Ottery St Mary Town Council — MINUTES

Full Council — Monday, 2 November 2026

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Attendance

Present: Cllr Mark Hobson, Cllr Janice Aherne, Cllr Sarah Martin, Cllr Nick Sneller, Cllr Richard Grainger, Cllr Peter Faithfull, Cllr Richard Copus, Deputy Mayor Dean Stewart (Chair)

Absent: Mayor Vicky Johns, Cllr Emily Peka

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

Members of the public present: 2

Declarations of Interest

Cllr Janice Aherne: declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item C18 26-27 — To receive an update regarding the proposal to rebuild Tipton St John Church of England Primary School — Member of group to keep the school in Tipton. Resident of Tipton, whose children and grandchildren attend this school.

Cllr Sarah Martin: declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item C26 26-27 — Request for a Royal Mail Post Box at King's Reach — I live on King's reach Estate

Cllr Sarah Martin: declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Item C32 26-27 — To consider Briefing from EDDC for Town and Parish Councils - Severe Drought in East Devon — I work in the team responding to drought, at the Environment Agency

C/26/11/001 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were noted for Cllr Vicky Johns (Mayor) and Cllr Ben Feasey.

C/26/11/002 Declarations of Interest

See above. No other interests were declared.

C/26/11/003 Exclusion of Public and Press

It was **RESOLVED** that Agenda items 12 To note the Minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting of 30th October 2026 (minute ref HR/26/10/09 - HR/26/10/17), 13 To consider (and approve if appropriate) recommendations from the Committee would be discussed in Confidential Session, 16 To receive an update regarding the outdoor structure at the Station Hub and make decisions as appropriate, 19 To receive an update regarding the Coleridge Pre-School building and make recommendations/decisions as appropriate will be moved to the end of the meeting to allow the public and press to remain in attendance for the maximum duration of the meeting, promoting transparency whilst ensuring that confidential matters can be considered appropriately.

C/26/11/004 Public Participation

No items were raised.

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

C/26/11/005 Confirmation of Town Council Minutes of 5th October 2026 (minute refs C26/10/61-C26/10/89)

The minutes of the Full Council meeting of 5th October 2026 (minute refs C/26/10/61 – C/26/10/89) were reviewed and updated to show that Mark Hobson was not a councillor at the time of the meeting. It was **RESOLVED** the minutes were then approved and were signed by the Deputy Mayor as a true and correct record of that meeting.

C/26/11/006 To receive Reports from the EDDC and DCC Councillors

A written report was received from EDDC Cllr Johns.
No report was received from EDDC Cllr Collins.
EDDC Cllr Faithfull gave a verbal update. It was **NOTED** that East Devon District Council is working more closely with communities on emergency planning. The Local Plan deadline has been extended by a further three months.
DCC Cllr Bailey attended from 19.36 and expressed serious concern regarding the lack of scrutiny surrounding organisational change at Devon County Council, specifically in relation to the removal of a key staffing role within the library service. It was **NOTED** that Devon County Council has a statutory duty to provide an efficient library service, and that insufficient scrutiny had been applied to how that duty would be met once the proposed new staffing arrangements take effect. The matter is due to appear as an agenda item at Devon County Council on 27 November. It was **NOTED** that the library is a valued facility within the community.
A member raised the question of whether the Council could fund the library supervisor role itself. It was **NOTED** that the cost of the role is not yet known, and that fact-finding should be undertaken to establish what that cost would be. The Council reiterated its support regarding retaining the library supervisor role in the town. It was **AGREED** that the Clerk will write to Libraries Unlimited to establish more information which can be considered by the Council.
Cllr Bailey also reported that the planning application for Tipton St John School has been submitted but has not yet been validated. Cllr Bailey advised that there are opportunities for further bus stops in the area to be improved. Any potential locations should be highlighted to Cllr Bailey.

C/26/11/007 To note the Councillor Surgery will be held between 10am and 12 on 10th December at the Council Offices, 8 Broad Street

It was **NOTED** that the Councillor Surgery will be held between 10am and 12pm on 10th December at the Council Offices, 8 Broad Street.

C/26/11/008 To note the Planning Committee Minutes of 19th October 2026 (minute refs P/26/10/001-P26/10/010) and 26th October 2026 (minute refs P/26/10/011-P/26/10/020)

The Planning Committee Minutes of 19th October 2026 (minute refs P/26/10/001–P/26/10/010) and 26th October 2026 (minute refs P/26/10/011–P/26/10/020) were **NOTED**.

C/26/11/009 To consider (and approve if appropriate) recommendations from the Committee

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council pursue a moratorium on any new housing applications for which the Council is a consultee, until such time as South West Water has suitable infrastructure in place to cope with current demand, let alone any additional demand, and that the Council support an infrastructure-first approach.

It was further **RESOLVED** that the Clerk write to the East Devon District Council (EDDC) Planning department to inform them of this decision.

C/26/11/010 To note the Minutes of the Finance and Strategic Planning Committee meeting of 13th October 2026 (minute refs FSP/26/10/016-030)

The minutes of the Finance and Strategic Planning Committee meeting of 13th October 2026 (minute refs FSP/26/10/016–030) were **NOTED**.

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

C/26/11/011 To note the Minutes of the Community Infrastructure Committee meeting of 19th October 2026 (minute refs CI/26/10/001-CI/26/10/021)

The minutes of the Community Infrastructure Committee meeting of 19th October 2026 (minute refs CI/26/10/001–CI/26/10/021) were **NOTED**.

C/26/11/012 To note the Minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting of 30th October 2026 (minute ref HR/26/10/09 - HR/26/10/17)

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

The minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting of 30th October 2026 (minute ref HR/26/10/09 – HR/26/10/17) were **NOTED**.

C/26/11/013 To consider (and approve if appropriate) recommendations from the Committee

There were no recommendations to consider.

*The Confidential Session ended. *

C/26/11/014 Finance Report / Budget Monitoring

The Finance reports were received, reviewed and **RESOLVED** as signed.

C/26/11/015 To consider current situation regarding the Skatepark and to make decisions as appropriate

The Council considered the current situation regarding the skatepark and what decisions should be made as appropriate.

It was **RESOLVED** that the repairs to the skatepark should be carried out as quoted.

It was **AGREED** that the Clerk should make efforts to determine how many people use the park, possibly through use of a counter or other means.

It was further **AGREED** that the situation regarding the skatepark would be reviewed in February.

C/26/11/016 To receive an update regarding the outdoor structure at the Station Hub and make decisions as appropriate

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

The Clerk provided an update. It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk will go back to the Council's solicitor after the structure has been inspected by Cllr Sneller and Rob Johns. It was **AGREED** that the Clerk will write to Stir to **ACTION** to voice the Council's disappointment at the recommendation that was made to them.

*The Confidential Session ended. *

C/26/11/017 To consider concerns with regards to hedgerow removal within the Parish and to make decisions as appropriate

It was **NOTED** that there was no update on this matter.

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

C/26/11/018 To receive an update regarding the proposal to rebuild Tipton St John Church of England Primary School

An update regarding the proposal to rebuild Tipton St John Church of England Primary School was provided by Devon County Council Cllr Bailey.

C/26/11/019 To receive an update regarding the Coleridge Pre-School building and make recommendations/decisions as appropriate

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

There was no update to report.

*The Confidential Session ended. *

C/26/11/020 To discuss the River Otter and Fluxton Sewage Plan and make recommendations as appropriate

There was no update to report.

C/26/11/021 To note the current situation regarding Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution

It was **NOTED** that devolution is proceeding with the creation of a Mayor for Devon.

C/26/11/022 To consider what action can be taken by the Town Council to enforce the 20mph zone within the town

Concerns raised by local residents regarding the lack of enforcement of the 20mph zone within the town were discussed. Matters considered included the reinstatement of a speed enforcement sign at Gerway, the situation on Exeter Road, and the possibility of reigniting the Community Speedwatch programme.

Cllr Sneller raised concerns regarding the reduction from 60mph to 20mph; however, it was **NOTED** that Devon County Council (DCC) does not share these concerns, which had been raised at the planning stage.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk would write to DCC and the police regarding enforcement of the 20mph zone within the town.

C/26/11/023 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 Devon County Council (DCC) would be arranging a meeting with the Town Council shortly to discuss various 20mph zones outside of the town centre.

C/26/11/024 To consider Feniton Parish Council Proposal to Undertake Maintenance of Grassed Area within Ottery Boundary

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council was content to enter into an agreement with Feniton Parish Council to undertake maintenance of the grassed area at the entrance to Feniton, which falls within the Ottery St Mary boundary, subject to the following conditions:

• that there be no cost to Ottery St Mary Town Council; and

• that written assurance be provided that appropriate public liability insurance had been obtained before any works were carried out.

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

C/26/11/025 To receive an update regarding the Night Bus survey and to make decisions as appropriate

The Clerk updated the Council that the Night Bus survey would go live later that week and would run until the end of November.

C/26/11/026 Request for a Royal Mail Post Box at King's Reach

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk write to Royal Mail to request the installation of a post box at King's Reach, following concerns raised by residents, including accessibility concerns regarding the nearest post box at Cadhay Lane.

C/26/11/027 To Consider Councillor Safety and seating within the Council Chamber and to approve Risk Assessment (if appropriate)

The Council held a lengthy discussion regarding councillor safety and seating arrangements within the Council Chamber. It was **AGREED** that the Clerk would investigate alternative seating solutions for the Chamber, reflecting the horseshoe-shaped table arrangement used by East Devon District Council (EDDC). This arrangement would ensure that councillors would not sit with their backs to members of the public, thereby addressing both safety concerns and the basic courtesy of facing those in attendance.

C/26/11/028 Confirmation of decisions made under the scheme of delegation

It was **NOTED** that Cllr Johns, Cllr Grainger, Cllr Feasey and Cllr Stewart had given delegated authority to replace the ramp to the portacabin at the Station at a cost of £878.20.

C/26/11/029 To approve the updated CCTV Policy and DPIA for the Ring Doorbell

It was **RESOLVED** that the updated CCTV Policy and Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) for the Ring Doorbell be approved.

C/26/11/030 To approve the new Artificial Intelligence Policy

The new Artificial Intelligence Policy was reviewed. It was **AGREED** that the policy should be amended to state that any images the Council publishes which have been created using AI should be labelled accordingly. It was then **RESOLVED** to approve the policy as amended.

C/26/11/031 To consider a response to the Fire and rescue service five-year plan consultation

The Council considered a response to the Fire and Rescue Service five-year plan consultation. It was **AGREED** that the Clerk would complete a response on behalf of the Council, and that individual councillors may submit their own responses separately should they wish to do so.

C/26/11/032 To consider Briefing from EDDC for Town and Parish Councils - Severe Drought in East Devon

It was **NOTED** that a briefing had been received from East Devon District Council (EDDC) regarding severe drought conditions in East Devon. The Council **NOTED** that very dry weather had caused significant infrastructure issues.

Cllr Sarah Martin declared an interest in this item, as she works in the team responding to the drought at the Environment Agency.

The Council further **NOTED** that reservoir levels were low, and discussion took place regarding steps that could be taken to reduce the Council's own water consumption, particularly in light of increasing water demand across the region.

It was **AGREED** that the Council would promote the message from East Devon District Council (EDDC) that East Devon is experiencing severe drought conditions, encouraging residents to use water carefully and to follow the latest advice and restrictions from South West Water. This will include a reminder that a hosepipe ban remains in

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

place.

C/26/11/033 Mayor's Report

The Mayor's written report was received. It was **NOTED** that Cllr Faithfull reported that the Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC) Annual General Meeting and information sessions had been very beneficial.

C/26/11/034 Clerk's Report

The Clerk reminded Councillors that the Festive Cheer and Christmas Light Switch On is taking place on 27th November. Councillors are encouraged to attend and help at the event if they are able to.

C/26/11/035 Correspondence Received

The following correspondence was **NOTED**:

• Advance Notice from EDDC regarding Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Funding Round 2026/27

• Information from Friends of Ottery Library regarding the Library Supervisor role being removed from their staffing structure

• The Have your say on West Hill Parish Council Local Green Spaces and Valued Views Consultation

C/26/11/036 To note any reports previously e-mailed by Councillors of Meetings attended

It was **NOTED** that Cllr Aherne and Cllr Faithfull had met with a representative from the Devon Resilience Innovation Project (DRIP) and were working on an emergency plan.

It was **NOTED** that Cllr Grainger had attended the tenth anniversary of the Ottery Men's Shed, which he had been proud to attend.

C/26/11/037 Matters Raised by Members Not Otherwise on the Agenda

Cllr Aherne and Faithfull have met with a representative from the Devon Resilience Innovation Project (DRIP) and are working on an emergency plan.
Cllr Grainger attended 10th anniversary of Ottery Mens Shed. Pleased to attend.

C/26/11/038 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held at 7pm on Monday 7th December.

The meeting closed at 20:44.

Signed: _____

Deputy Mayor Dean Stewart
Chair of the Full Council

Date: _____

UNAPPROVED MINUTES