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44 High Street
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To Councillors, M Fay (Chair/Mayor), J Williams (Deputy Mayor), B Gear, G Coulter, T Elliott, G Schofield, P Crabb, D Turton, D Williams, M Newland, T Huggins, T Ebert, N Basil, J Quinn, J Irwin, N Jenner, M Turnbull, S Jennison.

You are hereby summoned to attend the **Ilfracombe Town Council Meeting** to be held on **14th September 2026 at 19:00 at Council Chambers, The Ilfracombe Centre, 44 High Street, Ilfracombe** for the purpose of transacting the following business.

In accordance with The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 members of the public are welcome to attend. Recording, photographs and filming – In accordance with the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 the press or public may audio-record, photograph or film meetings. As such, members of the public may be recorded or photographed during the meeting. Anyone wishing to record or photograph the meeting must notify the Town Clerk before the commencement of the meeting.

This meeting will be streamed and recorded live via Zoom. All guidance relating to this can be found in our Live Streaming and Recording of Public Council Meetings Policy available on our website. The meeting will be opened with prayers. Anyone not wishing to join during this period can request to be shown to the 'waiting room' and join the meeting directly afterwards.

Laura Donovan
Proper Officer
clerk@ilfracombetowncouncil.gov.uk

9th September 2026

AGENDA

1. **Welcome by Chair**
2. **To note apologies and reasons for absence.**
3. **To receive and record Declarations of Interest** as per Localism Act 2011 Section 31.
4. **To request any Chair's discretion** – for any matters or announcements for Information only.
5. **Public participation** – As per Standing Order 3 (e-i), members of the public are permitted to make representations, ask questions and give evidence in relation to any business relating to the Town Council. The period not exceeding 15 minutes to be allocated allowing members of the public to speak for up to 3 minutes.

6. **To determine which items, if any, of the agenda should be taken with the public excluded** – Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, Section 1, Paragraph 2.
7. **To adopt minutes of Full Council Meeting held 10th August 2026** and to note matters, updates and actions arising.
 - 7.1. To review and agree proposed amendment to Draft Minutes of Full Council Meeting as per correspondence
8. **To adopt minutes of Extraordinary meeting held 17th August 2026** and to note matters, updates and actions arising
9. **Minutes of Staffing Committee meeting (to note and approve recommendations)** – 17th August 2026 - Cllr M Fay
10. **Minutes of Planning Committee meeting (to note and approve recommendations)** – 17th August 2026 - Cllr J Williams
11. **Minutes of Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting (to note and approve recommendations)** – 24th August 2026 - Cllr T Huggins
 - 11.1. **Item F2608 – 6.1** To review and agree F&GP recommendation for public convenience door supplier
 - 11.2. **Item F2608 – 9.3.** To review and agree F&GP recommendation regarding report ITC 26072 – Festive Lighting Report
 - 11.3. **Item F2608 – 9.4.** To review and agree contract terms for Lantern Nursery
 - 11.4. **Item F2608 – 10.1.** To review and agree proposal to honour rental cost for fixed term
12. **ITC 26073 – Proper Officer Report**
13. **ITC 26074 – Responsible Finance Officer Report**
 - 13.1. To review and agree current accounting status
 - 13.2. To review and agree invoices for payment
 - 13.3. **ITC 26075 – Financial Risk Review (Sept 26)** - To review and agree
14. **ITC 26076 – Programme Manager Report** – including One Ilfracombe update
15. **To receive reports from County and District Councillors**
16. **To receive reports from Working Groups and Councillor Champions**
 - 16.1. **ITC 26077** – Public Health Champion Report – Cllr T Elliott
 - 16.2. **ITC 26078** – Report re Access to Health Services – Cllr T Elliott – To review and agree recommendation within the report
 - 16.3. **ITC 26079** – Solar Car Parks Report – Environment Champion Cllr N Basil – To reconvene the solar panels working group, to include the biodiversity working group, to consider options within the report
 - 16.4. **ITC 26080** – Council Youth Champion Report – Cllr D Williams
 - 16.5. **ITC 26081** – Slade Vision Centre Report – Cllr D Williams
17. **To receive correspondence/licenses/notices**
 - 17.1. MP Ian Roome's response regarding maternity services at North Devon Hospital
18. **Chairs Discretion** – for information only



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**ILFRACOMBE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES – 26 – 08
THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, THE ILFRACOMBE CENTRE, DEVON, EX34 9QB**

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held at 7:00pm on Monday 10th August 2026

Members Present:

Cllrs: M Fay (Chair/Mayor), J Williams (Deputy Mayor), B Gear, G Coulter, T Elliott, D Turton, D Williams, M Newland, T Huggins, T Ebert, N Basil, J Quinn, J Irwin, N Jenner, M Turnbull

Officers Present:

L Donovan (Proper Officer), I Howard (Minute Taker), C Coombs (Responsible Finance Officer), C Lovett (Project Officer)

Others present: Cllr S Wilson and 2 members of the public.

2608 - 1. Welcome by Chair

Cllr Fay welcomed the assembled.

2608 - 2. To receive and consider for approval, apologies and reasons for absence.

Apologies were received from Cllr S Jennison, P Crabb and Cllr Irwin (personal). Cllr G Schofield was absent from the meeting.

2608 - 3. To receive and record Declarations of Interest as per Localism Act 2011 Section 31.

None received.

2608 - 4. Chair's discretion – for any matters or announcements for Information only.

The PO had an item to raise.

2608 - 5. Public participation

A member of the public requested an update on both the Osborne and Grovener Hotels. The PO explained that these have both been raised through various forums, such as IRB, and any updates will be fed back in due course. Another member of the public questioned if ITC have any policies in place regarding social housing decisions. The PO explained that applications are brought to ITC through the Planning Committee from NDC and we are only consultees.

2608 - 6. To determine which items, if any, of the agenda should be taken with the public excluded – Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, Section 1, Paragraph 2.

No items to be taken with the public excluded.

2608 - 7. To adopt minutes of Full Council Meeting held 13th July 2026 and to note matters, updates and actions arising.

Motion to approve and adopt the above minutes was proposed by Cllr Fay, seconded by Cllr Coulter with all in favour.

2608 - 8. Minutes of Staffing Committee meeting (to note and approve recommendations) – 20th July 2026 - Cllr M Fay – These minutes were noted by members.

2608 - 9. Minutes of Planning Committee meeting (to note and approve recommendations) – 20th July 2026 - Cllr J Williams – These minutes were noted by members. Cllr Elliott provided an update on the North Devon Resort site, which had been raised under the Chair's Discretion. Following discussions with Building Control and Ilfracombe Fire Service, Cllr Elliott was advised that the barriers had been reinstated, but the windows remained unsecured. As the site is due to be renovated, it was hoped that work would begin soon to improve safety.

2608 - 10. Minutes of Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting (to note and approve recommendations) – 27th July 2026 - Cllr T Huggins – These minutes were noted by members.

2608 - 11. ITC 26064 – Proper Officer Report

2608 - 11.1. To review and agree an ITC response to the Scoping Consultation to be submitted by 11th August 2026 – Motion to agree the response, as it stands within the combined papers, was proposed by Cllr Fay, seconded by Cllr Coulter with all favour. The PO will send of the response tomorrow before the deadline.

2608 – 11.2. To review and agree a spend on a replacement vehicle for the Facilities Team – Motion to agree a spend of up to £12,000 was proposed by Cllr Gear, seconded by Cllr J Williams with all in favour.

2608 – 11.3. To review and agree installation of Royal Mail Postal Locker at Ropery Road Car Park – Motion to agree the installation of the locker was proposed by Cllr Newland, seconded by Cllr Huggins with all in favour.

2608 - 12. ITC 26065 – Responsible Finance Officer Report

2608 – 12.1. To review and agree current accounting status – The RFO provided a verbal report to members, including the current status of the accounts, this was agreed by members.

2608 – 12.2. To review and agree invoices for payment – Cllr Huggins proposed to agree the submitted invoices on the addendum, for payment, this was seconded by Cllr Fay with all in favour.

2608 - 13. ITC 26066 – Programme Manager Report – including One Ilfracombe update – This report was noted by members.

2608 - 14. To receive reports/proposals from Ilfracombe Town Councillors

2608 – 14.1. ITC 26067 – Together for Tomorrow – Cllr M Turnbull & Cllr N Basil – This report was noted by members.

2608 - 15. To receive reports from County and District Councillors

2608 – 15.1. DCC Cllr Wilson report – This report was noted by members.

Cllr Newland left the meeting at 19:53hrs.

2608 - 16. To receive reports from Working Groups and Councillor Champions

2608– 16.1. ITC 26068 – Public Health Champion Report – Cllr T Elliott – Members noted the report and highlighted that concessionary rates for community groups may need to be reviewed.

2608– 16.2. ITC 26069 – Maternity Services Report – Cllr T Elliott – Following discussion, Cllr Elliott proposed to send a letter to both the Secretary of State for Health and MP Ian Roome including the concerns raised in the meeting in addition to those included in the report. This was seconded by Cllr D Williams, with all in favour. The PO will write and send these letters following the meeting.

2608 - 17. To adopt draft Biodiversity Policy and Action Plan – Motion to adopt the policy and plan as it stands was proposed by Cllr Fay, seconded by Cllr Jenner with all in favour.

2608 - 18. To receive correspondence/licenses/notices

2608 - 18.1. Letter from Police & Crime Commissioner in reply to ITC letter sent 15th June 26 – This correspondence was noted by members.

2608 – 18.2. Letter from MP Ian Roome in relation to Wildersmouth Beach – This correspondence was noted by members.

2608 – 18.3. DCC Speed Limit Proposal – to agree comments/objections on behalf of ITC – Members raised no comments or objections, and the proposal was noted.

2608 - 19. Chairs Discretion – for information only – The PO reported on discussions concerning the Larkstone Pitch and Putt contract with NDC. Cllr S Wilson explained that the matter was initially to be decided by officers but will now be considered by NDC's Strategy and Resources Committee in September. Members wished to express their views by letter; however, no decision could be made under Chair's Discretion. The PO advised that members could submit comments individually, call an extraordinary meeting, or wait until the next F&GP Committee meeting.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 20:34hrs, the next Full Council Meeting will take place on Monday 14th September 2026 at 19:00hrs in the Council Chambers.

Cllr Mark Fay (Mayor)
Ilfracombe Town Council
Chair

10/08/2026

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 16 August 2026 17:24
To: Ilfracombe Town Council
Subject: Request for amendment to August 2026 Full Council minutes – Public Participation

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Categories: [REDACTED]

CAUTION: This email originated from outside North Devon Council. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Town Clerk,

I am writing regarding item **2608 – 5. Public Participation** in the August 2026 FC minutes, in which I am referred to as "another member of the public".

I am disappointed with the way my question has been recorded, as I do not believe the minute accurately reflects what I asked.

The minutes currently state:

"Another member of the public questioned if ITC have any policies in place regarding social housing decisions."

That was not the question I put to the Council.

My question was, in substance, that **if councillors put their individual political allegiances aside, did Ilfracombe Town Council, collectively, have an opinion on the private development of property in Ilfracombe which may then be allocated to people who have never been on the social housing list for this area?**

I appreciate that minutes are not intended to be a verbatim transcript of proceedings. However, I do believe they should accurately record the substance of a question raised during public participation. In this instance, reducing my question to whether ITC has "any policies in place regarding social housing decisions" materially changes both its meaning and its purpose.

I would therefore ask that this section of the minutes is amended so that it provides a fair and accurate summary of the question I actually put to the Council.

I would suggest wording along the following lines:

"A member of the public asked whether, putting individual political allegiances aside, ITC collectively had a view on the private development of property in Ilfracombe which may subsequently be allocated to people who have never been on the social housing list for the area."

I would be grateful if this requested amendment could be considered before the minutes are approved as an accurate record.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]



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**ILFRACOMBE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES – 26 – 08
THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, THE ILFRACOMBE CENTRE, DEVON, EX34 9QB**

Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting to be held on Monday 17th August 2026 at 7:30pm (Following Planning Committee meeting)

Members Present:

Cllrs: M Fay (Mayor/ Chair), J Williams (Deputy Mayor), B Gear, G Coulter, G Schofield, D Williams, N Basil, J Irwin, N Jenner, M Turnbull

Officers Present:

I Howard (Minute Taker), L Donovan (Proper Officer)

E2608 - 1. Welcome by Chair - Cllr Fay welcomed the assembled.

E2608 - 2. To receive and consider for approval, apologies and reasons for absence. – Apologies were received from Cllr J Quinn. Cllrs T Huggins, T Ebert, P Crabb, D Turton, T Elliott, M Newland and S Jennison were absent from the meeting.

E2608 - 3. To receive and record Declarations of Interest as per Localism Act 2011 Section 31. – None received.

E2608 - 4. Chair's discretion – for any matters or announcements for Information only. – None received.

E2608 - 5. Public participation – None received.

E2608 - 6. To determine which items, if any, of the agenda should be taken with the public excluded – Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, Section 1, Paragraph 2. – No items to be taken with the public excluded.

E2608 - 7. To review and agree Ilfracombe Town Council's position in relation to the land currently known as the Pitch and Putt at Hillsborough. – Following discussion, Cllr Fay proposed writing to the NDC Strategy and Resources Committee to support retaining the area as an affordable amenity for the community, including young people, and visitors, rather than using it for rewilding. The letter should also ask NDC members to put the contract out to tender before deciding to discontinue the Pitch and Putt. Cllr D Williams seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

E2608 - 8. Chairs Discretion – for information only – None received.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 19:44hrs.

Cllr Mark Fay (Mayor)
Ilfracombe Town Council
Chair

17/08/2026



MINUTES – 26 – 08

THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, THE ILFRACOMBE CENTRE, DEVON EX34 9QB

Minutes of the Staffing Committee Meeting held at 10:00am on Monday 17th August 2026

Members Present:

Councillors: M Fay (Mayor/Chair), G Coulter, B Gear, J Irwin, J Williams (Deputy Mayor)

Officers Present:

L Donovan (Proper Officer), S Seatherton (Programme Manager)

Others present: Cllr D Williams.

S2608 - 1. Welcome by Chair

Cllr Fay welcomed the assembled.

S2608 - 2. To receive and consider for approval, apologies and reasons for absence.

Apologies were received from Cllrs Crabb

S2608 - 3. To receive and record Declarations of Interest. A book for members to record their declarations of interest will be made available.

None received.

S2608 - 4. Chair's discretion for any matters or announcements for Information Only.

PO had one item to raise.

S2608 - 5. Public participation

None

S2608 - 6. To adopt the minutes of the meeting held 20th July 2026 and note matters arising

Motion to adopt the minutes was proposed by Cllr Fay, seconded by Cllr Gear with all in favour.

S2608 - 7. To determine which items, if any, of the agenda should be taken with the public excluded "Part B":

None

S2608 - 8. Updates:

S2608 – 8.1. To review and agree all annual leave, sick absence, accrued time/agreed overtime & workload implication:

The PO updated members on one current staff absence with a planned phased return to work. Members were in agreement that this was a sensible option due to the nature of the employees work.

The PM highlighted that due to the ongoing workload around the Town of Culture project there is the possibility that there will be an amount of unclaimed leave. This was noted and will be monitored in relation to the employees welfare.

S2608 – 8.2. To consider and agree any training or conference requirements and requests

The PO mentioned some bespoke training around communications and engagement. It was agreed by members that this was worthwhile doing and can be made available to all staff and councillors in due course.

S2608 – 8.3. Update on any staffing reviews:

PO has completed all reviews. PM's team will have their reviews all scheduled and completed by the next staffing meeting in September. The PM and PO to complete their appraisal documentation and forward onto the Chair accordingly.

S2608 - 9. Project Feedback

S2608 – 9.1. Report on progress against the Programme Manager's programme overview with resource management/pinch-points:

PM reported that One Ilfracombe (OI) projects being formulated into one powerpoint type presentation in order that the work being done is more visual to members.

S2608 – 9.2. To review and agree work requirements regarding Town of Culture bid:

Now that a meeting has been had with the DCMS there is clearer understanding as to the quantity of work required. We are managing this internally with some additional staff hours to be funded from the available funding. Equally there is management of capacity taking place all the time and community members are being helpful with offering of their time.

S2608 - 10. Proper Officer Update

S2608 – 10.1. Update on recruitment of Facilities Officer position:

PO updated members that there were 5 applications for the position and that interviews are due to be set up shortly.

S2608 - 11. Correspondence

S2608 – 11.1. Email from Cllr Elliott regarding Litter/Staffing

This correspondence was raised and discussed. Due to the current employment process of a new Facilities operative and the ongoing internal work with NDC it was felt that there wasn't the capacity at this point in time to recruit another staff member however this will be re-evaluated on a regular basis prior to 2027/28 budgeting taking place.

S2608 - 12. Chairs Discretion – for information only

The PO raised the fact that WorkNest had updated the Employee Handbook and all new contracts. These will be brought to the next meeting for final approval.

The meeting closed at 10:50am. The next Staffing committee meeting will be held on Monday 21st September 2026 at 10:00am in the Council Chamber.

Cllr Mark Fay
Chair
Ilfracombe Town Council

17/08/26

DRAFT



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ILFRACOMBE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES – 26 – 08
THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, THE ILFRACOMBE CENTRE, DEVON, EX34 9QB

Minutes of the Planning and Environment Committee Meeting held at 7:00pm on
Monday 17TH August 2026

Members Present:

Cllrs: J Williams (Chair/Deputy Mayor), D Williams (Deputy Chair), M Fay (Mayor), G Coulter, G Schofield, N Basil.

Officers Present:

I Howard (Minute Taker), L Donovan (Proper Officer)

P2608 - 1. Welcome by Chair

Cllr J Williams welcomed the assembled.

P2608 - 2. To receive and consider for approval, apologies and reasons for absence.

None received.

P2608 - 3. To receive and record Declarations of Interest as per Localism Act 2011 Section 31.

None received.

P2608 - 4. Chair's discretion – for any matters or announcements for Information only.

None received.

P2608 - 5. Public participation

None received.

P2608 - 6. To adopt minutes of Planning meeting held 20th July 2026 and to note matters arising.

Motion to adopt the minutes was proposed by Cllr D Williams and seconded by Cllr G Coulter, with all members in favour.

P2608 - 7. To determine which items, if any, of the agenda should be taken with the public excluded – Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, Section 1, Paragraph 2

No items to be taken with the public excluded.

P2608 - 8. To consider planning policies, applications and appeals received and resolve to submit comments where appropriate. Please note that any applications received following the issue of this agenda will be considered (Appendix I – to be circulated)

Application Number	Applicant	Detail	End of consultation	Comments

81698	Jenny Tippetts	Installation of an ATM, internally illuminated ATM signage, and reinstatement manifestation - 23 High Street Ilfracombe Devon EX34 9DA	26/08/2026	
Discussion: No concerns were raised with this application. Recommendation: Support. Motion to support this application was proposed by Cllr D Williams, seconded by Cllr Schofield with all in favour.				
81699	Jenny Tippetts	Siting of internally illuminated ATM signage - 23 High Street Ilfracombe Devon EX34 9DA	26/08/2026	
Discussion: No concerns were raised with this application. Recommendation: Support. Motion to support this application was proposed by Cllr D Williams, seconded by Cllr Schofield with all in favour.				
81952	Joanna Payne	Creation of Parking area - 11 Chambercombe Park Terrace Chambercombe Park Road Ilfracombe Devon EX34 9QW	04/09/2026	
Discussion: Members had no issues with this application. Recommendation: Support. Motion to support this application was proposed by Cllr Schofield, seconded by Cllr Basil with all in favour.				
82059	Barbara Clarke	Change of use and conversion of 2nd & 3rd floor offices to 1no. residential maisonette - 97 High Street Ilfracombe Devon EX34 9NH	04/09/2026	
Discussion: No concerns were raised with this application. Recommendation: Support. Motion to support this application was proposed by Cllr D Williams, seconded by Cllr Coulter with all in favour.				
82042	Mr & Mrs Swinton	Extensions to dwelling to include a balcony together with internal and external alterations - Seerose St Brannocks Park Road Ilfracombe Devon EX34 8HX	04/09/2026	
Discussion: Members found no issues with this application. Recommendation: Support.				

Motion to support this application was proposed by Cllr Schofield, seconded by Cllr D Williams with all in favour.				
82065	N Theobald	Erection of a forestry building - Long Meadow Lee Ilfracombe Devon EX34 8LW	08/09/2026	
Discussion: Members supported the application while noting the concerns raised by the LLRA. Recommendation: Support. Motion to support this application was proposed by Cllr Basil, seconded by Cllr D Williams with all in favour.				
81986	Poltair Homes	Approval of details in respect of discharge of condition 5 (CEMP), 8 (Site Waste Management Plan), 9 (WSI) and 21 (Construction Phasing Plan) attached to planning permission 75724 Erection of residential development of 46 dwellings together with associated infrastructure - Land to the east of Worth Road Ilfracombe	06/08/2026	To note only
Discussion: This application was noted by members.				
81992	Haines	Notification of works to trees in a conservation area in respect of reduction of end weight from selective limbs and lateral spread on south-west quadrant 1x Monterey Pine (T1) - 2 Torrs Walk Avenue Ilfracombe Devon EX34 8AU	N/A	To note only
Discussion: This application was noted by members.				
82030	Rowe	Notification of works to trees in a conservation area in respect of reduction to height and lateral spread to the South 1 x Scots Pine (T1) and crown reduction to previous pruning points group of 4 x Sycamores (G1) - The Firs Torrs Walk Avenue Ilfracombe Devon EX34 8AU	N/A	To note only

Discussion: This application was noted by members.				
81889	Nick Pullen	Approval of details in respect of part discharge of condition 3 (BGP/LEMP) attached to planning permission 78594 (conversion of one dwelling to form two dwellings together with associated works) - Elms Court Torrs Park Ilfracombe Devon EX34 8BA	28/08/2026	To note only
Discussion: This application was noted by members.				

P2608 - 9. NDC Decisions – See Planning Notes – Read out.

P2608 - 10. Correspondence – None received.

P2608 - 11. Chairs Discretion – for information only – None received.

The meeting was declared closed at 19:17hrs, the next Planning Committee Meeting will take place Monday 21st September 2026 at 19:00hrs in the Council Chambers.

Cllr J Williams
Chair / Deputy Chair
Ilfracombe Town Council

17/08/2026



Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting
Monday 24th August 2026 at 7:00 pm
Venue – Council Chamber – The Ilfracombe Centre, High Street, Ilfracombe

Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Meeting held at 7:00pm on Monday
24th August 2026

Members Present:

Cllrs: J Quinn (Deputy Chair), B Gear, J Irwin, N Basil and S Jennison

Officers Present:

L Donovan (Proper Officer), C Coombs (Responsible Finance Officer) and I Howard (Minute
Taker)

F2608 - 1. Welcome by Chair – In the absence of Cllr T Huggins (Chair), Cllr Quinn opened the meeting as Deputy Chair. The PO requested that agenda items F2608 – 6.1 and F2608 – 7 be reordered so that an item could be considered with the public excluded. All members agreed.

F2608 - 2. To receive and consider for approval, apologies and reasons for absence. – Apologies were received from Cllrs T Huggins, G Coulter, P Crabb and D Turton (all personal).

F2608 - 3. To receive and record Declarations of Interest as per Localism Act 2011 Section 31. – None received.

F2608 - 4. Chair's discretion – for any matters or announcements for Information only. – None received.

F2608 - 5. Public participation – None received.

F2608 - 6. To adopt minutes of F&GP meeting held 27th July 2026 and to note matters arising. – Motion to adopt these minutes were approved by Cllr Gear, seconded by Cllr Quinn with all in favour.

F2608 – 6.1. Public convenience doors F2607 – 9.7. To review quotes for recommendation to Full Council in relation to doors for public conveniences – Following review of the quotations it was agreed that the PO will request further information from suppliers to enable a like for like comparison to ensure fair comparison. – **To review and make recommendation to Full Council toilet door contractor following updated information.** – This item was taken with the public excluded.

F2608 - 7. To determine which items, if any, of the agenda should be taken with the public excluded – Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, Section 1, Paragraph 2. – The PO suggested items F2608 – 6.1. and F2608 – 9.3. be taken with the public excluded due to contractual reasons. This was proposed by Cllr Irwin, seconded by Cllr Gear with all in favour.

F2608 - 8. Finance and Audit – RFO Report ITC 26070

F2608 – 8.1. To approve and authorise Accounts and authorise by signature monthly bank reconciliations. - The accounts were proposed by Cllr Gear, seconded by Cllr Quinn

with all in favour. These reconciliations were approved. The signatures for the reconciliations were taken prior to the meeting.

F2608 – 8.2. To receive and approve items of expenditure including addendum submitted on the day. – Cllr Gear proposed that all expenditure items, including those on the addendum, be approved for payment. This was seconded by Cllr Irwin and unanimously agreed.

F2608 – 8.3. ITC 26071 – To consider and propose preferred option from the Maintenance Quote from Expert Access Solutions for the Front Door Servicing. – Following discussion, Cllr Quinn proposed to go with the 3* cover option for the doors, this was seconded by Cllr Gear with all in favour.

F2608 - 9. General Purposes

F2608 – 9.1. Town Team Update – The meeting has not yet taken place, so no update is currently available.

F2608 – 9.2. IRB update. – The meeting has not yet taken place, so no update is currently available.

F2608 – 9.3. ITC 26072 - Festive Lighting Report–To review and agree recommendation to Full Council. – This item was taken with the public excluded.

F2608 – 9.4. Lantern Nursery update – To review and agree work highlighted in correspondence from potential new lessee. – Following discussion, members agreed to undertake the requested remedial works, subject to sufficient evidence that the prospective tenant intends to lease the premises. A proposal setting out the committee's preferred contract terms will also be presented to Full Council.

F2608 - 10. Correspondence

F2608 – 10.1. Email from Games Galore – Members agreed that the request did not comply with the ITC grant policy. However, the PO will submit a proposal to Full Council seeking discretionary approval to honour the rental rate agreed before the room change.

F2608 - 11. Chairs Discretion – for information only – None received.

At this point, the meeting continued with the press and public excluded under the below regulations. This was proposed by Cllr Gear, seconded by Cllr Quinn with all in favour. All officers were invited to stay.

The Regulations State: that under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of the Public Bodies (admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for this item of business in view of the likely disclosure of confidential matters about information relating to an individual, and information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person, within the meaning of paragraph 1 and 8 of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (see section 1 and part 1 of schedule 1 to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

F2608 – 6.1. Public convenience doors F2607 – 9.7. To review quotes for recommendation to Full Council in relation to doors for public conveniences – Following review of the quotations it was agreed that the PO will request further information from suppliers to enable a like for like comparison to ensure fair comparison. – To review and make recommendation to Full Council toilet door contractor following updated information. – After reviewing the tender comparison report, Cllr Gear proposed recommending to Full Council that Healthmatic be appointed to supply the public convenience doors. Cllr Quinn seconded the proposal, which was unanimously approved. The recommendation will be considered at the September Full Council meeting.

F2608 – 9.3. ITC 26072 – Festive Lighting Report–To review and agree recommendation to Full Council. – Following discussion, Cllr Gear proposed to recommend ITC go for the Blachere Illumination quote for purchasing the displays as per report ITC 26072. This was seconded by Cllr Jennison with all in favour. This item will be brought to Septembers Full Council meeting for final approval.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 20:07hrs, the next Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting will take place on Monday 28th September 2026 at 19:00hrs in the Council Chambers.

**Cllr Jon Quinn
Vice Chair of Finance & General Purposes Committee
Ilfracombe Town Council**

24/08/2026



REPORT TO: Full Council
 DATE: 9th September 2026
 SUBJECT: Proper Officer Report
 PREPARED BY: Laura Donovan

REPORT NO: ITC 26073

INTRODUCTION

This report is an update on Ilfracombe Town Council activity and work taken place as of 5th August to 9th September 2026.

REPORT

Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

As of the 8/9/2026 the decision to pause and review LGR has been made by the Secretary of State. This has obviously changed the way things will happen next year and District will continue with their elections alongside the parish and town election in May 2027. As per the email by NDC's CEO, we currently have no further information however as it comes in I will report back.

(Written pre 7/09/2026) Following on from the information we had last month, we now know what the warding for the new Devon Council will be ahead of the May Shadow Council elections. The warding determines how many councillors from our area will be able to stand for the new shadow council.

Ilfracombe has been joined with Woolacombe/Mortehoe allowing for the option of 3 council positions. We have been told by NDC that this is a temporary warding pattern and that the Boundary Commission will do a full review at some point within the first term.

Information on LGR for Devon can be found at [Local Government Reorganisation in Devon - Future Devon](#)

There have been a number of meetings that I have attended in relation to LGR together with other clerks, chairs and DALC. These have led to some further work needing to be done in order to develop positive founding principles that can be presented to the new council to encourage more collaborative working between the town and parish councils and that of the unitary council.

These principles hopefully will equally help establish how town and parish councils will be represented within the unitary authorities future Neighbourhood Area Committees structure. DALC is helping in facilitating a lot of this work.

Clustering

Our first informal clustering event will be taking place on the 30th September to include Clerks and Chairs. My hope is that this will lead to a wider collaborative working arrangement with our neighbouring parishes. – Following the recent announcement we have heard that South and North Molton are not continuing with their cluster meetings. As it stands the remainder of these meetings will continue as planned.

Facilities Team

As of the 14th September, we have welcomed a new member to the team. This will give the facilities team greater resilience and will enable them to cover more work around Ilfracombe.

Town of Culture

There has been a significant amount of work to support the Town of Culture Team, with the aim of helping to protect their capacity and ensure they are able to focus on delivery. Please can I ask that everyone fills in the relevant survey at www.ilfracombetownofculture.co.uk. Equally please encourage your friends, family and constituents to do the same.

Lee & Lincombe Update from Pat Coates

Hotel Site Development:

Work on the development restarted in August but really picked up following the August Bank Holiday.

At the time of writing the site is full of contractors and work is back to normal funding having been agreed to complete the works. The development is scheduled to be completed by 12th December 2026.

National Trust Car Park:

The Car Park is expected to open on 14th September 2026.

The catering kiosk was put out to tender, and it has been confirmed that the tender was won by Beth and Jim who have The Porthole in Woolacombe. The outlet will be called The Mermaid, and the kiosk should be built Autumn 2026 and is likely to open early 2027.

Although the car park will open in September some of the planting will not take place until October onwards following the very dry summer.

The area around the Lee toilets has been cleared and wooden fencing installed.

Town of Culture shortlist:

A post box has been installed at The Memorial Hall car park along with postcards and a poster with a QR code to enable Lee and Lincombe residents to give their thoughts on Ilfracombe Culture. This has been publicised on the village WhatsApp group.

Upcoming Events

Date	Event
10-11 October	Ilfracombe Photography Festival
16-17 October	Ilfracombe History & Fashion Exhibition



REPORT TO: Full Council
 SUBJECT: Finance Officer Report

REPORT NO: ITC 26074

DATE: 9th September 2026
 PREPARED BY: Carole Coombs

Item 13.1 Accounts - Draft for August 26

Bank Accounts	Business Account - 00116559	Commercial Call Account - 07111498 (Drip Account)	CCLA - Working Reserve	CCLA - Specified Reserve	Lloyds Charge Card	Reception Cashier Safe	Petty Cash - Office	Petty Cash - Reception	Lloyds Cardnet	Stripe	Total Funds held
Bank Account Statement 31/07/26	£69,575.32	£27,097.16	£227,230.49	£450,066.05	-£139.08	£60.00	£50.93	£43.49	£126.85	£0.00	£774,111.21
Bank Account Statement 31/08/26	£91,628.18	£27,109.04	£227,230.49	£452,269.96	£490.33	£435.00	£50.93	£25.27	£60.04	£0.00	£798,318.58
Income /receipts*	£92,022.78	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	0	£835.00	£0.00	£0.00	£1,114.80	£1,290.30	£95,262.88
Interest in	£0.00	£11.88	£739.47	£1,464.44	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£2,215.79
Transfer in to account	£2,912.40	£0.00	£0.00	£739.47	£139.08	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£3,790.95
Expenditure in month (includes VAT repayment where appropriate)	£72,743.24	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£490.33	£0.00	£0.00	£18.22	£0.00	£0.00	£73,251.79
Bank Charges	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£19.51	£0.00	£19.51
Transfer out of account	£139.08	£0.00	£739.47	£0.00	£0.00	£460.00	£0.00	£0.00	£1,162.10	£1,290.30	£3,790.95
Bank Account Statement 31/08/26	£91,628.18	£27,109.04	£227,230.49	£452,269.96	£490.33	£435.00	£50.93	£25.27	£60.04	£0.00	£798,318.58
Debtors (+)										£17,323.06	£17,323.06
Unpresented cheques (-)	£0.00										£0.00
Vat repayment due (-)										£9,574.69	£9,574.69
Creditors Invoices now req for payment (-)										£44,242.36	£44,242.36
Actual	£91,628.18	£27,109.04	£227,230.49	£452,269.96	£490.33	£435.00	£50.93	£25.27	£60.04	£36,493.99	£761,824.59
Bank Interest and Service Charges Bank Interest £2215.79 Bank Service Charges £19.51 Transfer to Reserves £0.0 Other Items of Note											



Outstanding Customer Payments Due up to 31.8.26

Debtors	not yet due	30-60 days	60-90 days	90 - 120 days	Older
MAKO	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£159.83
IT	£486.00	£108.00	£470.00	£60.50	£0.00
NDM	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£10.00	£0.00
DMHAT	£412.50	£412.50	£140.45	£0.00	£0.00
NT	£0.00	£364.25	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
HWD	£0.00	£170.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
LB	£40.00	£95.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
SWP	£550.00	£70.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Others not yet due	£13774.03	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Sub TOTALS	£15262.53	£1,219.75	£610.45	£70.50	£159.83
Total Due	£17,323.06				

All of these debtors have been contacted and the majority paid at the beginning of September.

13.2 Invoices for Payment by ITC

Invoices Due for Approval	Amount	Comments
AIB Merchant Services	£224.17	
Amazon	£35.92	
Autologic	£11,694.00	
Biffa	£274.76	
Churches Fire and Security	£120.60	
Concorde Copiers	£217.73	
EDF Ropery	£596.81	
EDF Memorial	£19.53	
EDF Lantern - Elec	£639.17	
EDF Lantern - Gas	£7.61	
EDF - Brimlands/Larkstone	£40.72	
EDF ITC Elec	£677.38	
EDF - ITC Gas	£7.61	
EDF - Lee Bay	£21.51	
EDF - Hele Bay	£45.24	
EON Next - St J Toilet	£65.00	
EXCEL	£125.78	
Flowbird Smart City UK Ltd		Not yet received
Freshout		Not yet received
Get to it		Not yet received
IPS	£278.64	
Linneal	£40.74	
Lloyds Bank Charge Card	£490.33	
Lyreco	£75.56	
Millbeck		Not yet received
North Devon Council - 0% vat	£25,434.20	
North Devon Council - 20% Vat		Not yet received



O2		Not yet received
One Ilfracombe		Not yet received
Pedlars		Not yet received
Pod Point	£896.57	
RGB Building Supplies	£68.41	
RINGGO	£887.06	
Sage	£51.60	
SLCC	£99.00	
Screw Fix	£273.49	
SWW - Hele	£74.73	
Spot on	£112.61	
Telecoms Consortium		Not yet received
N Townsend	£240.00	
D Tubbs - Greenclose Road Rent	£360.00	
Water2Business - STJ Toliet		Not yet received
Yu Energy - Gas - Greenclose	£13.08	
Yu Energy - Electric	£32.80	
TOTAL	£44,242.36	

13.3 ITC 26075 - Financial Risk Review to be reviewed and accepted

Please see attached Risk review and the following actions which will need to be addressed:

- The internal auditor is to be confirmed this will happen hopefully in October as awaiting information from APB as to name change and company structure
- Asset Management needs to be updated. This is linked to the review of finance, accounting and management software.

Both of this actions are of Low to Medium acceptability of risk.

Other items to note

- **Budget setting for 27/28** – This is now in progress and the budget spreadsheet is being generated for F & GP in October
- **Agar** -This is nearing completion by the external examiner PKL with all queries having been answered and we expect their report by the end of September
- **PPL/PRS submission** – this is being investigated as we should have this for both the Lantern and ITC offices, we are still awaiting information from them.

Report Prepared by Carole Coombs on 9th September 2026



Risk	Impact	Acceptable Risk Level	Control Action / Internal Control	Audit /Review / Assess / Revise			
Finance					September 2026 – 9.9.26	December 26/January 27	March 27
Precept Determination	Adequacy of precept Requirements not submitted to North Devon Council in time Amount not received by North Devon Council Fit for purpose	L	- Regular budget review by the Council. - Precept should be considered by Council before the deadline as set out in the Financial Regulations. - The RFO to report to the Council when monies not received. - Councillors receive monthly expenditure against budget reports to show how the accounts are performing against the budget.	Review as part of the Financial Regulations.	Budget continues to be reviewed Monthly as part of F and GP committee meetings – on track for first quarter		
		L			Precept to be review in Q2 budget setting spreadsheet being populated and should be ready at end of September		
		L			Debtors & Creditors remain a regular part of the F&GP agenda and also Full Council		
		L			Budget continues to be reviewed Monthly as part of F and GP committee meetings Accounting for all income and expenditure part of the regular reporting for both F&GP and Full Council		
Financial Records	Inadequate records Financial irregularities	L	The Council has adopted the Financial Regulations which set out the requirements.	Review the Financial Regulations annually.	These were reported on in Report ITC 20098 January F and GP and recommended to Full council in February 26 Will next be reviewed in December/January		



		L	Monthly reconciliations are carried out.		Reconciliations correct up to date and signed off at monthly F&GP committee		
Data Protection Act	inadequate Protection of Financial Data potential breaches	L	Financial Data This should be held in line with the Data Protection Act and Assertion 10 of the AGAR reporting template		All Policies reviewed and updated in April 26 as part of the integration of Assertion 10 in the Agar Template		
Bank and Banking	Inadequate checks Bank mistakes Loss Charges Loss of signatories	L L L	- The Council has adopted the Financial Regulations which set out the requirements for all methods of banking, cheques and reconciliation of accounts. - The RFO reconciles the bank accounts and any problems / irregularities are dealt with immediately by informing the bank and awaiting their correction. - Mayor, Chair and Vice Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee are signatories, plus the Proper Officer and the Responsible Finance Officer. Two members plus the Proper Officer	Policies and Procedures in place to cover these systems and reviewed in line with schedule	Existing procedure adequate. Reconciliations correct up to date and signed off at monthly F&GP committee Signatories were ratified in June full council meeting following changes in council committee membership and to		



			or Responsible Finance Officer have to sign cheques.		ratify the signatories across accounts.		
Rental income	Failure of tenants/hirers to settle invoices	M	Regular review of debtors and chasing of outstanding invoices.	Bad debt policy in place and reviewed in line with schedule Regular bi monthly review by F&GP and Full Council.	Existing procedure maintained and has been strengthened to include use of small claims court with time frames		
Payments	Goods not supplied but invoiced Invoices incorrect Invoices unpaid	M M M L	- All invoices checked and initialled for accuracy and receipt of goods/services by Responsible Officer or designated finance assistants. - List of payments presented to Full Council monthly. - Clear audit trail of all expenditure. - Sage Online Accounts system used.	System in place and reviewed in line with policy and procedure schedules	Existing procedures adequate		
Approval of expenditure	Unauthorised purchases Fraud	L L	- All payments authorised in line with adopted Financial Regulations. - Expenditure approved via F&GP and Full	Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy and Whistleblowing Policy all reviewed in line	Existing procedure adequate These were reported on in ITC 2098 January F and GP and recommended to Full council in February 26		



			Council	with schedules			
Cheque books	Loss of cheques Fraudulent use	L L	- Cheque books held securely. - No blank cheques signed.	Cash handling policies in place which cover cheque handling. Reviewed in line with policy and procedure review schedules	Existing procedure adequate		
Cash / Loss	Loss through theft or dishonesty	L L L L	- The Council has adopted the Financial Regulations which set out the requirements. - Cash / cheques received are banked as soon as practicably possible. - The Petty cash tin is locked and the tin is placed in a locked drawer. - Regular counts and reconciliations are made of the Petty cash by the Responsible finance officer - All discrepancies brought to full council	policies in place which cover all cash handling Reviewed in line with policy and procedure review schedules.	Existing Procedures adequate and reviewed regularly		



Annual Return	Completion and submitted within time limits	L	Annual return is completed and submitted to the internal auditor for checking and completion. Approved by Council and signed before sending to the External Auditor within time limits.	Independent External audit by accountant conducted twice yearly to coincide with mid year and year end points (Sept and April) Paper work for the AGAR report to be completed for the April visit.	Completed and submitted to PKL on time awaiting PKL report to publish online Existing procedures adequate The independent Auditor has not been confirmed yet as awaiting information from APB with regard to name change. This is anticipated before the end of October when a date for audit review is due		
Reporting and auditing	Information Communicated Auditing and Governance	L L L	- Budget against expenditure report produced and examined by the Finance & General Purposes Committee monthly. - Council undertakes External (AGAR) - and Internal - independent audits	Budgets, accounts and invoicing are standing agenda items as part of the Responsible officer reports provided to both Full Council and F& GP committee Council appoints an independent Auditor annually.	Existing procedures adequate		



Grants and support	Power to pay Authorisation of Council to pay	L	All such expenditure goes through the required Council process of approval, minuted and listed. Grant application form has been devised to keep up to date records of applications.	This process is the remit of the Grant Committee and reviewed but them and the Proper Officer. For suitability on an ongoing basis.	Existing procedure adequate All grants now agreed for 26/27 and payments made in May and June. New grant requests are being welcomed for 27/28 budget to be confirmed at the end of the year		
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[illegible]



Expenses	Fraud or incorrect claim	L	Mileage claims paid on completion of claim form and receipts provided, where applicable.	System in place and reviewed as part of the policy and procedure schedule	Existing procedure adequate These are minimal and procedure has been followed		
VAT	Reclaiming/charging	L	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements, VAT is claimed monthly.	This is part of the monthly reconciliation process on the sage system and linked to HMRC	Existing procedure adequate		
Election costs	Risk of an election cost	M	Risk is higher in an election year. When a scheduled election is due the Proper Officer will obtain an estimate of costs from the Local Authority. There are no measures which can be adopted to minimise the risk of having elections as this is a democratic process.	Council should consider saving each year to cover all costs.	Existing procedure adequate Yearly increase to reserve applied		



Assets	Loss or damage Risk/damage to third party/property	L L L L L	- Buildings and property insured and reviewed annually. - Building valuations carried out every 2 years. - Weekly fire alarm checks and quarterly servicing. - Buildings secured outside normal working hours. - An annual review of assets is undertaken for insurance provision, storage and maintenance provisions.	Review existing procedures adequate. Asset register to be updated annually.	Asset register available on paper and being transferred to Brisk Asset management programme work continues on this.		
Reserves	Inappropriate amounts in reserves accounts could lead to excess monies tied up or not enough to cover emergency and planned contingencies	L	- Annual review of reserves portfolio and policy - Inclusion of reserves as part of the budgeting process and precept process. - Updating of the reserves portfolio annually to reflect coming year budget		Reserves incorporated into budget process and agreed January 26 as part of precept		

Document Reviewed: **9th September 2026** - C Coombs, RFO (Risk Levels reviewed.)

Next Risk review: December 26 – January 27

Future reviews: 3 per year scheduled for August/September, December / January and March / April



REPORT TO:	Full Council	REPORT NO: ITC 26077
DATE:	14 th September 2026	
SUBJECT:	Public Health Champion Report for Full Council	
PREPARED BY:	Cllr Terry Elliott	

The past month I have been solely focused on the decision of the Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust's decision to temporarily halt maternity services at North Devon District Hospital effective from 11th August 2026. In particular I have been exploring the impact on those due to giving birth imminently and those who are attending routine or high-risk obstetrics appointments, having to travel to Exeter from Ilfracombe.

I attended the emergency board meeting virtually on 29th July to hear the Board's explanation and the DCC Adult Care Scrutiny Committee virtually on 17th August (all 4 and a half hours). I must say that the Scrutiny Committee did a fantastic job of accountability, questioning the Chief Executive and other medical officers at the Trust, as to how, and why, this urgent decision was made and the consequences for anyone pregnant in North Devon. Their key recommendations are below and it was particularly good to witness that our Devon County Councillor Sara Wilson was given a place on the committee to ask some very pertinent questions.

- **Restoration Plan:** Demand a clear reopening plan from the NHS and trust for NDDH birthing services.
- **Impact Assessment:** Request an equality and quality impact assessment concerning long-distance travel to Exeter or Taunton.
- **Lessons-Learnt Review:** Require an inquiry into the unannounced staffing crisis and responses in other rural areas.
- **Fragile Services Report:** Urge a detailed report on broader health service fragility across Devon.
- **Letter to the Secretary of State:** Jointly write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care demanding national support for rural healthcare access.

I also attended the Living Well meeting at ITC on 2nd of September to share my concerns (having spoken to many people who are pregnant in Ilfracombe and their families, including at a rally) that there was a complete failure to plan for the difficulties many people face accessing healthcare further away. I could see little evidence that when the decision was taken to close the maternity unit that there had been thought given to how people on low incomes, without private transport, with co-morbidities/high risk pregnancies or with childcare responsibilities in remote areas like Ilfracombe, could travel to Exeter safely and affordably. The Trust appeared to scrabble around after the fact trying to put in place a messy mitigation plan that started with advice on where to claim financial help or benefits (no use if you have to pay out £200 on the day for a taxi, or if the benefit decision takes weeks or more to decide). The Trust then realised that this was unacceptable for the most financially vulnerable and then rushed to organise some other kind of option through school transport provision and finally a taxi voucher scheme. Despite a request I have not been able to identify which taxi firms in

Ilfracombe are taking part in the scheme, if any. Many of you know that taxis are hard to come by, especially at night, unless they are prebooked but of course labour and childbirth doesn't run to order like that.

The example of the decision around maternity is an echo of every other recent decision to remove healthcare services in North Devon that especially affect residents in Ilfracombe. Despite initiatives like the Poverty Truth Commission and Closing the Gap, and the recent focus on the link between deprivation and poor health, there is little evidence that low income is taken into consideration in planning around health services and what mitigations should be put in place. At the Living Well meeting, and at the Closing the Gap Meeting, I have been pushing to ensure that this will not continue to be the case. Socioeconomic status is not a protected characteristic but every responsible authority should take into account the poorest in our community and the impact of decision making on their ability to access health and other public services. I was asked by Living Well to update a report I compiled in February 2026 which I shared with the Town Council and I have attached the updated report in the hope that it can be used as evidence for health bodies to consider when deciding what services are offered and where. There should be equality of access for everyone who needs healthcare wherever they live. Services should plan for those who may be excluded due to cost, geography, age, disability or other factors.

Although by the time this report is discussed the decision will hopefully be made to return Maternity services to the most remote hospital in mainland England, lessons should be learned about the impact of removing health services for the least resilient in our community.



REPORT TO: Full Council
 DATE: 14th September 2026
 SUBJECT: **Report into access to healthcare for pregnant residents of Ilfracombe and surrounding areas who are reliant on public transport resulting from the decision to temporarily close maternity services at North Devon District Hospital**
 PREPARED BY: Cllr Terry Elliott – Public Health Champion Ilfracombe Town Council

In February 2026 I authored a report into the difficulties experienced by Ilfracombe residents on low incomes accessing health and other appointments, but who were without private transport. The report was widely shared.

The report highlighted pockets of high deprivation in Ilfracombe (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2025/english-indices-of-deprivation-2025-statistical-release>) and lower rates of car ownership, with a significant percentage of residents relying on public transport to access services provided elsewhere (Barnstaple, Exeter, Plymouth or Bristol). The report also drew attention to unreliable public transport and a bus timetable that excluded parts of the Town and outlying areas completely, or at certain times, such as after 6pm or on a Sunday in winter. It also indicated that the complexity of travelling further for health appointments without a car combined with the cost, made it prohibitive for some.

The recent resolution by the Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust's to temporarily halt maternity services at North Devon District Hospital effective from 11th August 2026, has provided an unfortunate example of how decisions taken centrally show little understanding of the barriers to accessing healthcare from remote areas of deprivation. Planning and mitigation to ensure that people who are pregnant could continue to receive safe prenatal treatment and delivery of their babies at alternative hospitals further away seemed limited. The RDUH Trust Board meeting held on 29th July certainly suggested that this was an emergency decision and therefore consequences were not thought through. Considerations of how vulnerable people who were pregnant would be able to travel those distances without a car were not especially evident. A recording of the Board meeting is available using the link below.

<https://vimeo.com/1217337069/1facaf984e?fl=pl&fe=sh>

The meeting of the DCC Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee on 17th August examined the decision by the RDUH Trust at length. Council members

questioned the Chief Executive of the Trust and Officers. They drew attention to the lack of planning and consideration of the impact on groups of pregnant people, especially those who had no access to transport in labour but who would be expected to travel over 50 miles (nearly two hours from Ilfracombe) to Exeter hospital or Taunton, to give birth. A video recording of the Committee is available using the link below.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/2Qu5VSIDZXE?is=z9zR0zt9hMkDfDMI>

What services were removed from North Devon District Hospital on 11th August 2026?

- All births. This included home birth options
- Labour ward
- Caesarean sections both planned and emergency
- Face to face triage and day assessment
- Special care baby unit
- Inductions
- Active requirement of urgent need for obstetric and neonatal treatment

A limited range of community led midwife services remained at North Devon District Hospital including antenatal appointments, routine scans and pre op for C sections along with gynaecology.

The decision to temporarily remove maternity at NDDH was taken tentatively on 27th July. On 28th July after the announcement a helpline was established for anyone pregnant or their families. On 6th August the Trust confirmed the decision. On 7th August the Trust produced an information pack for people who were pregnant. On 18th August 2026 a Medical Director at NDDH, Dr Karen Davies resigned due to the Trust's handling of maternity services saying that 'we have known for several years that there have been concerns about fragility, as well as safety and culture in the northern maternity unit' and was 'was concerned that a proposal for additional support which could have produced a plan to avoid closure was not brought in'

(Health boss resigns over Barnstaple maternity unit closure - BBC News)
<https://share.google/QzqUtd4RNh00WFwR9>

It wasn't until 20th August after 20 babies had already been born that the Trust announced the introduction of additional financial support for families and accommodation costs covered for some. There is also a dedicated maternity triage line open 24/7 whilst the temporary cessation is in place. On 25th August the Trust announced a Newborn Outpatient Clinic at NDDH whilst maternity is suspended hopefully in recognition of how difficult it is for some new parents to travel long distances back to Exeter if they have concerns about their newborn babies. On 26th of August the Trust issued a press statement regarding media coverage that women are being advised how to give birth in the back of a car. They reiterate the message that anyone over 34 weeks should have a birthing plan in place through their midwife which covers travel plans. On 1st September the Board issued a statement that progress was being made towards reopening safely. On 3rd of September the Trust announced that subject to approval on 14th September the plan was to reopen maternity on 29th September. They announced that they have launched free taxi support

working with Devon County Council. This timeline suggests that rather than proactive planning, the Trust were playing catch up as problems presented themselves.

Why were these services removed temporarily?

The Trust issued a statement that due to the unavailability of senior medical staff the unit was no longer safe to operate. Indications were, however, following the resignations of Dr Karen Davies and exposed in the meeting of the Adult Health and Care Scrutiny Committee at Devon County Council, that the fragility of maternity services and staffing had been on-going for a prolonged period of time. If this assumption is correct the Trust could have been working on emergency plans some years before.

What are the difficulties for people from Ilfracombe who require maternity services?

As the timeline of announcements from the RDUH Trust indicates, the decision to temporarily close maternity at NDDH appears not to have undertaken sufficient consideration as to how difficult it is for people without transport to access maternity services nearly 2 hours away in an emergency, or for other necessary pre and post-natal care. It was only on 3rd September (nearly a month after the closure) that they announced a taxi service, although the details and availability are unclear.

As the previous report I compiled indicated, the costs and complications of travelling to Exeter Hospital without a car from Ilfracombe are significant.

The journey by train on public transport from Ilfracombe to Exeter begins with a bus from Ilfracombe to Barnstaple train station. This takes around 45 minutes. The bus services (either 301 or 21b) are notoriously unpredictable and do not serve all parts of town and are reduced post summer. Patients travelling by public transport from this part of North Devon cannot have early appointments due to the time it takes to get to Exeter hospital (bus, train, bus, at least 3 hours if connections are all running smoothly). In February the single-track train service from Barnstaple to Exeter had been cancelled due to flooding and eventually a replacement bus service was put in place taking over two hours. Obviously for anyone pregnant travelling over two hours on a rural bus service without access to a toilet is impossible. Hopefully maternity will be restored at NDDH before the winter but as the previous report set out 'inadequate infrastructure and inclement weather conditions in a remote location makes travelling in the winter months extremely difficult, if not impossible'.

Since the temporary closure of the maternity services on 11th August unfortunately the rail line has been beset with problems. On 12th August GWR reported issues with rail lines due to hot weather and by 16th August the line from Barnstaple was unsafe and non-operational but thankfully restored the next day. Signal failures and problems with older rolling stock have regularly delayed trains. For example, on Saturday 5th September the Barnstaple 10.36 train was cancelled, and passengers were told to walk between Exeter Central and St Davids to try to catch the next train there. This involves a steep footpath so obviously not easy or suitable for someone who is in the later stages of

pregnancy. At St Davids passengers were told that the train was going nowhere and to wait for the next one once the problem had been resolved. Passengers were redirected over the footbridge twice as the platforms were changed. Although there is a lift just imagine how stressful this would be for someone who is pregnant and exhausted? Currently as schools and colleges resume, the train from Barnstaple has been over full and with only two carriages, some passengers have been told that they can't travel on the train at both ends of the line and must use the bus alternative. An account of this on 8th September is given below.

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/196CqRDpLp/>

As the previous report set out 'A taxi to Exeter one way starts around £100 depending on the time of day so the round trip can cost upwards of £200. It is not surprising that many Ilfracombe residents referred to Exeter who don't drive opt to stay overnight nearby so that they can use public transport which takes much longer but is considerably cheaper even with accommodation. The last train from Exeter to Barnstaple is at 9.29 pm.

Although the Trust eventually agreed to provide taxi transport to those people needing it, it is unclear if this is for all pregnant patients or just those on a low income. It is also unclear which, if any, Ilfracombe taxi firms are involved in the scheme. Taxi services have declined in Ilfracombe, and it is difficult to secure a journey that is not pre-booked, especially at night. The Trust talked about vouchers which hopefully was in response to the fact that many people on low incomes do not have £100 up front to pay initially and reclaim. Some taxi drivers will be reluctant to take someone in labour on a long journey. The Trust's plan to use school transport drivers has not been fleshed out to the public and concerns have been raised about availability and capacity, especially now that schools have resumed.

People in labour or needing an obstetrics appointment in Exeter during the temporary closure of NDDH maternity services who have access to a car have fared little better. During the summer season roads are often blocked with holiday makers making the journey longer and more stressful. It can take up to two hours even on a good day from Ilfracombe using the A361 and motorway. Of course, transporting someone in labour means that the driver has to be especially careful and may travel at lower speeds. The advice to anyone travelling by car has been to take a support passenger in case of needing to stop or the person in labour requiring assistance. Unfortunately, this journey has also been beset by serious road traffic accidents during this time and the closure of several important roads due to gas or engineering works. The impact on traffic has been horrendous. The link below is to a BBC news story covering the gridlock at the end of August. Just imagine being in labour in a hot car during these circumstances.

Major gas works in Barnstaple pulled amid traffic chaos - BBC News
<https://share.google/Z8zhplkKp4ckJcUae>

Only a few days before this report was compiled a mother from the 'Maternity Matter's' campaign group alerted people to the fact that a road closure and diversion was imminent on the A361 placing extra time and stress onto a

journey to Exeter. Luckily RDUH and Devon County Highways have worked together to ensure that this road stays open during the closure of NDDH maternity unit.

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1BdkTW8fsA/>

A quick google of accidents on the M5 will indicate to anyone that these are a common occurrence and delays can be significant, alongside roadworks which local leaders have referred to as impacting a 'fragile' infrastructure. It seems incredible to imagine being pregnant with an emergency, or in labour, and having to navigate these unforeseen circumstances. The alternative A377 road is often no better with hold-ups and delays due to traffic lights or volume of traffic.

Of course, when anyone arrives at Exeter in a car or via public transport, they will have to orient themselves with a different hospital and where to find maternity. Parking is difficult and not cheap. The distance being travelled means that stays in hospital are beset with problems such as how to organise childcare for other children as it's difficult for a partner to travel backwards and forwards to Exeter to take over. Some families or single 'parents to be' don't have the support structure to provide long periods of childcare. With no special care baby unit at NDDH, parents are trapped in Exeter unable to return home for showers and a rest. Some families with the economic means to do so have been booking accommodation ahead of their due date. The Trust have said that birth plans organised through a midwife can include accommodation and child care, but it is unclear whom this extends to or if there is a means test.

What has been the impact on people who are pregnant or in labour?

The impact on expectant people and their families has been immense. It is no exaggeration when talking to anyone pregnant to say that the uncertainty and lack of planning has increased the stress and anxiety felt, especially as there has often been no answer to many of the questions raised. The effort demonstrated by so many in finding a solution to the maternity crisis at NDDH has been phenomenal and must be commended, but this incident has uncovered the uncomfortable truth that many health services at NDDH are in a similar perilous state whereby the loss of one consultant may see the closure of a whole unit. Where is the contingency planning one might ask?

Press statements issued by the Trust have implied that all babies have been delivered safely. Anecdotal reports have suggested that at least one baby has been born at NDDH A&E after a partner turned back from Exeter when the baby started coming. Other reports have said that a baby was born in the car park, in the waiting room and a number of unassisted births at home have allegedly occurred. Also reports of babies being born very soon after arrival at Exeter such that any delay might have resulted in a kerbside birth. These examples cannot be substantiated until the Trust does an impact assessment and gathers comprehensive data including the experiences of those giving birth. Hopefully any such review will also indicate the number of ambulances called and the impact on South West Ambulance service. Also, the pressure placed on the

Exeter service. Reports were that those with elective C-Sections were being told that it was difficult to secure dates due to extra numbers from North Devon.

Here are some of the comments from those who are pregnant

'I had to travel from Bideford to Exeter last night to visit triage, something that could have been a very simple trip up to Barnstaple. The journey down was awful, with multiple sets of traffic lights and more planned closures being advertised. The whole way down I was imagining how horrific it will be to make that same trip whilst in labour and how sorry I felt for all those who have already had to do so...I think the wider issue that all emergency care is now down in Exeter doesn't get enough attention from the trust, there's no way to fully quantify the impact it's having on mothers and babies not having that triage service locally and what knock on effect might come of it. It's easy to say mother should morally make the journey if they're worried, but the reality is the additional travel time, costs, and hassle is cause to second guess if it's really worth it'

'It is very irritating to have the Trust applaud the fact that women and birthing people can get to Exeter. Stressed, by the skin of their teeth, by staying with friends or in hotels. Damn them for spinning the lack of a lay-by birth as a win.'

'What support 🙄🙄🙄

Not been a lot of support for my 39 wk pregnant daughter who's due a c section tomorrow with no time 🕒 till the actual day 🙄'

'A baby has been delivered by family in the car park at RD&E this week. Not clear where they came from. There were also no beds available for a prolonged time period in Exeter and women were waiting on a different ward, not a labour ward. Families should not have the stress of not knowing where their babies are going to be born'.

'Funny because I'm 35 weeks pregnant now and I am still yet to be contacted. It sure doesn't feel like the care of women and birthing people is your absolute priority.'

'34 weeks pregnant here 🙄. I haven't been contacted about my high-risk situation at all. Seeing the hospital trust say over and over again that high-risk people have been contacted is just making my blood boil because that is completely false'.

'I am 37 weeks pregnant, live 2 hours from Exeter hospital. I have been advised and coached by two Royal Devon midwives how to deliver a baby myself in the car. I have also been told by two midwives the safest thing for me to do is to just call an ambulance when I go into labour and not risk the journey. I have been given absolutely no individualised plan from anyone at the trust.'

These comments which are an example of many in response to RDUH comms indicate the fear, anger and stress which this decision has caused those about to give birth from Ilfracombe and across North Devon/Cornwall. What should be the most relaxed and wonderful time before meeting your baby has for many

become a source of real anxiety. Some may go on to experience trauma related to their birth, especially if the journey was difficult and frightening. For many on low incomes and without access to transport the uncertainty that this decision has caused is amplified.

What lessons should be learned from this decision and its impact?

The Adult Health Care Scrutiny Committee at Devon County Council requested a number of actions but the three that are most pertinent for the situation regarding Ilfracombe as an area of deprivation and health inequality are;

- **Impact Assessment:** Request an equality and quality impact assessment concerning long-distance travel to Exeter or Taunton.
- **Lessons-Learnt Review:** Require an inquiry into the unannounced staffing crisis and responses in other rural areas.
- **Fragile Services Report:** Urge a detailed report on broader health service fragility across Devon.

Any level of Government or health organisation involved in the commissioning and delivery of health services in North Devon must demand a pre-impact assessment in future regarding any decision to remove services or limit their coverage. This impact assessment must include details of how to mitigate the impact on the poorest members of our community and those who do not have access to private transport. RDUH Trust appears to have been negligent in planning for the removal of maternity services and how this would affect all those who are pregnant, but particularly those who have additional vulnerabilities. This has been an exercise in poor planning and neglect and although no fault lies with the staff on the ground providing the services, management must be accountable for any harm caused and learn lessons which must be applied in the future.

So many reports and initiatives have been created around access to health care in remote, disadvantaged areas like Ilfracombe, but it appears that the issues they highlight are ignored by the ICB, the Healthcare Trust and local Government when these services are removed. This cannot be allowed to continue.

Recommendation - to write to the RDUH Trust with a copy of this report and request that all future decisions around health services affecting Ilfracombe be subject to a pre-impact assessment which models the impact on the most disadvantaged in our community.



REPORT TO: Full Council
DATE: 14th September 2026
SUBJECT: Solar Car Parks
PREPARED BY: Environment Champion - Councillor N Basil

Solar Car Parks

Introduction

While reviewing ITC's carbon footprint, I quickly realised that we cannot maintain our current services and reduce emissions to zero through operational changes alone. However, we have committed to achieving zero carbon emissions by 2030. Although we should continue reducing emissions wherever possible, meeting this target will require us to offset a significant share of our carbon footprint.

Although we do not have large areas of land for tree planting, we do have car parks at Ropery Road and the High Street. These sites could generate enough solar electricity to offset all our carbon emissions and make ITC carbon neutral.

Beyond its environmental benefits, this scheme would be a sound investment for ITC, paying for itself and generating a profit. It would improve the car parks by making them more attractive and providing shelter from rain and shade in hot weather. It would also support the installation of electric vehicle charging points, encouraging more visitors to use the car parks and promoting electric vehicle use. Overall, the scheme would benefit the town and demonstrate that ITC is forward-looking.

The Scheme

Together, the two car parks cover around 5,000 square metres, with probably 80% of that area likely suitable for solar panel coverage.

The images below show examples of existing solar car parks. These structures are typically modular, require limited heavy groundwork, and can usually be installed without closing the entire car park during construction.



Carbon footprint

ITC's CO₂ equivalent emissions, by Greenhouse Gas Protocol scope, are as follows:

Scope 1 emissions, from fuel used directly: 6,052 kg

Scope 2 emissions, from electricity use: 14,742 kg

Scope 3 emissions, from all other sources: at least 13,709 kg, and probably around 20,000 kg

Biogenic emissions, outside the formal scope: at least 9,821 kg, and probably around 12,000 kg

To become carbon neutral, we therefore need to generate enough electricity to offset between 37,503 and 52,794 kg of CO₂ equivalent emissions; this would require between 900 and 1300 square metres of panels. Covering 80% of the two car parks would save around 163,000 kg.

Electric Car Charging

Ropery Road car park currently has two Pod Point 22 kW electric chargers, which I believe provide a useful profit and attract visitors to the seafront. High Street car park has no chargers, and the only other charger near the town centre is a 22 kW unit in Wilder Road car park. We could install chargers in High Street car park powered by electricity generated from the solar panels.

The only fast chargers in Ilfracombe are at Hillsborough. During the tourist season they are often busy, with all chargers in use and cars waiting, despite being a long walk from the town centre and seafront attractions.

Fast chargers encourage electric vehicle drivers to use nearby car parks and facilities. As more people switch to electric cars many plan journeys around charging points found online. Ideally, this electricity should come from renewable sources, making fast chargers a natural fit with solar car parks. Installing four or more fast chargers at each car park would therefore be a sound investment.

Environmental Benefits

Beyond our commitment to zero carbon emissions by 2030 we have also signed the Devon Climate Emergency Declaration, which amongst other things obliges us to;

“(Deploy) more renewable, decentralised and smart energy systems”

“lead in the global response to climate change through our collective action, innovation and influence”

“engage Devon’s residents, businesses and visitors to develop and implement a plan to facilitate the reduction of Devon’s production and consumption emissions to meet IPCC recommendations”

Solar power is becoming the cheapest form of energy, and it is

renewable. There are many who object to solar farms in the countryside, covering farmland; car parks are ideal places for them, as there they are an asset in every way. We should be promoting solar panels above all the car parks in Ilfracombe, not just our own, and the best way to this this is to encourage others by committing ourselves.

Other Benefits

Covering the parking spaces will make the car parks more attractive to drivers as they will be sheltered from rain and from the sun in hot weather. This plus the chargers will encourage use of the car parks and attract tourists to the town and seafront businesses.

Costings

Enough solar panels to offset our carbon emissions would cost between £380,000 and £530,000 and return between £33,000 and £48,000 a year in electricity sales. Covering 80% of both car parks with solar panel roofs would cost around £1,500,000 with a return of about £180,000 per year from electricity sold to the grid. The panels have a 25-year guarantee and are likely to remain useful for much longer.

This would be a stronger investment than the purchase of High Street car park, offering a higher and more predictable return while also delivering wider benefits for the town and the environment.

Adding six fast chargers across the two car parks, along with two 22 kW chargers at High Street car park, would cost around £150,000 and should pay for itself in about five years.

Proposal

I propose that the solar panels working group is reconvened and extended to include members of the biodiversity working group, to consider our options in this report.



REPORT TO: Full Council
DATE: 14th September 2026
SUBJECT: Ilfracombe Town Council Youth Champion Report
September 2026
PREPARED BY: Cllr David Williams

Summer Outreach

Over the summer period, while the Youth Club was closed, the Youth Club continued its work with young people through street-based outreach.

This involved walking around Ilfracombe with youth workers and volunteers, speaking with young people, building relationships and making sure that support remained available during the school holidays.

As part of these outreach sessions, there was a number of activities organised. One of the highlights was sumo wrestling on the Promenade, which proved to be a huge success. One young person described it as "one of the funniest activities they have done in Ilfracombe this year." Activities like this are important because they give young people something positive and fun to get involved in, while also providing an opportunity for youth workers to build relationships and engage with them in a relaxed environment.

There were also a number of events in Ilfracombe over the summer specifically aimed at young people. One of the highlights was the Skate Jam at the Skate Park, which was extremely popular. The Youth Club provided free food and drinks for those taking part, alongside a sumo wrestling activity which was also very well received. Cllr Dan Turton joined us for part of the day. Sadly, he declined the opportunity to take part in the sumo wrestling, which is probably understandable, as we all know he wouldn't have stood a chance against me!

It was great to see the Skate Park being so well used and to have a positive event where young people could meet, socialise and take part in activities. From discussions with young people who found out a lot of people came from Braunton and Combe Martin on a daily basis to use the skate park what highlights how this area isn't just important for young people In Ilfracombe but the wider North Devon area.

Another event planned during the summer was a picnic and music day. Unfortunately, the weather meant that we had to cancel the original event on the day. Rather than abandoning the idea, we rescheduled it and moved the event to the Lantern. Although a number of young people attended, the turnout was unfortunately smaller than we had hoped. However, I believe the event demonstrated the potential for similar activities in the future, and I hope we can develop the idea further.

I would like to thank all of the musicians who turned up with their equipment and gave their time to support the event. The event also highlighted to me what a fantastic venue the Lantern can be for small-scale music and community events. It is a beautiful building and a real asset to Ilfracombe, and I believe there could be opportunities to encourage more small music and youth-focused events there in the future.



I would like to give a particular thank you to all the volunteers who gave up their time over the summer to support the outreach work. It has genuinely been a pleasure to work alongside you, walking around the town, talking to young people and helping provide positive activities. The Youth club is still looking for additional volunteers, and increasing the number of people involved would allow this work to expand further across Ilfracombe.

The Youth Club has now reopened at the Slade Vision Centre and has an exciting programme planned for the coming term. Following the success of the DJ workshop last term, we are looking at providing more activities that allow young people to explore new interests and develop new skills. The DJ workshop was particularly successful, with one young person discovering a new hobby and interest as a result.

This demonstrates the value of offering young people opportunities that they may not otherwise have access to.

The club hopes it can continue to build on this and provide a wider range of workshops, activities and experiences throughout the coming term.

The Youth Club would like to thank the Snug and Hyde who raised £500 for the Youth club to help them continue the work they are doing.

SecondWave – Environmental and STEM Opportunity

During one of the outreach walks around Ilfracombe, I met a representative from SecondWave, a grassroots initiative which plans to sail a boat constructed from waste and recycled materials around the UK.

The project aims to promote STEM education, inspire the next generation of engineers, encourage community engagement, raise awareness of plastic pollution around the UK's coastline and provide an expedition experience for those taking part.

The boat itself will be constructed using repurposed plastics and recycled materials, demonstrating how innovative ideas can be used to tackle environmental challenges.

SecondWave plans to visit communities around the UK, with seven key ports hosting community events designed to inspire young people to take action for the planet while also highlighting future careers and opportunities.

They expressed an interest in undertaking outreach work in Ilfracombe. I have encouraged them to contact Ilfracombe Town Council and myself with further information about their plans. Once we have received more information, I will provide a further update to the Council. I believe this could potentially be a really interesting opportunity for our young people, particularly around STEM, environmental awareness and practical learning.

Closing bits and bobs

I am happy to hear there will be more outreach work happening in Ilfracombe in the coming months with another youth organisation, this has funding to last while what's good to see. I will be reaching out to the college to see how the transition from Athena to a new trust is going, I will also be looking to see how we can do more collaborative work together in the coming term.



REPORT TO: Full Council
DATE: 14th September 2026
SUBJECT: Slade Vision Centre
PREPARED BY: Cllr David Williams

REPORT NO: ITC 26081

As many of you may or may not know myself and Cllr Elliott are Council representatives on the Slade Vision Centre committee. At the Slade Centre AGM on 2nd September I was voted in as chairman of the Centre again. I'm happy to report the Centre is doing financially well and offering a great space for people of Slade but the wider community to utilise. This past year we have done work to improve the Centre including buying new equipment and replacing the old floor. This was all done by using money from the Centre.

The Centre is owned by North Devon District Council and with LGR around the corner there might be some interesting discussions around ownership as either the Centre will be transferred to the new Devon Council or if we feel it should be transferred to Ilfracombe Town Council.

I would like to thank Cllr Elliott and the other volunteers on the committee for their continued work to look after this building and help keep it operational for years to come.

Slade Vision Centre Allotment

During the summer, I was also invited to attend the opening celebration for the Salvation Army allotment at the Slade Vision Centre.

This area has been transformed by Sophie and her team of volunteers into a safe, welcoming and friendly space for local people and community groups to access and enjoy. The allotment provides an opportunity for people to grow their own vegetables, learn new skills and spend time in a positive outdoor environment. It has already been used by community groups, including youth groups. On 16th September, the Youth Club will be holding a pizza night at the allotment, giving young people another opportunity to use and enjoy this fantastic space.

It is really positive to see another area of Ilfracombe being brought back into use for the community. The transformation is a fantastic

example of what can be achieved through volunteering and community spirit. I would like to give a special thank you to Sophie and her army of volunteers for the enormous amount of work they have put into creating this space over the past year. I have personally seen Sophie working in this area late at night to make it into what it is today. It is far improved from when I first became Chairman of the Centre.





HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Laura Donovan
Ilfracombe Town Council
The Ilfracombe Centre
44 High Street
Ilfracombe
Devon
EX34 9QB

13 August 2026

Dear Laura,

Thank you for your letter on behalf of Ilfracombe Town Council, and for your support for the campaign to restore maternity services at North Devon District Hospital.

I have read the letter you have written to the new Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Yvette Cooper, and I would be very interested to see the response when you receive it.

As you will know, I have raised the issue myself with the Health Secretary, as well as with NHS England and around 50 organisations, particularly those focused on women's health, urging them to intervene and support efforts to recruit the obstetrics and gynaecology consultants to reopen the service.

Yesterday, I was interviewed on BBC Radio 4's *Woman's Hour* about the suspension of births at the hospital. I specifically highlighted the impact this will have on women and families in communities such as Ilfracombe, where travelling further afield for maternity care presents an even greater challenge.

I have been working intensively to tackle the suspension of births at NDDH, and the petition I launched to save our maternity services has gathered nearly 15,000 signatures.

In my meetings with Trust executives, I have been assured that the suspension of births is only temporary, **and I will absolutely be holding them to that.**

There has been several encouraging expressions of interest in the advertised role, and I secured a commitment from the NHS Trust that the application process will be fast-tracked so that they can find and get the right candidate in post as soon as possible.

I have also worked to keep the issue firmly in both regional and national media, ensuring that the suspension of births and the impact on women and families in the area remains in the public eye.

This week, I also met with a retired obstetrics and gynaecology consultant who served at NDDH for over 25 years. We discussed the current situation and possible next steps, and I will continue to pursue every avenue available to me.

I am doing every last thing I can to ensure this is only temporary so that we can restore safe local maternity services here in North Devon as soon as possible.

Thank you again to Ilfracombe Town Council for your support and for making your voice heard on this important issue. I will be back in touch with any significant updates or developments.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ian Roome". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Ian Roome

Member of Parliament for North Devon