MINUTES OF TORQUAY NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM Steering Group

Tuesday 14th July 2026, 6.30pm
At CDT Offices and zoom

Officers of the Steering Group: Present Rodney Horder (Chair), Mike Cowdery (Vice Chair), Nigel Goodman (Treasurer), Julie Brandon (communications)
Steering Group Members: Anthony King, Margaret Forbes-Hamilton, June Pierce, Roger Carter, Sally Allen-Gerard (part), Cllr Nicole Amil, Bethan Huntley (part).
Other: David Carter, Torbay Council, Chris Kenny, Kay Elliot, Tracey Cabache (Torbay Communities)

Item	
1.	**Minute taker –** Tracey Cabache
2.	**Minutes Apologies for absence –** Chris Smith, Sophie Smith, Carolyn Drew, Alan Griffey, Darren Cowell, Cllr George Darling
3.	**Minutes of meeting 2nd June 2026** Approved
4.	**Matters arising** **From June: Occombe Farm - CCL Community Partnership expressed their concerns to Anne-Marie Bond, Cllr D Thomas, Cllr S Long, Cllr D Cowell and Steve Darling MP but no response. A similar FOI was submitted by a resident asking about how they can be sure this was sold by best consideration. The value is confidential. Plan is for the CP to take to the Local Government Ombudsman.** **From May:** **ACTION: Tracey and Rodney to organise for updates from CIL projects that have been funded** **ACTION: Rodney to send Torquay Athletic Rugby Football Club revised CIL forms once circulated** Chris raised the issue of the community taking on leases of Council property and then inheriting maintenance backlogs. **ACTION: Tracey to add this to the list of 'community barriers' to be shared with AnneMarie Bond. Rodney to ask AMB to attend the Neighbourhood Forum meeting in September.** **From April:**

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	ACTION: Rodney to invite South West Water and Dave Stewart to a future meeting. **Heritage and Arson** **ACTION: TNF and Civic Society to take this up with the Council Conservation Officer** **Membership of the Forum** **ACTION: Hazel will ask Cllr Mark S to see if is willing to represent the Conservative Group. Rodney has invited Mark but no response.** **From March:** **ACTION: We need to challenge the Council 'promising' groups CIL funding. Rodney to draft a message to Anne Marie Bond, and add to CIL panel agenda.** **From February:** • CIL process with panel / Roger used old form – Roger check with Tracey. Roger has emailed AMB to ask for some support. Police Sector Inspector has indicated that police are watching this but do not consider this to be a hot spot currently. Travellers have been using it as a toilet. Julie fed back that the group are working up a plan • Signage for tourists – a bit vague **Historical** • Hollicombe – Sam Irvin (Torbay Council Affordable Housing) knows who owns the site, but the cost of development is currently prohibitive. Re Hollicombe – there are a lot of theories as to why this has not progressed, we need to determine if it is deliverable. **ACTION: Rodney to ask strategic planning for a written view.** **ACTION: Create 2 lists – one on sites that have not complied with planning consent and the other for sites with Planning Consent that have been left derelict. Use these lists to chase the Council. All to send content to Rodney.** **ACTION: Tracey and Rodney to work up some social media guidelines** **ACTION: The Forum to work with Adam on the planned removal of historical or perceived historical lamp posts** **ACTION: All to come up with identifiable district retail areas and amend the Wellswood Shopfront Design guidance for their area** **ACTION: Rodney and Tracey to look at the CIL decision-making process.** **Re:** Re: BT hubs – **ACTION: Put loopholes on a future agenda.**
5.	**Strand Development - David Carter, Torbay Council/Chris Kenny, Kay Elliott**

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	David provided the background to the demise of Debenhams and the previous plan for a residential development, which post pandemic became £7-8 million adrift and was no longer viable. There was no affordable housing in this plan and the Council also cannot subsidize a private development. Our Town Centre was not redeveloped like Exeter and Plymouth purely for retail – we have more options to redevelop as for the most part we have the original buildings. The new hotel plan has been developed to a scale that makes it viable. This plan will still need some subsidy from the Council. The site is very unique. Interviewed 15 hotel operators and they thought it could work at an average room rate of £130 across the year - £220 per night in high season. Would it displace people from other hotels? Possibly – but not for those at the lower end of the offer. Will it really be a 4 star? Council are buying up older hotels and converting them to homes – next 2 Walmer House and Abbey Court. DC is meeting the representative of the Palace Hotel to try to understand their intention. Usual model is you buy the brand and then a 3rd party operates it. In this case we are looking at getting an equity stake so the brand will run it directly. One of the potential hotels want to put in a spa which would make it 5 star. High benefit cost ratio of 4.8. Royal London are interested in investing. There is a risk with any investment, but this would not be viable if we did not subsidize. Council will make the decision whether to progress in December, planning consent is needed before then. The deal is then done with the investors. Construction phase will be 5 years. Earliest start is Sept/Oct 2027. Repayment thereafter. Council has an AA credit rating so it will be a cheaper investment. Why does it not stack up as a private development? They did not have CPO powers. A company could come and try to buy it off of us outright. But we do need it built so that would be a risk at this time. Current funds the Council has invested are government grants. <u>Re Design</u> Need to keep numbers 7 and 8 The Strand for heritage purposes – demolishing and developing numbers 9-14. Due to flood risk the frontage has to be raised by 1m. To account for this the hotel will be set back. Left hand side small massing, right hand side a larger mass. What do we want to call the stairs? Could this be a public competition? **ACTION: Steering Group invited to suggest names.** 3-4 retail units on the ground floor of the left hand side – businesses have already expressed an interested. Could we lose a storey and build on the steps instead. Access and design statements give you a lot more detail on treatments on the façade. How much research has been done re noise pollution that may be caused by the rooftop restaurant. Provision re cycle lanes, worries about the Transport Plan. It may be possible to reduce the amount of tarmac for the cars. **ACTION: Beth to email David Carter with specific questions and suggestions** Can you extend the date for comments as it is such a key site eg to the end of the month?

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	ACTION: David to ask the planners Could you make the right hand side also look like narrow buildings? This could make it look less bulky. Could a CGI be created for us to see? Wanted the right hand side to look like a 'heyday hotel' like the Torbay Hotel, Queen's Hotel etc The Forum looked at the model of the hotel. Lack of on-site parking is an issue. May have valet parking. Will we lose the historic view of the Terrace? We will lose some of this. The ASB issues will need to be sorted. What is the impact on the Hampton at Hilton and Premier Inn? Minimal – no loss of views. Went through the design review panel and they were complementary. Discussion amongst the Forum: The bulk is a concern for members. One of the objections that has been submitted has referred to a lot of planning policies good to look at this. Architecturally it is quite good. **ACTION: All to send comments keeping to policies to Rodney within 7 days.**
6.	**CTIAs – NF position** There is some eradication of this. What should be our policy on this? We need to accept that some of the buildings in the CTIA should be allowed to be converted to housing. The Forum agreed that we are open to lower grade non-viable smaller hotels being converted to housing, but not HMOs. **ACTION: Rodney to draft policy**
7.	**Local Plan– changes following Reg 18 Consultation/Reg 19 O&S** O&S Board meeting - We tried to challenge the process, but got accused of being biased in favour of Maidencombe. A compromise was needed to be made to make sure we get a Local Plan agreed by the end of the year. We can comment again on the Reg 19 consultation in August and Rodney will try to get onto the Local Plan Working Group to address the Reg 19 re-sponses.. High level Reg 18 feedback was given to Overview and Scrutiny Roger raised the windfall site at Meadfoot car park. Housing Minster is not happy with the numbers we have allocated.

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8.	**Neighbourhood Plan update** Will progress and then review. We may need to change our community aspirations. **ACTION: All Community Partnerships to review** We will tweak to include learning from Heritage Walking Trails, Hoe report and Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Improvements have been made to the Heritage Walking Trails app and other groups have shown interest. We have tested it – but now it is bigger than a Wellswood Project. Group suggested applying for a Heritage Lottery Bid. **ACTION: Mike to attend the Heritage meeting tomorrow, possibly also talk to Rachel Kiddey** Margaret is developing a measured heritage mile for Torre.
7.	**CIL** **The current balance of Cil for Torquay is £47,368.82** a. Final documents now ready b. Swim Torquay – Plainmoor Pool boilers – now fixing the new boilers. They are submitting a new application. c. Torquay Athletic Rugby Football Club **ACTION: Rodney to send new forms** d. Meadfoot Sea Road Shelter – screening form approved. Community angle. **ACTION: Julie and Mike to progress this further with the application form** The next CIL panel is in Sept.
8.	**Planning Applications/Issues** 1. Planning Applications/Issues • Old Town Hall – possible visit • Strand/Debenhams P/2026/0238 & 0239 – as above

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	• 1a St James Road – P/2025/0366 Appeal – no update • 10 homes due west of Edginswell Lane, Edginswell P/2025/0152 – no update • 51 Avenue Road P/2025/0840/CU – change of use not determined, full PA required – no update • Land To Rear Of 2 Westbourne Road DE/2026/0023 (PreApp) – no update • 242 Union Street P/2026/0171 – no update • Corbyn Head Hotel P/2026/0115 – Licence was granted, Key takeaway was needing evidence – are near neighbours getting noise pollution. **ACTION: Send complaints in when needed.** • Seascape Hotel P/2026/0177 – no update • Seabury Hotel P2026/0118 – no update • Sladnor Park P/2025/0353 – no update
9.	**Pride in Place Torquay – Project list** Julie shared the plans for the Creative use of the space above TK Maxx. It is a dormant. Access needs to be built. Focus is around creative and community use. Buy in from Milligans who see it as a key hook for Fleet Walk SDC are interested in a partnership. Initial ask is £22,000 to look at the viability and get specialist Fire advice. Julie invited those present to visit the space. Rodney and Mike have visited today, and supported the initiative – very exciting use of the space and complementary to the Pavilion. Julie advised it could be activated quite quickly. Rose will need to feedback at the Board meeting. **ACTION: Rodney to send Rose an email.** Board met 15th June and funded one additional project – a community hub in Melville. There is just £200,000 left of this year's funding and the Board are meeting again on Monday to consider 5 further shortlisted projects. Then there will be a review and possible and re-opening for applications but with a tighter set of criteria.
10.	**Torquay Town Vision** • Meeting with David Carter (RH/MC) • Pavilion – site visit was very useful. But a lot of work to be done. Julie shared that the portacabins and internal box planning was approved for the creative work Artizan are doing to get people to engage in the process. • Cary Green Taxis – reinstatement has happened. • Union Square – viability?

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11.	**Any other business** **None**
	Next meetings: Next meetings - 08 September, 13 October (RH away all month), 10 November

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.

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