 2026 were **NOTED**.

C/26/09/039 To consider (and approve if appropriate) recommendations from the Committee

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

The minutes of the previous confidential meeting held on 21 August 2026 were **NOTED**.

Members discussed the proposed purchase of the parking spaces, including matters relating to neighbouring residents, the condition of the associated building, and the strategic benefit of securing the spaces situated directly outside the Council offices. Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that an offer be made to purchase the land situated in front of the Council offices, including the adjoining grassed area.

C/26/09/040 To note the Minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting of 21st August 2026 (minute ref HR/26/08/01 - HR/26/08/08)

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

The minutes of 21st August 2026 were **NOTED**.

C/26/09/041 To consider (and approve if appropriate) recommendations from the Committee

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk be authorised to enrol on the Community Governance training course in February 2027, at a cost of £4,000 for the first year and £4,000 for the second year. It was further **RESOLVED** that, should the Clerk voluntarily leave the Council's employment within two years of successfully completing the training, they will be required to repay a proportion of the training costs incurred by the Council, calculated on a sliding scale basis.

C/26/09/042 To note the Minutes of the Finance and Strategic Planning Committee meeting of 25th August 2026

The minutes of 25th August 2026 were **NOTED**.

C/26/09/043 To consider (and approve if appropriate) recommendations from the Committee

The Council considered recommendations from the Committee:

It was **RESOLVED** that up to £54,000 of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding be used on the Wayfinding project.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council proceed with the quotation from Courtstall to resurface Winters Lane Tennis Courts at a cost of £38,300 plus VAT.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council instruct Sid Valley Tree Surgery to carry out the tree works at a cost of £1,500 plus VAT.

It was **RESOLVED** that, in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders, Cllr Johns (Mayor) be authorised to sign the grant funding agreement with East Devon District Council (EDDC) for the Section 106 funding towards the resurfacing of Winters Lane Tennis Courts, and that Ottery St Mary Town Council agree to enter into the funding agreement.

C/26/09/044 To consider concerns with regards to hedgerow removal within the Parish and to make decisions as appropriate

It was **AGREED** to bring this item forwards to enable Cllr Bailey to partake in the agenda item. It followed Agenda item 6. The legal letter has now been sent out to the landowners of the hedge and a notice has been published. There is a time period they need to wait to hear back from the landowners. The hedgerow replacement notice details what should be replanted there. It will then be protected for a minimum of 30 years. The Clerk will circulate the report from EDDC to Councillors. Cllr Johns has been acting in her EDDC Cllr capacity.

C/26/09/045 To receive an update regarding the proposal to rebuild Tipton St John Church of England Primary School

It was **NOTED** that there was no further update on the proposal to rebuild Tipton St John Church of England Primary School beyond that already provided by DCC Cllr Bailey earlier in the meeting.

C/26/09/046 To receive an update regarding the Coleridge Pre-School building and make recommendations/decisions as appropriate

It was **NOTED** that a meeting had been held with Devon County Council (DCC) regarding the Coleridge Pre-School building, and that a further meeting was being arranged in due course.

C/26/09/047 To note the current situation regarding Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution

It was **NOTED** that the Government had placed Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution on hold whilst the Secretary of State carries out a review.

C/26/09/048 To receive an update regarding the Night Bus survey and to make decisions as appropriate

It was **NOTED** that the Clerk would be meeting with a representative from Honiton Town Council to discuss the Night Bus survey in the near future. It was anticipated that the survey would subsequently be circulated to the parishes to enable both Councils to decide whether the initiative should be included in the budget for 2027/28.

C/26/09/049 To receive an update regarding the survey for a 20mph zone outside of the town and to make decisions as appropriate

It was **NOTED** that there was no update available regarding the survey for a 20mph zone outside of the town.

C/26/09/050 To receive an update regarding the installation and costings for the Christmas Lights for 2026 and to make decisions as appropriate

The Council received an update regarding the installation and costings for the Christmas lights for 2026. A lengthy discussion followed. It was **RESOLVED** that all necessary changes to the lights should be progressed and implemented as required.

C/26/09/051 To review and approve the updated Complaints Policy

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the updated Complaints Policy.

C/26/09/052 Confirmation of decisions made under the scheme of delegation

There were no decisions made under the scheme of delegation to confirm.

C/26/09/053 Finance Report / Budget Monitoring

The August 2026 Receipts and Payments and Reconciliation reports were **RESOLVED** as approved. The July 2026 CCLA reconciliation was also approved. It was **NOTED** that the CCLA reconciliation will always be a month in arrears due to the timing of when the statement arrives. The Council **NOTED** the budget monitoring reports for the period 1 April to 31 July 2026.

C/26/09/054 To note the AGAR Section 3 External Auditor Report

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) Section 3 External Auditor Report was received and it was **NOTED**.

C/26/09/055 Mayor's Report

The Mayor's written report was received. Cllr Johns reminded all councillors that the Council is a non-political Council and urged members to adhere to the Code of Conduct at all times.

C/26/09/056 Clerk's Report

The Clerk reminded the Council that a vacancy existed which will be filled by co-option. It was **NOTED** that the deadline for applications was 2 October 2026 and that the vacancy had been advertised. Further information is available on the Council's website.

C/26/09/057 Correspondence Received

It was **AGREED** that the Council was content for its logo to be included on a poster advertising an Eco Homes open weekend taking place in Ottery St Mary and Sidmouth at the beginning of October. *Cllr Faithfull abstained.*

C/26/09/058 To note any reports previously e-mailed by Councillors of Meetings attended

There were no reports previously e-mailed by councillors of meetings attended.

C/26/09/059 Matters Raised by Members Not Otherwise on the Agenda

Cllr Sneller raised concerns regarding vehicles being left parked on the roadside. It was confirmed that an abandoned vehicle should be reported to EDDC.

It was **NOTED** that signs had been erected at the start of Strawberry Lane indicating the road was closed, had resulted in the lane a more pleasant and safer environment for pedestrians to walk through.

It was further **NOTED** that double yellow lines had been installed in Ridgeway Gardens by Devon County Council. Members were advised that parking and highway matters of this nature fall within the remit of the Devon County Council Highway and Traffic Orders Committee (HATOC), and that any residents wishing to raise concerns should contact Devon County Council Highways directly.

C/26/09/060 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held at 7pm on Monday 5th October 2026 at Tipton St John Community Hall.

The meeting closed at 20:50.

Signed: _____

Vicky Johns

Chair of the Full Council

Date: _____