

Report of Cllr. Wheatley for Merton Parish council meeting 8th September 2025

FULL COUNCIL

Holsworthy Leisure Centre

We were pleased to receive a Report/update regarding Holsworthy Leisure Centre swimming pool roof, PV and changing Area Reinstatement Works. The swimming pool roof has been replaced and the PV (Photovoltaic- solar panels) installed. The changing area fit-out has been completed and was handed back to Active Torridge team for opening.

Decarbonisation investment and work in the facility has been completed including substantial thermal efficiency with thicker insulated roofing panels, draught stopping triple glazed windows and doors, funded by the Public sector decarbonisation scheme and the Rural Prosperity Fund.

Atlantic Raquet Centre - Bideford

A loan of £100,000 for the ARC (Atlantic Raquet Centre) was voted for unanimously by members. The Loan to be repaid over as 10 years for completion of phase 6 development.

Currently there are 5,500 users per week of the ARC and its many facilities. ARC are awaiting extra 100K funding 106 money. Phase 6 development will entail a Community Hub and Learning Space within a multi-use hall and community cafe.

Councillor Climate Change Working Group

Donna Sibley Climate Officer updated our group and we discussed and recommended some minor changes to our TDC Carbon Environment and Biodiversity Plan. We operate a traffic light system for indicating and tracking progress and made amendments to the Plan which covers Energy, Transport, Planning, Bio-diversity, waste and recycling.

Donna Sibley Climate Officer updated the Group regarding Treeconomics involving tree planting proposals for the continuation of developing plans and undergoing site assessments, though an initial cost would be £6000. Donna stated that actual tree planting would be cheaper due to available grants.

Globe Hotel Community Project - Torrington

Very pleased to announce the target of £230,000 for the Globe was achieved and now over half a million will be released by central Government.

Free expert support to help businesses and farms thrive



North Devon Plus - economic delivery agency for North Devon Council and Torrington District Council - is inviting local businesses and farmers to take advantage of two fully funded support programmes. The Business BOOST and Farm BOOST programmes are designed to help businesses grow, adapt, and succeed in today's challenging environment.

On the Business BOOST programme, participants will receive up to 12 hours of fully funded, one-to-one support from an experienced Business Support Advisor. This tailored support is designed to meet the current needs of your business and can include:

- strategic business planning
- financial forecasting and budgeting
- marketing and digital presence advice
- growth and scaling strategies
- navigating funding opportunities
- HR and staffing guidance

- sustainability and green business practices

The Farm BOOST programme offers specialist support for farmers and landowners, providing:

- help understanding and applying for schemes such as Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) Please note that DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) has a new appointee Emma Reynolds mp and DCC supported by some mps and others are fighting to get clarification of the new revised SFI scheme due in 2026!? Many farmers are left without new agreements and uncertain about future funding from government. Capital Grants, Countryside Stewardships, Farming in Protected Landscapes, Farming Equipment and Technology Fund, Animal Health, and Welfare Pathway
- business planning and diversification advice
- guidance on compliance, sustainability, and future-proofing your farm
- nutrient management support from FACTS qualified advisors

North Devon Plus's Programme Delivery Manager, Louise Adam said: "We know how busy local businesses and farmers are, that's why we've made it simple and flexible to access support—whether online, by phone, or in person. We're here to help you make progress without adding to your workload."

"BOOST is already helping businesses across the region—from small businesses growing their customer base to farmers securing funding and planning for the future. Workshops and webinars are led by local entrepreneurs and industry experts, offering practical advice and opportunities to connect with others facing similar challenges."

Anyone who is interested can speak with an advisor or book a free support session by calling [01237 428 834](tel:01237428834), or emailing:

- Business BOOST: boost@northdevonplus.co.uk
- Farm BOOST: farming@northdevonplus.co.uk

This programme is funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund via North Devon Council and Torridge District Council.