



ANNUAL REPORT 2023 / 2024



Councillor
David Corney-Walker
Mayor - 2023/ 2024



Phil Rowe
Town Clerk



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Presented by the Mayor of Newton Abbot,
Councillor David Corney-Walker

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Following the local elections in May 2023 it was a privilege to be selected by my colleagues to become Mayor for the ensuing year. The elections for Newton Abbot Town Council had failed to attract sufficient candidates for the full complement of eighteen Councillors. Three were returned unopposed and nine in contested wards leaving six vacancies. One of the first acts of the new Council was therefore to invite applications for co-option and more than twenty were received. After careful consideration six were selected to fill the vacant posts.

During the following summer months events we attended included the regular Band Concerts in Courtenay Park and the various activities of the Court Leet. A more unusual event on the 21st of June was the unveiling of a Contemporary Stone Circle in Church Walk, off Pipistrelle Road, which has been carefully designed by the artist to cast precise shadows marking the Summer and Winter Solstices.

Early September brought the Annual Town Criers Competition and the Classic Bus Running Day organised by the Devon General Society. Later in the month we were made very welcome by the Bürgomeister (Mayor) of our twin town of Besigheim at their annual Winzerfest. Whilst the Newton Abbot Mayor normally has just a one-year term it can be much longer in Germany. Subsequently it was my honour to send congratulations and thanks to Herr Steffen Bühler when we learned of his intentions to retire in the Spring of this year after more than thirty years in the post.

Activities in the town continued with the build up to Christmas. All the events proved to be as popular as ever with even bigger attendances for all of them. Starting with the switching on of the Christmas Light and then the Lantern Parade, the Victorian Evening, the Doggie Carol Service and the Mayor's Carols. I must record my heartfelt thanks to the officers of the Town Council and all the volunteers who ensured smooth operation.

Your council is continuing to take on the jobs the bigger councils (TDC and DCC) find they can no longer afford. We have invested in high quality machinery to extend our ability to maintain the cleanliness of our town centre and residential areas and have recently appointed a fourth FMO (Facilities Maintenance Officer).

The regeneration plans for Queen Street have proved very controversial. It has to be emphasised, however, that Newton Abbot Town Council has no control over this and many other issues that affect us. The Planning Authority (Teignbridge District Council) and the Highways Authority (Devon County Council) are the decision-making bodies. We are asked for our opinion and give it but TDC and DCC have no obligation to act upon our views. They are only required to consider them.

My year has concluded with a succession of happy events. On March 1st Austins celebrated their centenary. The store has become synonymous with our town and attracts visitors and shoppers from a very wide area. Long may it continue to do so. In April we marked the 50th anniversary of the formation of Newton Abbot Council by planting two oak trees in Courtenay Park. The three days of the annual Maltingsfest drew long queues of attendees and the Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA) made a very generous contribution to my charity for the year – Devon Air Ambulance. Finally on the 5th of May we had the first of our monthly Sunday Markets. Though the weather was not kind attendance showed these are likely to prove a successful innovation.

My sincere thanks to all the officers at the Town Council for all their hard work and support for this Mayoral year and to all those councillors who have given me their support and encouragement at throughout the whole of this year.

Cllr. David Corney-Walker
Mayor of Newton Abbot

MAYORAL YEAR 2023 – 2024

ENGAGEMENTS CARRIED OUT BY THE MAYOR – COUNCILLOR DAVID CORNEY-WALKER

2023

Saturday 20 th May	Annual Town Meeting
Thursday 25 th May	Totnes Mayor Choosing Ceremony
Sunday 11 th June	Band Concert
Sunday 18 th June	High Sheriff of Devon Garden Party
Wednesday 21 st June	Unveiling of Art at Linden Homes, Church Walk
Thursday 22 nd June	Lord Lieutenant of Devon Presentation
Sunday 25 th June	Newton Abbot & District Society of Arts AGM
Friday 30 th June	Stover Preparatory School Speech and Prize Giving
Friday 30 th June	Stover Senior School Speech and Prize Giving
Sunday 2 nd July	Band Concert
Thursday 6 th July	Exeter Lammas Fair
Saturday 8 th July	Court Leet Ale Tasting
Sunday 16 th July	Choir 86 Forde Park Pavilion Fund raising event
Saturday 29 th July	St. Luke's Summer Fete
Saturday 29 th July	Launch of the Museum Exhibition
Sunday 13 th August	Band Concert
Thursday 31 st August	St. Benets Residential Home Garden Party
Sunday 3 rd September	Devon General Remembered
Saturday 9 th September	Town Criers Competition
Sunday 10 th September	Band Concert
Thursday 14 th September to Tuesday 19 th September	Besigheim Winzerfest
Sunday 15 th October	NADSA Concert
Saturday 21 st October	Court Leet Law Day
Wednesday 8 th November	Launch of the Salvation Army Toy Appeal

Friday 10 th November	Lay wreath on the Poppy Train
Friday 10 th November	Official Opening of Tang & Tipple
Saturday 11 th November	Armistice Day Service
Saturday 11 th November	Newton Abbot Charity Town Ball
Sunday 12 th November	Remembrance Service and Parade
Sunday 19 th November	NADSA Concert
Saturday 25 th November	St. Luke's Christmas Fayre
Saturday 25 th November	Christmas Lights Switch On
Tuesday 28 th November	Cheque presentation to Museum from Persimmon Homes
Sunday 3 rd December	Opening of new shop "Yellow Umbrella"
Wednesday 6 th December	Victorian Evening
Saturday 9 th December	Doggy Carol Service
Saturday 9 th December	Choir 86 Christmas Concert
Sunday 10 th December	Friends of Rowcroft Celebration of Christmas
Wednesday 13 th December	Lantern Parade
Thursday 14 th December	Visit to St. Benets Nursing Home
Wednesday 20 th December	Mayors Christmas Carols

2024

Monday 15 th January	Presentation of Training Passes
Sunday 21 st January	NADSA Concert
Sunday 18 th February	NADSA Concert
Saturday 24 th February	Raising of the Ukrainian Flag Ceremony
Friday 1 st March	100 th Anniversary of Austins Ribbon Cutting ceremony.
Friday 15 th March	NADSA Concert
Thursday 21 st March	Choir 86 Concert
Saturday 23 rd March	Portreeve Dinner
Tuesday 9 th April	Presentation of cheque to Mayor's Charity
Friday 19 th April	Open Malting Fest Beer Festival

Friday 19 th April	NADSA Concert
Saturday 27 th April	Court Leet Meeting
Sunday 5 th May	Monthly Market
Sunday 12 th May	Band Concert

Deputy Mayor – Councillor Alex Hall – 2023-2024

Saturday 27 th May	Classic Car Show
Sunday 4 th June	Royal British Legion Decoration Day
Saturday 10 th June	Fired for Royal Exhibition Launch at the Museum
Saturday 22 nd July	Court Leet Bread Weighing Ceremony
Saturday 29 th July	St. Luke's Summer Fete
Sunday 10 th September	Dawlish Town Council Civic Service
Saturday 16 th September	Classic Car Show
Sunday 22 nd October	Totnes Civic Dinner and Lunch
Thursday 7 th December	Festival of Nativities
Friday 8 th December	Kingsteignton Civic Carol Service

2024

Wednesday 7 th February	Pop-Up Photography Exhibition
Sunday 21 st April	Devon County Council Civic Service
Sunday 28 th April	Lord Mayor of Exeter Civic Service

NAMES OF COUNCILLORS FOR THE TERM 2023 – 2024

Councillor Brian Bailey

Councillor Janet Bradford

Councillor Philip Bullivant

Councillor Richard Buscombe

Councillor Jamie Cook

Councillor Louise Cook

Councillor David Corney-Walker

Councillor Tom Corney-Walker

Councillor Colin Davieson

Councillor Alan Gibbs

Councillor Alex Hall

Councillor Amanda Ineson

Councillor Gwen Jennings

Councillor Mike Joyce

Councillor Colin Parker

Councillor Mike Ryan

Councillor Laura Wood

Councillor Nick Yabsley

CURRENT OFFICERS

Town Clerk Mr Phil Rowe
Newton's Place
43 Wolborough Street
Newton Abbot
TQ12 1JQ
Telephone: 01626 201120

Website: www.newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk

E.Mail: phil.rowe@newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk

Deputy Town Clerk Ms Sam Scott
Monday – Thursday

Email: sam.scott@newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk

Mayor's Secretary Mrs Carla Winsborrow
Tuesday – Friday

Email: carla.winsborrow@newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk

Events Co-ordinator Job Share

Mrs Natalie Hicks
Part Time 3 days a week

Email: natalie.hicks@newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk

Miss Kelly Burridge

Email: kelly.burridge@newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk

Office Administrator Miss Kelly Burridge

Principal Administrator Linda McGuirk
(Monday - Thursday)

Email: Linda.McGuirk@newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk

Facilities Maintenance Officers - Mr Kevin Tagg (FMO Team Leader, Tony Little, Mr David Samson and Mr Steve Ryan)

Housekeeper Mrs Michele Webber

Newton Abbot and Great Western Museum.

Telephone: (01626) 201121

Curator: Charlotte Dixon

Email: charlotte.dixon@newtonabbot.gov.uk

Curatorial Assistant: Katie Petley-Jones
tc.gov.uk

Email: KatiePetley-Jones@newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk

Admin Assistant: Charlotte Edwards
tc.gov.uk

Email: charlotte.edwards@newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk

Email: museum@newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk

Website: www.museum-newtonabbot.org.uk
and www.devonmuseums.net

Town Development Manager

Sally Henley Telephone: 07595 893151 or 01626 201120 Email sally.henley@newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk

Newton Abbot Community Interest Company

Business & Community Development Officer - Emily Farrell
Telephone: 01626 206690

Email: manager@newtonabbotcic.org.uk

Town Crier Mr Nigel Kenneison

Email: nigelk57@gmail.com

NEWTON ABBOT TOWN COUNCIL - ANNUAL REPORT 2023 - 2024

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Council and its Committees and Sub-Committee received presentations and reports on a variety of subjects resumed this year following the removal of the Government Restrictions imposed because of the COVID-19 Pandemic which had been severely limited for the past two years. However, work did continue with many local organisations to ensure that local issues are reviewed and moved forward despite the difficulties faced during those difficult times. Greater normality has now returned however working and social patterns have yet still to return to pre-Covid levels, and they possibly never will.

The Council has received presentations from a few organisations, relating to the following:

In June the Council welcomed representatives of Newton Abbot Twinning Association who made a presentation to the Council in recognition of 30 years of Newton Abbot twinning with Aÿ in France. The Mayor accepted the painting on behalf of the Council and thanked the Twinning Association for attending the meeting.

Also in June, the Mayor welcomed a representative of Devon & Cornwall Cyber Protect Team to the meeting who delivered an interesting and insightful presentation on Cyber Security.

In September the Mayor gave a warm welcome to representatives of Newton Abbot Community Shed who made a presentation which covered:

- Target demographic.
- Ethos - companionship and supporting people through life events.
- Making small items for the library to sell and to be sold at community events.
- Projects are directed by the members.
- Funding, members pay an annual £15 donation plus £3 per session attended.
- Becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.
- Establishing a Repair Café.
- Courtenay Street tree stump project in partnership with the Town Council.
- Securing a permanent base while maintaining a presence in the library.

In November, the Mayor, was very pleased to welcome Mr & Mrs Eric Collar to the meeting. The Council's Communications Advisor, Nigel Canham was invited to make a 'This is your Life' presentation to Mr Collar in recognition of his long service to the Council as volunteer Tree Advisor. The meeting was advised that Mr Collar had served the Council as volunteer Tree Advisor for over 20 years and provided invaluable advice, which would be greatly missed. Mr Collar was presented with a certificate of long service and a pen crafted from the wood of a tree from Courtenay Park.

The Mayor welcomed the representative of Devon Communities Together to the January 2024 meeting who gave a presentation to members on the benefits of creating an Emergency Plan in Newton Abbot.

In March, in a first for the Council, the meeting welcomed a representative of Life Chance Trust, who attended the meeting virtually and explained that the Life Chance Trust charity was a specialist youth-based charity based in Newton Abbot. The Trust worked with young people aged 16 to 25 years old who are dealing with the effects of trauma.

1.2 Significant developments in the town include:-

- The Council's main priority, had been the delivery of Newton's Place, a community space, the Heritage Fund supported estimated £2.2m Project to deliver community rooms; a new town Museum and offices for the Town Council at the former St Leonard's Church in Wolborough Street which was completed in June 2021. This fits into plans to introduce a 'cultural quarter' in the town being Newton's Place, the Passmore Edwards Centre and St Leonard's Clock Tower. Members of the Council were pleased to note the final account for the Newton's Place project which was delivered at a cost of £2.5m. This was considered as value for money when taking into account the additional works carried out to the original specification and a number of unforeseen issues such as the front parapet leadwork and the columns holding up the former church's balcony;
- Ongoing involvement in the economic vitality of the town by the Town Development Manager, Mrs Sally Henley;
- The operation of the activities of the Community Interest Company;
- Continued maintenance of Victoria Gardens (the Rose Garden) following the delivery of the project to totally transform the area into a beautiful and tranquil town centre amenity space, with views of the River Lemon;
- Ongoing maintenance of two areas of the Mill Leat adjacent to Bradley Manor/Allotments;
- Ongoing delivery of the contract for Christmas Illuminations in Newton Abbot with bespoke features procured by the Town Council delivering striking Christmas displays. The contract was tendered in early 2024 and the successful contractor will commence in November 2024;
- Ongoing maintenance of the Town Quay. Sat in the shadow of the cycle/footbridge over the River Teign. The mobile refreshment facility continues to operate with a new proprietor A Bite to Eat during the Spring/Summer months;
- Ongoing maintenance of the refurbished Golden Lion Square at Bank Street, which previously saw the introduction of a new centrepiece bench designed and constructed by the students of South Devon College; with colourful backrest designs by pupils of Wolborough Primary School which it is pleased to note is still in excellent condition;
- The previously completed total restoration of the historic. Grade II Listed War Memorial at junction with The Avenue and Queen Street which remains in pristine condition and continues to attract large crowds for the November Remembrance Sundays.
- The Contract for the floral displays throughout the town was tendered during 2023, the new contractor will commence the first year's displays throughout 2024.

1.3 Regular updates at Council meetings by County and District Councillors on their activities as they affect Newton Abbot.

1.4 The work of the Council is carried out by delegation to various standing Committees which, in turn, delegate powers and duties to Sub-Committees. The Council has continued to operate a new streamlined Committee structure with ever evolving terms of reference, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. From May 2016 it has continued to operate a revised Committee Structure with more emphasis on community, heritage and improved financial reporting. This new structure was reviewed in late February 2017 when it was

decided to continue with the revised structure. Members were of the view the new structure had worked well, and better reflected the current and future vision, aims and objectives of the Council.

- 1.5 The Council continues to undertake numerous activities and puts forward a number of representations which are suggested for detailed consideration and in many cases actioned by Teignbridge District Council, Devon County Council and other public utility services. In the past 9 years the Council has been partnering with the Chamber of Commerce on delivering CCTV through a Newton Abbot Security Trust. The partnership has worked extremely well.
- 1.6 Since 2015, the Town Council has funded the cutting of all grass verges throughout Newton Abbot arising from Devon County Council as Highway Authority cutting the service other than visibility splays for road safety purposes. For 2018, the Town Council operated a contract to maintain all areas of grass verges (including the visibility splays) and has agreed to continue with the increase of the number cuts from 4 to 6 throughout the year.
- 1.7 From November 2014 the Town Council took over the leasehold ownership and operation of the Newfoundland Way public conveniences. The conveniences have subsequently been redecorated inside and out and continue to provide a valuable facility for residents and visitors alike. In 2023 the Council replaced the ageing 'Wallgate' hand washing units.
- 1.8 In 2021 the Council embarked upon the review of its Newton Abbot & District Community Plan, first published in 2008. The consultation exercise was being driven by the Newton Abbot Community Interest Company (CIC) with the aid of the Council's Community Engagement Officer, Kate Green. The original document was the precursor to many projects identified for the public for delivery through the 20-year life of the Plan such as the refurbishment of the Rose Garden (Victoria Gardens); Golden Lion Square public open space; and the community hub (Newton's Place). The Plan has now been completed and adopted by the Council who will with the cooperation of partner organisations strive to facilitate the delivery of the numerous projects identified in the plan as priorities for the people of Newton Abbot.

2. INVOLVEMENT OF THE COMMUNITY

The Town Council has once again supported a number of community groups around the town, including Newton Abbot Community Interest Company.

Newton Abbot Community Interest Company is a not-for-profit organisation. We deliver projects and activities to support local people and improve the local environment. Examples of our current activities include running the Buckland Community Centre and the Courtenay Centre, managing the Buckland Hub Project, providing the Base Youth Club, delivering the Art in the Subways Project and looking after the greenspace at Penn Inn roundabout. We also manage the Newton Abbot Community Fridge, and support projects and activities in areas of new housing in the town. We are always open to new ideas and suggestions for projects. To find out more, visit www.newtonabbotcic.org.uk

3. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR, COMMITTEE BY COMMITTEE

3.1 Finance & Audit Committee – (Chairperson, Cllr Colin Parker; Vice-Chairperson, Cllr Mike Ryan) and Policy & Resources Committee, (Chairperson Cllr Mike Joyce, Vice-Chairperson, Cllr Phil Bullivant).

These are the main Committees of the Council which meet on a regular basis to consider:

- ◆ Month by month income and expenditure statements and other detailed financial reports;
- ◆ Annual Governance and Accountability Return and internal audit reports;
- ◆ Recommend policy to the Council;
- ◆ Recommend budget and Precept to the Council;
- ◆ Consideration of all aspects of the maintenance of property and assets of the Council;
- ◆ Deals with all matters relating to the staff of the Council;
- ◆ Reports from Council representatives that serve on various outside organisations;
- ◆ Regular updates by the Police Inspector based in Newton Abbot;
- ◆ Applications for financial support.

This year detailed consideration has been given to various issues, including the following:

- ◆ The management of Newton Abbot's Community Hub, Newton's Place and its fantastic museum;
- ◆ Involvement in Newton Abbot Community Trust to own, and maintain the public space, 'Golden Lion Square';
- ◆ Awarded a number of Shop Front Improvement grants to local business owners;
- ◆ Ongoing contributions to the funding and management of CCTV facilities in Newton Abbot;
- ◆ Refining relations with the local press;
- ◆ Review of the Town Council's Vision & Priorities;
- ◆ Review of the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and other strategic and operational policies pertaining to the work of the Council;
- ◆ The management of the ever-growing threat of 'cyber-security';
- ◆ The management and reporting of Community Infrastructure Levy income
- ◆ Continuation of the Localism Act and its various regulations;
- ◆ The budget provides for grants and financial assistance to various organisations in Newton Abbot.

This year, we tried to assist as many organisations as we could, as many were suffering the effects of the cost-of-living crisis.

This year grants were made to local organisations including;

✚ Citizens Advice Bureau – Teignbridge	£5500
✚ Newton Abbot Community Transport Association	£5000
✚ The Lodge Indoor Skate Park	£7500
✚ Newton Abbot Swimming Club	£2275
✚ Forde Park Community Project	£1000
✚ Newton Abbot Community Shed	£ 963
✚ Green Futures	£ 650
✚ Newton Abbot Community Interest Company	£ 500
✚ Girl Guiding Newton Abbot	£ 950
✚ Newton Abbot Scouts & Guides	£1000
✚ Newton Abbot Community Orchard	£1000
✚ Devon General Remembered	£ 500
✚ Park Run Newton Abbot	£1000
✚ Community Advice Support Service (CASS)	£1000
✚ TOTAL FUNDS GRANTED	£28,838

- 3.2 **The Strategic Planning Forum** has concentrated not only on current budget performance but also budget strategy and the Precept for 2023/2025, together with setting out guidelines for all committee future budgets over the short and medium term. The overwhelming response from Councillors during this year's discussions was to be able to support the economic recovery and vitality of the town. Although the Government restrictions due to the COVID pandemic had been lifted, some businesses are still struggling to recover. For the forthcoming year, there has been an increase in the Council's budget brought about in the main by cost-of-living increases in fuel, utilities, nationally agreed salaries and insurance cover. The Council's bold step to lease a large industrial unit off The Avenue in which to locate its vehicles, tools and equipment and also to create a workshop to support the various activities performed by the Council's Facilities Maintenance Team has worked well. New areas the Council has approved include funding transport for schoolchildren to be able to visit the Museum; filling the fourth FMO position with a Team Leader; leasing a street sweeping vehicle along with switching a van to a tipper truck and purchasing the previously leased van.
- 3.3 **Community and Heritage Committee** – Chairperson Cllr Louise Cooke; Vice-Chairperson Cllr Mike Ryan. The Committee has responsibility for Council Events, Museum, Newton in Bloom, (via the Community Engagement Group) and Allotments Sub-Committees, together with environmental issues and Town Council amenities.

This year the committee has:

- Received presentations from representatives of the Community Advice And Support Services (CASS), Newton Abbot Green Futures, the Environment Agency and Action On Climate in Teignbridge (ACT).
- Liaised with representatives from the District Council's Emergency Planning team on the creation of a community emergency plan for Newton Abbot.
- Made a recommendation to Full to prohibit the use of pesticides across its assets and services.
- Supported the development of a bespoke interactive town trail app, pending further investigation.
- Resolved to allocate funding to support the installation of CCTV at the Figure of Eight Park and liaised with the Police & Crime Commissioner.
- Monitored and liaised with the Newton Abbot and District Community Allotment Association. Including supporting the installation of water harvesting system on Hele Park, facilitated the resurfacing of the access tracks on the Decoy site and facilitated changes to the management agreement between the Allotment Association and the Council.
- Supported a proposal to increase seating provision within the town pending identification of suitable locations.
- Made a recommendation to Full Council to allocate funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy Fund to purchase infrastructure for the Newton In Bloom project.
- Approved budgets for its Sub-Committees, (Events, Museum and Newton in Bloom).
- Received reports from the Museum Curator on the work of the Museum.
- Received reports from the Community Engagement Officer on her work in the community.
- Authorised Pavement Cafe Licence applications (for various town centre establishments).
- Facilitated grass verge cutting, (a devolved service from Devon County Council).
- Overseen the maintenance of 40+ public footpaths within the Newton Abbot parish boundaries.
- Is responsible for the management of Victoria Gardens; war memorial; floral displays; Newfoundland Way Public Conveniences.
- Monitored Floral provision, including the tender process for a new contractor.

3.4 **Community Engagement Group** - Chairperson Cllr Alex Hall, Vice-Chairperson Cllr Richard Buscombe. The group has responsibility for matters relating to community engagement within the town and wider community.

The focus of the Community Engagement Group during 2023/24 has been to oversee the delivery phase of the [Community Plan 2022 to 2032](#).

The group received a presentation from the Business & Community Manager of Newton Abbot CIC Emily Farrell, who asked members to consider projects from the Community Plan they would like the CIC to deliver as a priority. Councillors identified the following projects as priorities:

- Youth initiatives.
- Youth Council.
- Art installations in the town – building on the success of the Tunnels of Love.

3.4 (a) **Newton Abbot Town & GWR Museum Annual Report 2003-24**

In 2023 the museum welcomed **14,912**. By comparison, in 2022 we welcomed **12,556** visitors to the museum, to St. Leonard's Tower, and through school and community outreaches.

We have been receiving positive feedback from our visitors and in 2023 we received 372 comment cards:

- The average satisfaction score was 4.9 out of 5 (where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent)
- The average visitor age was 38 (this is the mean average)
- 41% of visitors who left comments were under 16s, the next largest demographic was the over 60s with 34%. Our youngest recorded visitor was 13 months old and our oldest was 93!
- As with previous years the majority of our visitors are from Devon. Although we did have visitors from as far afield as Australia and New Zealand.
- Most comments (62%) expressed general positivity to the museum. 6% used the comment space to make a suggestion, 20% named their favourite part of the museum and 12% specifically praised the front of house team.
- The model train, dressing up and interactive elements were named most frequently as people's favourite part.

Sample of comments:

'Excellent museum. Very interactive - lovely, informative staff. Will come back.'

'Thrilled to see such a lovely museum & so much to look at. A wonderful experience.'

'We loved everything- especially the time capsules. We were also amazed how accessible items were and the level of care and detail was amazing! I felt like we only scratched the surface too and can't wait to come back. The drawing session was really great too! I'm almost lost for words on how to comment as you just have to go! Thank you'

'What a splendid museum. Got to be a signalman :D '

Thank you to everyone who has visited and supported the museum and don't forget if you haven't yet had a chance to visit, the museum is free and open Tuesday – Friday 09:30-16:30 and Saturday 09:30-13:30.

From object of the month to temporary exhibitions, there is always something new and exciting for the community to see and participate in, so if you have visited before, come back again!

To find out about upcoming events and exhibitions see the upcoming dates for the diaries section.

Exhibitions and changing displays

January display changes

Keeping the displays fresh by changing them is important for the conservation of the collection as well as keeping interest for returning visitors. We used the closure period in December/January to change a range of displays. This included:

- Costume case – changed to two wedding dresses which show a comparison between the wedding fashions of the 1950s and 1970s.



Costume case featuring wedding items

- New acquisition case – we now have an illustrated leaving gift given to a lady when she retired from Newton Abbot hospital in this case. The illustrations were done by Charles Lane Vicary and depict her colleagues.



Frontispiece and example page of the autograph book

- Hallway items – we have changed the items in the hallway to display different objects that were made or used by local businesses, including Ross bottles and Hexter Humpherson bricks.



The new hallway items

Object of the Month

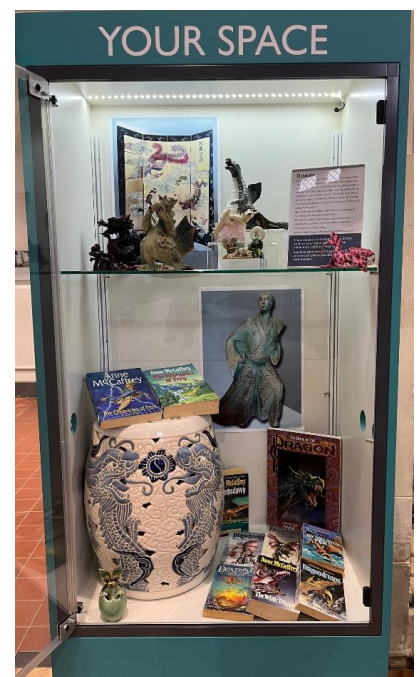


Primo Bear was Object of the Month in February

We continue to change this case monthly to ensure there is always something new for visitors to see. This is an opportunity for objects that aren't usually on display to be viewed by the public and also an opportunity for groups and members of the public to select the object they would like to see displayed. If you would like your group to select an object of the month please do get in touch!

Your Space

We like to keep changing our community cabinet to make sure that there is always something new to see. January & February saw a beautiful display of old books by then assistant curator Lucy Cokes. In March we had a collection of different types of dragons.



Henry Cole's Drum

In March we said goodbye to the Ippelen coins, and have used this display case to exhibit the drum owned by ex-Town Councillor and Mayor of Newton Abbot, Henry Cole.



The Science of Collections

The 2023 Summer Exhibition 'The Science of Collections' was a great success with 1237 visitors.

Exploring the ways in which science supports the work done in museums, the exhibit featured a variety of natural history specimens, with the star objects being a mysterious lynx shot in Newton Abbot in the early 1900s (on loan from Bristol Museum) and our own Henry Mapleton's butterfly collection.

Throughout the exhibition we ran weekly family workshops connecting to the themes of the exhibition, all of which were full to capacity. We also ran six 'Young Curator' mornings for young people interested in the work of a curator.



Families Making Curiosity Cases



One of our Young Curators Checking Insect Traps



The Newton Abbot Lynx on Loan from Bristol Museum and an example display board

SPECIMEN COLLECTIONS: & CABINETS OF CURIOSITIES

Specimens are historical collections which help us place particular species in particular places at particular times.

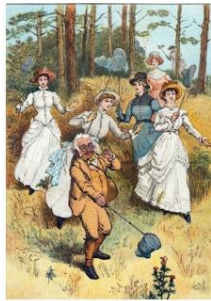
Collections such as these on display reached peak popularity with the Victorians. The upper classes thought it showed sophistication and education. The collections were a conversation starter and gave the collector the opportunity to show off their knowledge of the specimens they had collected.

Collections were usually displayed in curiosity cabinets, that took centre stage in the household, where guests could look over the items and ask questions.

Despite not being something we would normally see encouraged today, butterfly collecting is not illegal. Although, 25 of the 59 species we have in the UK are protected in some way. However, the collection of wild bird eggs is only legal with a license.



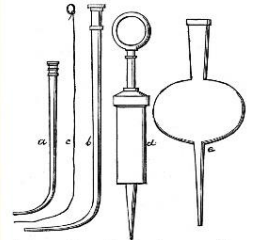
One of the trays from Mapleton's Curiosity Case



The Professor's Class, Randolph Caldecott (1846-86)



Image from *The nests and eggs of British birds - when and where to find them: being a handbook to the oology of the British Islands* (1894)



Instruments used for blowing eggs: a & b - blow pipes, c - wire for cleaning pipes, d - syringe, e - bulbous insufflator, for sucking eggs. From Elliot Coues *Key to North American Birds*

Torquay Pottery Collectors Society – Fired for Royalty

In July 2023 we collaborated with Torquay Pottery Collectors Society on an exhibition celebrating Aller Vale Pottery's Royal Collection. The exhibition was in place for four weeks and was enjoyed by many visitors. It included vases, plates, cups and much more.



Family workshops and activities

Toddler Tuesdays

These free family sessions are aimed at children up to the age of 4 and continue to be a success running every Tuesday during term time from 9.30-10.30am. The sessions are led by volunteers from the Education team and Kate Green, Community Engagement Officer, and involve story time, music, toys and a chance to explore the museum. On the last Tuesday of the month we run a creative activity for the children. Due to the high demand for these sessions we introduced a booking system. Tickets can be booked via our What's On page on our website, by phone or in the museum.

Museum: Make and Create

“Museum: Make and Create workshops” are sessions designed to encourage families to work together and are led by Kate Green, the Community Engagement Officer. The free sessions take place on the first Saturday of every month (pre-booking is highly recommended) and have a two-hour duration.

The workshops always have a link to the museum’s collections and the activities cover a wide range of mediums including crafting, working with clay and digital formats. Recent workshops include creating journals, paper ‘stained glass’ windows and cultural headdresses.



Clay Workshop



Sewing Workshop



Cabinet of Curiosities Workshop

Community engagement events and projects

Outreach visits

As well as visiting children in their classrooms, the museum also visits memory cafes and other interest groups in Newton Abbot and surrounding areas. Our handling collection of objects that people can handle and explore is very popular and inspires lots of conversations and reminiscence.

Channings Wood project - 'Springboard'

A new outreach project for the museum this year. Our community engagement officer has been taking a variety of objects from our collection into the local prison. Approx 12 inmates have been looking at our artefacts and have created artwork in response, including a matchstick model of John Lethbridge's diving machine. Their art will go on show in our community cabinet, Your Space.

What's in Store? Project

One particular activity that we ran with local schools enabled children to see items from the 16,000-strong collection that may never go on display in the museum. The children created various artworks inspired by the objects and formed an exhibition of their work that was on display in the community area and in the Your Space cabinet.



What's in Store Artwork

Twilight Sketching

In partnership with Newton Abbot Art Group. Our sketching sessions run from 4-6pm every other Monday and are open to all ages to attend. Visitors bring their own sketchbooks and pencils and enjoy two hours of calming music and sketching being inspired by the museum and its displays, plus a cuppa and a biscuit at mid-point which is an ideal way to chat and see each other's handiwork. There is no need to book, and it is free to attend.



Twilight Sketchers



Twilight Sketcher's Drawing of The Feoffee Chest in the Museum

Special Halloween-themed event

The museum marked Halloween with a story-telling event, linking objects in the museum with spooky tales. Families came along and joined in the ghoulish activities and had eerie snacks.



A Spooky Story About the Doll's House

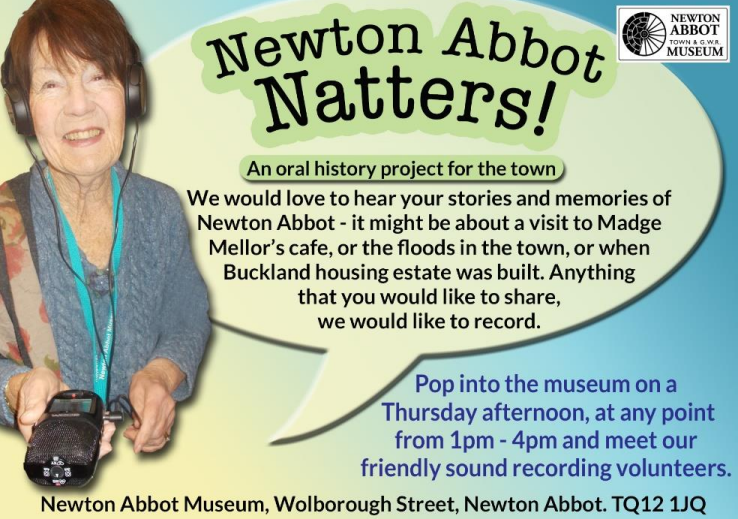
Makaton choir



A local Makaton choir are using the community rooms to rehearse weekly. This resulted in a well-attended concert being performed in the building on the 25th March 2023. We continue to host the Makaton choir for rehearsals and performances. Keep an eye on our What's On page on our website to find out when the next concert will be.

Newton Abbot Natters – Oral history project

Following oral history training for volunteers, we now offer opportunities for local people to share their stories of the town, which are recorded and then stored in the museum archive.



Newton Abbot Natters!

An oral history project for the town

We would love to hear your stories and memories of Newton Abbot - it might be about a visit to Madge Mellor's cafe, or the floods in the town, or when Buckland housing estate was built. Anything that you would like to share, we would like to record.

Pop into the museum on a Thursday afternoon, at any point from 1pm - 4pm and meet our friendly sound recording volunteers.

Newton Abbot Museum, Wolborough Street, Newton Abbot. TQ12 1JQ

School and educational visits and outreach

We are still receiving interest in visits from school and educational groups and the team have been developing bespoke workshops and a handling collection so the children can have a unique learning experience to their usual classroom-based learning. In 2023 we welcomed:

- 951 visitors to the museum as part of school or home education visits
- 2761 visitors on group or informal education visits (including Museum Friends Talks)
- We reached 133 people during school outreach visits
- 61 people were reached during community outreach visits
- 1149 people to St Leonard's Tower

Schools we have worked with in 2023:

All Saints Marsh
Bradley Barton
Decoy
Haytor View
Hazeldown
Highweek
Kingsteignton
Rydon
St Josephs
School for Inspiring Talents (Ashburton)
South Devon Technical College
Wolborough

Home education

As well as monthly home education Lego workshops that are being run in the museum with Brick Ideas, the Community Engagement Officer is running a very popular, bi-monthly, home education creative workshop – this is aimed at children aged 12 and under, along with their accompanying adults.

In 2023 it was requested that we started a home education group for older children, aged 12+ with a more focused approach to heritage. The Heritage Creatives group explores our museum and collection and are inspired to respond in creative ways.

Both of these groups are free to attend. More information can be found on our website, or the Newton Abbot Home Education Facebook page.



Some of the Members of our Home Education Group

Accessibility

In 2023 we continued to run Relaxed Visits every other month. During these visits sounds in the museum are reduced and there is a chill out room available upstairs. We also have additional resources available at the Welcome Desk all year round to support visitors to enjoy their visit including ear defenders, sensory bags, audio guides and we are currently developing a tactile booklet in collaboration with the RNIB for visitors with sight impairment.

Volunteers and work experience

The museum currently has 51 active volunteers who assist with a range of activities including front of house, behind the scenes collections work, education, and conservation to name a few. Without our wonderful team of volunteers we simply wouldn't be able to offer the service that we can, so a huge thank you to all of our amazing volunteers.

In March we hosted a Work Experience Student at the museum. She helped us create a new trail at the museum, picked photos for the Photo Wall and an object for the Object of the Month case and wrote the labels for these. She also learnt how to use Canva and did some graphic design work for us.

We currently have 2 Duke of Edinburgh Award participants with us, who attend every Saturday, with a 3rd starting shortly.

Projects

Stover Park project

Restoring Stover Park is a 3-year National Lottery Heritage funded project. The museum has received some funding to participate in this project by working with a team of volunteers to conduct research that will feed into new interpretation around the park and that can be accessed digitally. This project commenced late April 2023 and ran until September 2023. We are also running family creative workshops across 2023 and 2024, thematically linked to Stover Park. In August 2025 we will be putting on an exhibition linked to the project and the research that the volunteer team will have been working on.

Pilot project with the Natural History Museum

'South West Area Natural Sciences: Setting Natural Science Collections Data Free', is a collaborative pilot project between the Natural History Museum London, South West Museum Development and Bristol Museum & Art Gallery. This project will enable museums to digitally share their natural science specimens and associated data and help researchers understand more about biodiversity, as well as the influence of humanity on our rapidly changing planet.

A team of volunteers and staff received training from experts at the Natural History Museum and we have been photographing and cataloguing our entomology collection. This came about following our successful award of Green Grant funding to carry out a condition check of the collection.

This project was displayed within our Science of Collections exhibition last summer and was a big hit amongst the public.

Curatorial Assistant Lucy working on the butterfly collection



Friends of the Museum

We have over 70 Friends of the Museum members and put on monthly talks on a range of different local topics which continue to be successful – we are often fully booked!

Staff changes

Maternity leave has come to an end for Curatorial Assistant Katie Petley-Jones, who has come back to the museum after having her daughter. This means we have had to say a short farewell to Lucy Cokes; however she will be returning soon on a freelance basis to support the Curator and Curatorial Assistant, with a focus on conservation.

Curator India Jolly will also be leaving at the end of May, as Curator Dr Charlotte Dixon returns from her maternity leave, after also having a daughter last year.

Kate Green, the Community Engagement Officer, and Charlotte Edwards, the Museum Administrative Assistant will still be here to support the museum and continue their good work.

Looking Forward

New for 2024

Cabinet of Curiosities, the Board Game.

A new initiative for all who are interested in board games with an opportunity to play games and invent a new board game for the museum called 'The Cabinet of Curiosities'. Sessions began during the school Easter holidays with a jam-packed room full of gaming families of all ages. Weekly gaming sessions now take place each Tuesday 3.30pm – 6pm in the community rooms in Newton's Place. Free to attend.

Help the museum invent a brand new board game. During sessions we will play games, talk about board games, explore the mechanics of how games work, and then we will invent a table top adventure about collecting and museums!

★ FREE ★
Drop-in sessions
(& free biscuits - yayyyy)

Creative Newton Abbot – “What's Happening?” Stall

CREATIVE NEWTON ABBOT

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Pop along on market day and get all the latest information.

Would you like to know what events, performances and activities are happening locally? A new information point is starting in Newton Abbot town centre where local creative folks and organisations will share what they are up to.

**VISIT THE INFO STALL EVERY WEDNESDAY
IN COURTENAY ST, NEWTON ABBOT
11AM - 1PM**

With funding received from the Queens Jubilee fund we were able to purchase a branded gazebo that is used by the town council for monthly creative events in the town centre.

We have been planning to use the stall on market days to help raise the profile of the museum and of other cultural organisations and activities in the town. Beginning on 17th April we launched 'Creative Newton Abbot, What's Happening?' The stall will be in the middle of town each Wednesday from 11am until 1pm and we are hoping that local people will appreciate regular information about arts and culture activities and events in Newton Abbot as well as local artists, creatives and organisations having a central point for sharing information.

Community Transport Fund

With schools that are on the edges of town having to walk children for nearly an hour to reach the museum, and with memory cafe attendees not being very mobile, we recently asked our town councillors if the museum could have a small fund to help transport children and adults into the museum for visits. An arrangement with Newton Abbot Community Transport will mean that groups can be brought straight to the front door.

Dates for the Diary

Relaxed Visits

Newton Abbot Museum welcomes anyone who might benefit from visiting the museum at a quieter time.

Monday June 10th

Monday August 12th

Monday October 14th

Toddler Tuesdays

Free informal sessions for children 0- 4, every Tuesday during term-time, 9:30-10:30

May

- 21st - Activity
- 28th – No session (*half-term*)

June

- 4th
- 11th
- 18th
- 25th – Activity

Museum: Make and Create – first Saturday of every month

1st June, 10:30-12:30 – ACT Climate Change Festival themed

6th July, 10:30-12:30 – Stover Park themed

For future Make and Create sessions and to book your place please visit our website.

Twilight Sketching – every other Monday 4pm – 6pm

Running until the end of May and recommencing in September

Exhibitions

Stover Canal Trust - 30th July – 31st August

This exhibition will be in the main museum space and celebrating the excellent work of the trust since the 1990s.

100 Years of the High Street - 30th July – 31st August

In recognition of Austin's 100-year anniversary, this exhibition will focus on the shops and changes in Newton Abbot High Street over the last 100 years.

For more information and upcoming events please visit the What's on Page on our website







www.museum-newtonabbot.org.uk

Email: groups@newtonabbot-tc.gov.uk

Tel: 01626 201121

3.4 (b) Newton in Bloom Sponsorship 2023

Newton Abbot Town Council would like to thank local businesses, which have once again so generously sponsored many of the displays in the town centre. Thank you for your continued support.

 <p>The Foot Man The Foot Lady</p> <p>www.Footmannewtonabbot.co.uk</p> <p>37 DEVON SQUARE NEWTON ABBOT . 01626 354834</p>		 <p>idverde</p> <p>CREATING AND MAINTAINING LANDSCAPES</p>
 <p>TQ12 TAXIS</p> <p>01626 35 55 55</p> <p>4, 6 & 8 Seaters Friendly Local Service Credit Cards Accepted</p> <p>www.tq12taxis.co.uk info@tq12taxis.co.uk</p>		 <p>RBL</p> <p>ROYAL BRITISH LEGION</p>
 <p>Andrew Hill Hairdressers</p>		 <p>Best Accountancy Services</p> <p>Outstanding in our field</p>

3.5 Allotments

The Town Council has recently entered into a new service level agreement with the Newton Abbot & District Cooperative Allotments Association Limited. Under this agreement, the Association assumes responsibility for the day-to-day management of allotment fields located at Decoy, Blake's, Cooke's, Coach Road, and Bradley fields. Meanwhile, the Town Council has assumed oversight of all compliance matters, including the issuance of tenancy agreements and invoicing, in addition to carrying out regular inspections.

Annual meetings between Council representatives and Association officers serve as a platform for discussing any pertinent issues, with additional meetings scheduled as needed. It's worth noting that allotments have been widely recognised by plot holders as invaluable contributors to family health and well-being, particularly during challenging times.

Furthermore, a portion of Vicary's field has been allocated by the Town Council for use as allotments, with the remaining area designated for Transition Town Newton Abbot as a community garden.

Progress has been made regarding land transfer activities at Hele Park, with one field already undergoing the transfer process, resulting in the allocation of plots. Efforts are underway to complete the transfer of the remaining field at Hele Park in the coming months. Individuals on the Association's waiting list who express interest in renting a plot at this location can expect to be contacted throughout the year 2024.

3.6 Events Sub-Committee

BAND CONCERTS – MAY TO SEPT 2023

Thanks to the kind weather all 5 concerts managed to go ahead at Courtney Park Bandstand.

A big thank you to everyone who turned out to watch South West Comms, Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service Concert Band, Bay Brass, Exeter Railway Band, Spectrum Music Concert Wind Band.

A total of £858.64 was collected at the concerts and along with other collections taken will be handed to the Mayor's Charity, The Devon Air Ambulance at the Annual Meeting of the Council in May.



A huge thank you to Davie Construction, Best Accountancy, Austins and Major Braden for their continued support in sponsoring these concerts.

This year the following bands have been booked to play in Courtenay Park

12th May – Spectrum Music Concert Wind Band

9th June – Okehampton Excelsior Silver

14th July – Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service Concert Band

11th August – Torbay Brass Band

8th September – Brixham Town Band

TOWN CRIER'S COMPETITION – SATURDAY 9TH SEPTEMBER

Newton Abbot once again played host to members of the Ancient & Honourable Guild of Town Crier's held on Saturday 9th September. 14 Criers took part in the competition, which was held in front of Austin's the Globe throughout the day.

The competition involved 2 cries – the 'Home Cry' and the second cry which was based on 'Sweets'.

Winners as follows:

- 1st Place – Andrew Fox (Ilminster)
- 2nd Place – John Pitt (Plymouth)
- 3rd Place – Mark Wylie (Calne)
- Best Dressed Crier – Chris Smirthwaite (Liskeard)
- Best Dressed Escort – Angie Bishop (Frome)
- Best Dressed Couple – Phil and Rose Northcott (Penzance)
- Loudest Crier – Andrew Fox
- Best Devon Crier – John Pitt
- Sweet Cry Winner – David Green (Torpoint)



Many thanks need to go to a number of people, who have made the event possible from volunteers on the day to event sponsors of cash or prizes.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY – SUNDAY 12th NOVEMBER

The Remembrance Sunday parade consisted of members from the RBL, town councillors, local cadet groups and youngsters from the scouting and Girlguiding local units. It paraded through the town from Courtenay Street from 10.30am led by the Devonport Royal Naval Volunteer Band.



As the live streaming went well during previous years it was decided to stream again at the War Memorial so that anyone unable to attend was still able to support and view the event by watching the stream on NATC's Facebook page. The knitted poppies were on the War Memorial rails, once again they looked fantastic on display for the service and weeks following.

CHRISTMAS LIGHT SWITCH ON – SATURDAY 25th NOVEMBER

The start of the Christmas celebrations began on Saturday 25th November, throughout the day children could enjoy free entertainment and crafts in Courtenay Street as well as entertainment from stilt walkers and the Taiko Drummers.

The parade in the evening started on The Avenue and comprised of the mayor, Santa on his float, the Newton mascot, Ipplepen winter carnival float 'Jack Frost' and cars from Prestige Events.

Father Christmas and the mayor Councillor David Corney-Walker turned on the lights for the crowds. There was also a cheeky 'Grinch running around the crowds. Santa even stayed afterwards for a meet and greet with the waiting children.





The Town Council is grateful to the Town Councillors and volunteers who put so much time, effort and enthusiasm into making this event happen.

We are also extremely grateful to businesses, for making contributions to the Christmas lights fund.



VICTORIAN EVENING – WEDNESDAY 6th DECEMBER



Wednesday 6th December saw the annual Victorian Evening take place in Newton Abbot in the Market Square. It is a well-known event now in the South Devon area and everyone looks forward to the charity evening with a Victorian atmosphere.

Once again the Market Square was jam packed with local charity stalls selling their wares. In total there were 26 stalls selling Christmas themed items from tree decorations, beautifully crafted Christmas gifts, wreaths, homemade cakes and sweets to Christmas cards and plenty of tombola's to try your luck on.

This year the 'best dressed stall' trophy went to 'Newton Abbot Community Shed' they received a cheque for £50 for their charity.



This year saw a stilt walking Victorian policeman in the town centre entertaining the general public throughout the evening. Children were also entertained by a gentleman on a penny farthing who was making balloon models for the children, Elfic the kids' entertainer, walk about act 'Squirrel Nutkins' and bell ringing at St Leonards Clock Tower.

Santa this year could be found on his sleigh near the clock tower, plus in Courtenay Street there was plenty of street food vendors to cater to everyone's needs.



There was plenty of lovely prizes to be won on the Mayor's Charity raffle stall and a total of £253 was raised for the Mayor's Charity.

LANTERN PARADE – WEDNESDAY 13th DECEMBER

All eight of the local primary schools took part again making lanterns to the theme of the 'The Wild Creatures are coming to town'. Lanterns included baby boars, frogs, gnomes, pufferfish, jellyfish, penguins, kingfishers and bees. Plus a few enormous lanterns including a panda, fox, Phoenix and Giant whale they looked truly incredible parading through the town.

The parade started from Bearnas Primary School at 6.30pm and over 200 lanterns paraded through the town up to the Clock Tower. The story of the 'The Wild Creatures are coming to town' was told and all the students and audience could sing and dance along. It was a great evening, and very popular.



Mayor's Christmas Carols

The weather stayed dry for the Mayor's Christmas Carols held on Wednesday 20th December at the Clock Tower.



Our thanks once again to Richard Toomer and the wonderful Rock Choir which led the Mayor's Carols and performed the beautiful "Carol of the Bells" and a mix of Silent Night and The First Noel.

A collection of £48.38 was added to the Mayor's Charity

FIRESIDE SELFIES & SANTA ON HIS SLEIGH – THROUGHOUT DECEMBER



Fireside selfies at the Clock Tower were well received again this year, members of the public had chance on each of the late-night Wednesdays in December to go into St Leonard's Clock Tower and visit Santa's living room, a great photo opportunity.

Santa was also out with his sleigh on all late-night shopping Wednesdays around the Tower to chat to the children and give them a free bag of sweets.





Donations received totalled £98.49 at the Fireside selfies



3.7 Planning Committee - Chairperson Cllr Mike Joyce, Vice-Chairperson Cllr Nick Yabsley. The Committee meets every three weeks to consider all planning applications in Newton Abbot and its borders.

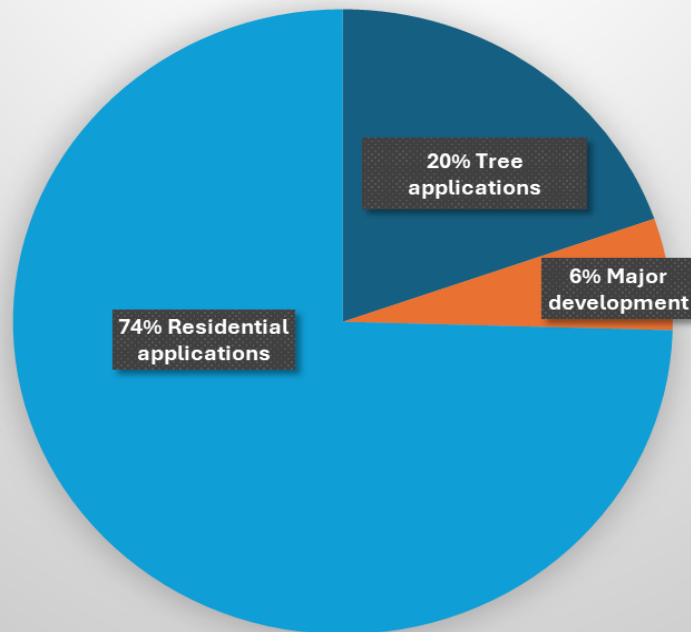
As a statutory consultee, the Committee considers and makes recommendations on all planning and tree works applications to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), Teignbridge District Council (TDC). The Committee also considers applications made by Devon County Council (DCC) for matters such as highways. During 2023-24 the Committee considered and made recommendations on **173** planning applications. Of these applications 9% of the Committees recommendations were at variance with the LPA's decision.

When considering tree applications the Council relies upon on the expert advice of its volunteer Tree Advisor Mr Eric Collar, who has served the Council for over 20 years. In November 2023 at the age of 94, Eric stepped down from the role and was presented with a certificate of long service and a beautiful pen crafted from the wood of a tree in Courtenay Park. There are plans to plant a tree in Courtenay Street in recognition of Eric's dedication.



Mr & Mrs Eric Collar and the Mayor Councillor David Corney-Walker.

Planning Applications 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024



The Planning Committee has had preliminary discussions and deliberations on several major applications, including the following: -

- 23/00378/MAJ Land At Ngr 284376 71456 Ogwell Mill Road Newton Abbot
- 23/00597/MAJ & 22/02069/MAJ Wolborough Barton Coach Road Newton Abbot
- 23/00937/MAJ Howton Field Howton Road Howton Barton Newton Abbot
- 22/01129/MAJ 17-19 Market Walk Newton Abbot
- 23/01310/MAJ Wolborough Grange Newton Abbot
- 23/01594/MAJ Land At NGR 285451 72391 Whitehill Exeter Road Newton Abbot
- 23/01786/MAJ Former Wolborough Hospital Development Site Old Totnes Road Newton Abbot
- 22/00579/MAJ Development Site 22 - 26 Wolborough Street Newton Abbot
- 23/01897/MAJ Car Park Adjacent To Sherborne House Kingsteignton Road Newton Abbot
- 24/00301/MAJ Land At Whitehill Road Newton Abbot
- 24/00220/MAJ Parcel 2.1 East Wolborough, Wolborough Barton

The Committee continues to monitor closely the various policies and application of the Teignbridge Local Plan and responded to the following consultations:

- Street naming for new developments.
- Infrastructure Levy Reform.
- District Council's Community Infrastructure Levy.
- Brownfield Land and Permitted Development Rights.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Town Council encourages members of the public to attend its meetings and its committees/sub-committees in order to listen to the debate, recommendations and decisions of the authority. Residents are also encouraged to attend to make representations or ask questions of councillors. It is pointed out that on every Agenda there is a business item entitled "Public Participation". During the Covid Pandemic the public were still able to attend and participate online meetings of the Council using access to the video links.

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like take this opportunity to thank all members of staff for their support during the past twelve months, and, of course, all members of the Council on the various committees, sub-committees and working groups on which they have served. This has been a difficult year for the Council, as it has been for everyone, continuing to go about our business and deliver services in a cost-of-living crisis and whereby not everyone has recovered from the effects of a global pandemic brought about by Covid-19.

All members of staff having had to quickly adjust to working from home and all the challenges that brought but continued to deliver and without any complaint. In fact, having been 'forced' into finding a way to facilitate 'business as usual' during that period had led to benefits whereby staff can work in a hybrid manner, providing flexibility and an improved work/life balance.

On the democracy front, the Council faced Elections in May 2023. The May elections resulted in only 12 of the 18 Councillors being elected. Thankfully that was the 2/3 required to maintain the Council's General Power of Competency status. It was particularly disappointing though for there to have been again no nominations received for the single member Brunel Ward, and surprisingly, no nominations for the four member College Ward.

As a result the Council in July was successful in co-opting to the six remaining vacancies. In fact, applications were received from 17 qualified residents. Unfortunately, in November a member elected in the May resigned due to personal reasons and an Election was demanded by the requisite number of electors, with three candidates standing for an election that was held on Thursday 8th February. There was a very disappointing turnout but a successful election meant the Council was back to its full capacity of 18 councillors.

Yet again I can confirm that none of the 18 Members of the Town Council receive any allowances when they act as Town Councillor. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor do however receive an allowance for their year of office.

P A Rowe
Town Clerk
April 2024

Newton Abbot Town Council 2023/2024

Income and Expenditure Account for Year Ended 31st March 2024

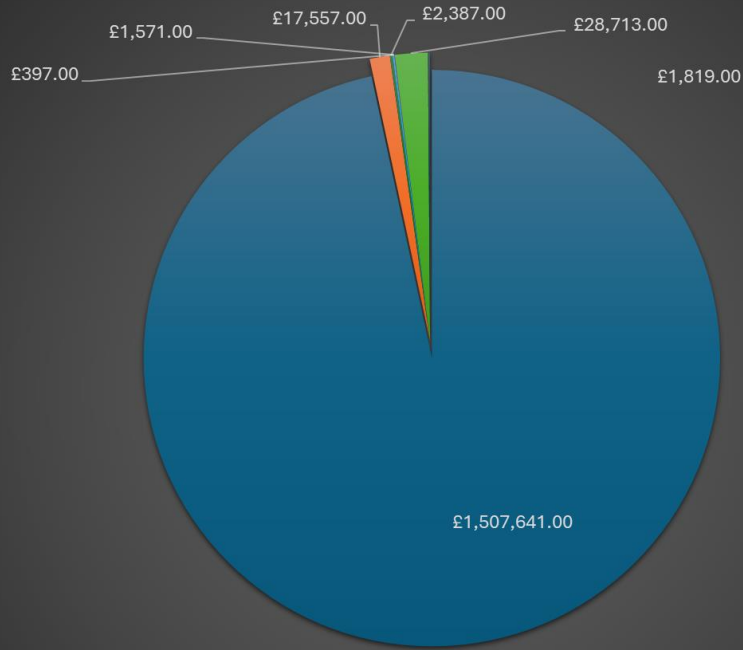
31st March 2023		31st March 2024
	Income Summary	
1,082,000	Precept	1,284,500
<u>1,082,000</u>	Sub Total	<u>1,284,500</u>
	Operating Income	
0	Admin F&A	5,310
104,768	Administration	119,933
7,665	NEWTON'S PLACE	1,819
711	Civic	378
300	St Leonard's Tower	397
0	Victoria Gardens	620
170	Golden Lion Square	0
94,228	CIC	97,519
25,975	Museum	17,557
3,044	Events	2,387
1,854	Newton In Bloom	1,571
1,940	Allotments	14,119
2,700	Footpaths	3,000
672	Town Quay	543
33	Newfoundland Way Toilets	0
33,033	Other Amenities	10,431
<u>1,359,094</u>	Total Income	<u>1,560,085</u>
	Running Costs	
100,205	Admin F&A	117,459
772,461	Administration	894,116
43,009	NEWTON'S PLACE	81,325
6,105	Civic	18,110
34,533	Wharf Road Depot	32,158
11,538	Town Development Manager	10,055
9,361	St Leonard's Tower	6,113
1,967	War Memorial	1,970
10,364	Victoria Gardens	6,709
1,429	Golden Lion Square	1,764
276	Newton Abbot Community Trust	0
123,195	CIC	111,071
39,701	Museum	53,057
29,282	Events	38,223
22,470	Newton In Bloom	30,533
2,772	Allotments	20,155
1,367	Footpaths	905
7,920	Bradley Leat	23
9,570	Town Quay	4,954
17,206	Newfoundland Way Toilets	10,529
90,290	Other Amenities	36,731
<u>1,335,019</u>	Total Expenditure	<u>1,475,958</u>

Newton Abbot Town Council 2023/2024

Income and Expenditure Account for Year Ended 31st March 2024

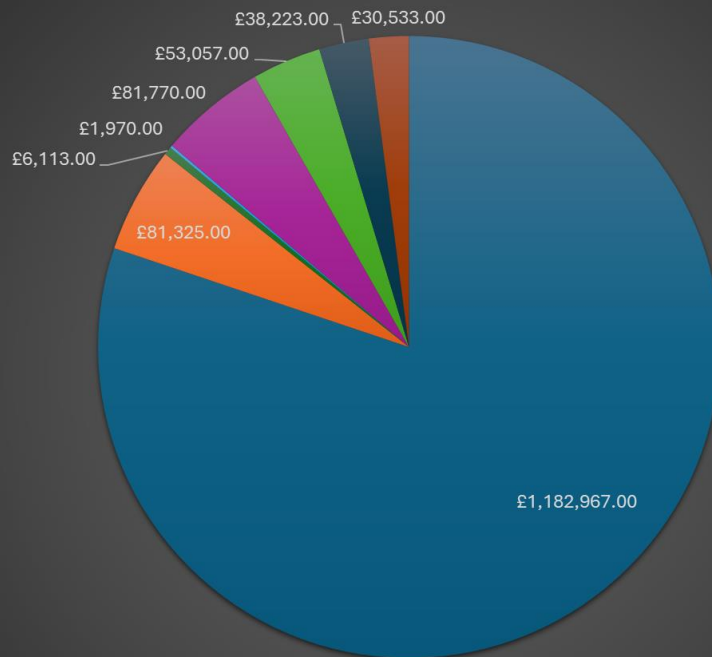
31st March 2023		31st March 2024
	General Fund Analysis	
103,211	Opening Balance	126,146
1,359,094	Plus : Income for Year	1,560,085
<hr/>		<hr/>
1,462,305		1,686,230
1,335,019	Less : Expenditure for Year	1,475,958
<hr/>		<hr/>
127,286		210,272
1,140	Transfers TO / FROM Reserves	(37,451)
<hr/>		<hr/>
126,146	Closing Balance	247,723
<hr/>		<hr/>

Newton Abbot Town Council Income for the YE 31st March 2024



- General operating income
- Museum
- Events
- Newton in Bloom sponsorship
- St Leonard's Tower
- Community & Heritage (assets and amenities)
- Newton's Place

Newton Abbot Town Council Expenditure for the YE 31st March 2024



- General running costs
- Newton's Place
- St Leonard's Tower
- War Memorial
- Community & Heritage (assets and amenities)
- Museum
- Events
- Newton in Bloom floral displays

FACILITIES MAINTENANCE TEAM

The Facilities Maintenance Team play an important role in delivering a high standard of service to both visitors and residents. They are responsible for maintaining a wide range of property and assets including Newton's Place - Community Space and Museum, St Leonard's Clock Tower, a section of the Leat, Town Quay, Victoria Gardens, Golden Lion Square, Newfoundland Way Public Toilets, War Memorial, Council Depot, Public Footpaths, Allotments, Street Furniture etc.

Their working week is spent out and about in all weathers, tackling any number of jobs required to keep Newton Abbot looking smart. When they aren't battling the weeds, they are supporting the Council's busy calendar of community events - managing road closures, setting up and dismantling gazebos, marshaling crowds, chaperoning the Easter Bunny, towing Father Christmas in his sleigh and on occasions dressing up as Newton, the Town Council's mascot.

During November 2023 the Council resolved to prohibit the use of pesticides across its assets and services and has prioritised investment in resources to help improve the visual appearance of the town. At the time of writing this report the Council are eagerly awaiting delivery of new equipment that will enable the Facilities team to tackle larger areas of weeds more efficiently, this machine also has capacity to scrub and dry paved areas.

The Town Council continues to undertake duties that are outside the scope of its responsibility as the District and County Councils are impacted by austerity. To meet this demand the Council has successfully recruited a Facilities Maintenance Team Leader. The team consists of two full time and two part time personnel.



Town Development Manager Report Spring 2024

Newton Abbot town centre continues to buck the trend of decline seen in many towns. With a vacancy rate of around 5% and a ratio of independent businesses representing around 65% of the total, this is a good position to be in and a great place to do business!

Business rates and energy bills continue to dominate the challenges for many businesses, and I use every opportunity presented to me, to lobby government on behalf of the business community about the need for a radical change on the former and support on the latter. This might be at the monthly business meetings with our MP or through the place management sector representative body, of which I am a director – the Association of Town and City Management.

We have seen government funding made available, but all too often it cannot be used for the things which towns need most and on top of this, all towns are different. For example, the 'Future High Streets Fund' and the 'Shared prosperity Fund' are both central government funds, which are currently operating and to which only Teignbridge District Council can apply. The town council is prohibited from applying directly for these funds and the range of things for which the funding can be used is often strictly proscribed by the government. I often hear people say 'they should have spent the money on xxxx'. Unfortunately, it does not work that way and it is either spend the money on the things government will allow or the alternative is not to have the money at all!

In order to really have our best foot forward, there are some things which are on my wish list. A few decades ago, some of these might have seemed laughable, as the community would have taken them for granted. These would include things like a policeman on the beat in the town centre and a local authority- funded CCTV system to keep us safe and to prevent crime. (It was however, great to see our police station open to the public again last year, after many years of it being shut.) The list features a plea for drains and gutters to be cleared of weeds and regularly cleaned and maintained. Pothole- free roads and pavements are also high on this list, as is cheap or free parking and a tourist information centre! With budget cuts everywhere, it's the nice-to- have things which go; but the nice- to- have are essential when considering what makes a town centre attractive, both for the residents who live there and those who visit. Thank goodness the town council has a small team of facilities officers, who are doing some fantastic work, filling the gaps left by the District and County councils.

What is high up on other place manager wish lists, is a department store. With the demise of Debenhams and House of Fraser, many large towns and indeed, some cities, are without a department store entirely. I was pleased to be invited to join the Mayor of Newton Abbot at a ceremony to celebrate the centenary of Austins in our town on 6th March. It was great to see the BBC and other local media there to capture the moment and it is quite something for any family business to celebrate 100 years of trading, let alone 100 years trading in a town centre!

We have some amazing community groups in Newton Abbot and once again I must pay tribute to the Community Shed, who are always so willing to help with our events. You may have seen the standing table, created from a felled tree stump and the fantastic tintamarresque, which they created for our Easter event. They are also working on some exciting Christmas projects too, so watch this space.



Whilst you may not be surprised to know that we are working on Christmas 2024 already; before that, we have a whole range of summer events. These include our two Classic Car Shows, organised by Teignbridge Classics car club, where it's great to see cherished classic cars providing interest for shoppers in May and September.

We had the very first of our Monthly Sunday Markets in Courtenay Street on 5th May and we really thought that our luck was in when the Saturday proved sunny and bright. This tantalizing glimpse of summer was to be our last, as rain came in for much of the Sunday. Our lovely local traders, however, all came out regardless of the unseasonal weather and provided a wonderful variety of food, produce and craft. Shoppers came out too and there was positive feedback all round.

Thank you so much to the traders and to Kris Hanson of The Plot Deli for all their hard work and we look forward to the first Sunday of every month for more local markets! I am also looking to see if we might deliver a 'Summer Nights' too this year, which if we can pull it off and find the funding for it, I know will be welcomed back.



There is consternation from a broad section of the business community about the impending traffic management scheme for Queen Street and I think it's important to reiterate here that having looked at the final proposals at the TRO stage and listened to the community, Newton Abbot Town Council objected to all but the 20mph element. If you look at the consultation documents and reports, it seems pretty clear that these proposals are not broadly supported, so it is frustrating to see them being forced through, particularly when one sees the results from consultations elsewhere, being respected.

It is disappointing that our town will not now see a multi-screen cinema being built with the Future High Streets funding. We love the 'Alex', but a large town like ours, with its growing population, needs the amenity, the flexibility and the variety which a multi-screen would bring to our leisure offer. The chosen location and design for the cinema were perhaps not widely supported, but I do hope that another opportunity might present itself in the not-too-distant future. We have a superb hospitality offer in Newton Abbot with most of our cafes and restaurants being independently owned and run and we have an enviable array of bars and pubs too; however 'big box leisure' is an important part of a contemporary town centre economy and we must look for an opportunity to add this to our list of attractions. Talking of hospitality, do check out 'Deo Gloria' in Bank Street. The community has watched progress on the former Ridgway's shoe shop premises and the doors are finally open on this large bright contemporary café and community space. Bank Street is now well and truly on the map with its choice of eateries! Look out too for the transformation of the retail unit next to the Union pub. Local investors are returning this to its former glory as two affordable retail units, with the added addition of office space above and it will be great to see our famous Mrs B's Bonnets in a ground floor setting in this historic part of town.

Looking at other new businesses – a warm welcome goes to 'Osteo and Physio' and soon- to -open. 'Maria Burns Aesthetics and Beauty' at 66 and 108 Queen Street respectively. Both of these independently owned businesses are responding to the growing demand for health, beauty and wellness services in the high street and for which Queen Street is fast becoming a destination. I would love also to take this opportunity to wish Sandra Benson of D&S sewing machines, a well-earned, relaxing and enjoyable retirement and to congratulate the team at 'Split Endz' for the magnificent transformation of their new premises at 165 Queen Street. It's great to see all this private investment in Queen Street and now that some of the empty units in Market Walk are being marketed, I'm pretty sure that we will have some new occupiers in this little shopping centre very soon. The artist's impression of how the market hall will look, once it has been refurbished were shown recently and I understand too that the planning application for the changes to this listed building will be submitted shortly. We have a fantastic nighttime economy with our existing bars, pubs and restaurants, many of which offer live music; I personally, therefore, cannot see that offering more of the same will satisfy a particular demand; however, perhaps we might gain a greater understanding of how the market hall will operate, when the plans are revealed. I think everyone is agreed that the retail markets should play a dominant role in this historic pannier market and of course the market square itself. I wish our indoor market traders luck in their various temporary premises and I'm sure that shoppers will seek them out and continue to support them.

On a final note, after decades of lying empty, there might be a possibility of a development commencing on the disused site in Wolborough Street, opposite Austins furniture store. This privately owned plot of derelict land has rather blighted this part of town and now that planning has been approved, it hopefully will not be too long before the site is sold, and a developer will get spades in the ground! I have been saying this for 15 years and so let's hope this is a lucky year!

Thank you for shopping locally and I hope to see you in town.