**Minutes of the Extraordinary Assets & Facilities Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 2nd September 2026 at 12pm at The Beechfield Centre, Beechfield Road, Fremington**

**Present**: Cllr H Walker, J Cann, J Bridgeman, N Tamlin, Mr A Heighton (co-opted member, Barnstaple Youth Football Club).

Mrs J Wood, Administration and Projects Manager
1 member of the public

2609/01 **Apologies for Absence**
None

2609/02 **Declarations of Interest**
Councillor Cann declared a personal interest in Item 2609/08.

2609/03 **Public Participation Period**
A member of the public raised several matters with Councillors:

- A large and deteriorating pothole in the car park towards the Tarka Trail was reported, with clarification sought on whether the Parish Council's Maintenance and Amenities Operative could undertake repairs or whether this was a Devon County Council matter.
- Concern was raised regarding the condition of the disabled toilet, including worn fittings, exposed padding, the need for repainting and marks from previous hand dryers. It was noted that potential funding had been discussed approximately six months previously, but no further information had been received.

  Members were advised that there are no other publicly accessible toilets along the Tarka Trail. The Café currently undertakes cleaning and provides toiletries, and clarification was sought as to whether the toilets could become solely Café facilities.

- The member of the public thought that there may be parcels of land available for sale, although no details had been seen or confirmed. It was put forward that the residents and the current leaseholders of the café would be interested in purchasing any land that may become available and would welcome the opportunity for such properties to be brought to the open market. Current lease holders of the café had previously discussed the possibility of purchasing the café with Councillors several years ago.

  Councillor Walker proposed suspending Standing Orders to respond to the matters raised, which was agreed.

  Cllr Walker advised that funding is available for public/disabled toilets and suggested that any refurbishment should be stoma-friendly. She noted that, as a changing table was already provided, a shelf would not

be required, but a long mirror would be beneficial and offered to assist with designs.

She clarified that the land referred to was not for sale but comprised assets which North Devon Council was considering transferring ahead of Local Government Reorganisation. The Parish Council had applied for areas it currently leases and/or manages. No land was currently available for public purchase.

The pothole was confirmed as a Devon County Council matter. Cllr Walker offered to provide details for reporting it online or by telephone.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

2609/04 **Minutes**

It was **resolved,** with no votes to the contrary, that the Minutes of the Assets and Facilities Committee held on the 21st May 2026 be approved.

2609/05 **Muddlebridge Allotments Pond Fencing**

Members considered a request from the Chairman of Muddlebridge Allotments to repair or replace the pond fencing, with quotations provided. Following review of the Parish Council's lease, the Administration & Projects Manager advised that there was no obligation for the Parish Council to undertake the works.

Cllr Tamlin suggested a sign warning of deep water. Cllr Bridgeman advised that, should allotment holders wish the works to proceed, they would be required to reimburse the Parish Council for any costs incurred.

It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, that the Parish Council would not proceed with replacing the fencing and would advise the allotment association accordingly. It was further agreed that a deep-water warning sign would be erected.

2609/06 **Tarka Ridge Allotments**

Members were updated on the transfer of Tarka Ridge Allotments. The title paperwork had been signed, and the Parish Council had received the keys and access to the building. A meeting had been arranged with those on the waiting list.

Members noted the unusual arrangement, with purpose-built buildings containing storage, WC and kitchen facilities connected to electricity and water, resulting in additional insurance and maintenance costs.

The Administration & Projects Manager made members aware that the plots were in a poor condition due to being left over the summer. It was suggested that the allotment plots be offered rent-free for the first year, given their current condition. Electricity and water usage would be recharged to allotment holders on a quarterly basis from 1 October 2026, with charges thereafter being issued annually.

Cllr Bridgeman asked whether an additional rent could be charged to build a fund for future maintenance. The Administration & Projects Manager advised that this had not been discussed.

It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary to agree the plots being rent free for the first year and to note the above information.

2609/07 **Queen Elizabeth II Playing Field - Drainage**

Members considered a specification for drainage works as part of the extension to the pavilion project and existing contract to address surface water pooling in the north-west corner of the playing field. The proposal included new drainage pipes connecting to the existing system and discharging into an attenuation pond on neighbouring land.

Members discussed the existing football pitch drainage and where this may discharge, and whether a provision regarding pitch drainage should be included if the recommendation was approved.

It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to approve the recommendation and proceed with the drainage works to alleviate water runoff.

2609/08 **Village Green**

Members considered the information and quotes regarding the removal of the diseased holm oak tree on the Village Green. The tree is exhibiting significant structural defect, including extensive internal decay, historic pruning wounds and associated fungal fruiting bodies, making retention inappropriate and removal the recommended management option. The proposal is to dismantle as close to ground level as reasonably practicable.

It was **resolved,** with no votes to the contrary, to approve the quotation received from Gavin Hendry Tree Surgery and Grounds Maintenance.

It was **resolved** that under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item as it involves the likely disclosure of confidential information.

**Part B**

2609/09 **Fremington Quay – Bike Shed**

Cllr Walker reported correspondence from the owner of the bike shed regarding an apparent discrepancy in the land ownership plans. North Devon Council's Estates Department had confirmed that the boundaries were correct and that no land belonging to the owner was included within Parish Council land.

Cllr Walker advised the owner accordingly. The owner subsequently requested a meeting with the Parish Council and North Devon Council Estates to discuss the potential purchase of land for a septic tank to serve the storage building. A provisional meeting date of 9th September had been agreed, with Cllr Walker, the Executive Officer and Administration & Projects Manager also attending.

Members noted the information and would await feedback from the meeting.

2609/10 **Beechfield Centre Changing Rooms**

Members received an update on the cleanliness of the changing rooms and were advised that standards remained satisfactory, although it was noted that the season was only beginning.

Members were advised that the Football Club had, on several occasions, paid for hall hire but failed to collect the key in advance, despite previously being reminded that this was the hirer's responsibility.

The office was subsequently contacted by a member of the public who had hired the hall immediately before the Club's booking. They advised that the Club had approached them for their key after failing to collect it, offering to reimburse their key deposit and claim this from the Parish Council.

The Club was reminded of the hire terms and conditions and advised that any difficulty collecting keys should be discussed with the office. Members were also advised that the Club appeared to be entering the hall before its booked time and outside its allocated set-up and take-down periods.

Cllr Can raised safeguarding concerns. Mr Heighton queried whether the key-fob system remained operational and offered to check this.

It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to remind the Football Club of the hire terms and conditions and to charge for additional hours where these were identified. It was further **resolved** that the Administration & Projects Manager investigate additional key access to the hall.

Meeting ended at 1.25pm

Signed: Helen Walker ..... Dated: 22/10/2026 .....