

Agenda 9b)

COUNCIL

19/03/26

Milly Southworth

From: lizeta fellows <lizetafellows@live.co.uk>
Sent: 13 March 2026 10:19
To: clerk@torpointtowncouncil.gov.uk
Subject: Christmas lights alternative proposal
Attachments: TTC Christmas lights Doc.docx; Christmas lights TTC proposal.docx

Good morning Milly,

Thank you for your email response regarding the Christmas lights alternative proposal.

Please find attached the following documents:

Christmas lights alternative proposal

Supporting quotes from the Vision for Torpoint and our town strategy.

The final figure for the Christmas lights 2025 is currently missing, as I require some clarification of the final amount please - I will add this to the document once I have this, I wanted you to have the rest of the documents in time, as requested.

I will contact you separately for this.

If there are any further questions, please feel free to contact me.

Many thanks and kind regards

Lizeta Fellows



Mission and Strategic Objectives



Our mission is to be open and fair, delivering a sustainable prosperous town economy that protects the environment, embraces the whole community and recognises Torpoint's unique design and location as a gateway to Cornwall and the Rame Peninsula.

We will achieve our mission by focussing on three strategic goals.

- **Community**

To put the community at the heart of everything we do, providing opportunities for our residents, community groups and businesses, where no-one gets left behind.

- **Community Governance**

To be a leading council operating within best practice and standards as recognised by the town community, members, staff, partners and peers.

- **Community Growth and Sustainable Development**

To ensure the provision of assets, services and to influence the supporting infrastructure to enable the community to grow and flourish delivering the Vision for Torpoint whilst protecting and enhancing the

'The town centre is a key issue – if regenerated it could provide an attractive high quality centre of local shops and services, in mixed-use development with suitable premises for modern business services. It has the potential to be competitive and attract businesses that serve

has the potential to be competitive and attract businesses that serve Plymouth and the Rame Peninsula from an attractive waterfront.'

Cornwall Towns Study - 2006

Proximity to Plymouth – a population of 260,000 and a wider hinterland

A strong local community – nearly 8,000 people

A stunning waterfront – views onto the Tamar Estuary

The Torpoint Chain Ferry – over 1.2 million vehicles per year

A beautiful hinterland – the Rame Peninsula

A rich historic legacy – buildings, history and town plan

HMS Raleigh – the Navy's main training centre

A gateway to Cornwall – the hidden corner of Cornwall

Community infrastructure – schools, parks, green spaces and facilities

Lack of investment

Decline in the number and quality of shops and services

Under supply of affordable housing

Worsening of the image of the town to visitors

Reduction in confidence of potential investors

Fewer jobs for local people

On-going decline in the quality of the town environment

Worsening of socio-economic deprivation

Negative impacts on wider Rame Peninsula

Existing community facilities become unviable

Young people continue to migrate away from the area

A better waterfront – making the most of the unique asset

Redevelopment at the bottom end of town – ensuring a high quality area

Improving the gateway into town – improving the experience and quality of the environment

Enhancing Harvey Street – the main spine through town

Parking – make it easier for people to park in and around the centre

Connect the waterfront and the town centre – a more joined-up place

Better connections to Plymouth – water transport

Feeling part of Rame – a new civic quality

Providing housing – for local people

An entrance to Rame and Cornwall – make more of this

Benefit from investment in Plymouth – proximity to a big population and the City Deal

The 'hidden corner' – make the most of the remote geography

The image of the town – a poor appearance at the gateway to Cornwall, Falmouth and Torpoint

A tired appearance – a lack of civic quality

The bottom end of town – tired and in need of redevelopment

Waterfront – a big asset that needs to be realised

Lack of visibility of the town centre – 1.2 million vehicles pass through per year

Waterfront and town centre separate – they could support one another

From a commercial point of view all of the projects identified in the Vision for the town centre area would make a positive difference to the town, help to develop a new momentum for change and build confidence for potential investors

Most of the public realm projects are not profitable and therefore would require grant funding, Section 106, CIL or capital receipt re-investment to be delivered

Commercial development in the town centre has historically been extremely marginal – a step change in this position is an important part of what the vision is looking to achieve. There have been very few developments of note in recent years and commercial buildings have generally not sold at strong prices. In contrast, the Trot Inn office and recent investment in the Jetty restaurant at the waterfront represent notable improvements brought about as a result of a courageous investment by individuals

Harvey Street – a poor image for Torpoint along the main route

Shopping quality and variety – many people do their weekly food shop; out of Torpoint Fore Street needs to be better

A lack of affordable housing – a need for more housing for locals

Employment opportunities – for local people

money – a bespoke, unique experience in a good quality environment

The proposals for the town centre aim to establish a new focus – around a more compact commercial centre that has a broader mix of uses including residential and leisure uses of an appropriate scale. The aim is to add positively to the colour, vibrancy and vitality of the town centre. This would be to its benefit in regeneration terms

In order to give mixed-use residential developments greater potential to succeed it would be sensible to limit the extent of planning gain requirements in the early years of implementation – this includes affordable housing contributions. Consequently greater attention could be placed on the quality of architecture and public realm design. This should be dealt with through viability assessment where the costs of higher quality design can be considered in the round

If it is not possible to realise some of the opportunities identified and begin to generate improved socio economic fortunes there are a number of threats to the future. These include – a lack of investment, a worsening in the number and quality of shops and services, an undersupply of affordable housing, a decline in the image of the town to visitors and as a result a reduction in the confidence of potential investors, fewer jobs for local people and an on-going reduction in the quality of the town environment

It is essential that the town will be stimulated into positive change – emphasis on quality, establishing a new civic pride and regenerating the town centre needs to underpin this. This way the change can be transformational

- People like Torpoint – there are many positive things about the town including the local community that people want to hold onto,

- Improving the bottom end of town – the redundant post-war public buildings currently let the image of the town down at an important gateway,

- Making the waterfront better – the waterfront is a unique asset of the town that needs to be improved and have a bigger role,

- Enhancing the town parks particularly Thanckes Park – another major asset that could be significantly enhanced,

- Building on existing leisure and sports facilities – whilst generally well placed for facilities there is a strong desire to see an all weather pitch, a swimming pool and new rugby facilities,

public transport, cycle and pedestrian infrastructure are efficient and of the highest quality to keep the local economy moving,

- Walks around the waterfront and into wider countryside – these are a great asset that need to be looked after and improved where possible,

- Supporting Fore Street – this is the main shopping street for Torpoint and the wider peninsula and local shops need as much support as possible to survive and thrive;

- Improving the overall image of the town for residents and visitors – a revitalised civic pride is necessary to improve the quality and appearance of the town environment

At present there are a number of weaknesses that are working against the prospects of the town. These include the image of the town centre and the waterfront, a lack of job opportunities, tired appearance, and the lack of visibility of the centre.

Opportunities exist to address some of these weaknesses by building upon the strengths of the town. For example, by delivering projects that improve the waterfront, the 'bottom end of town' and Fore Street and create a better relationship between them.

The wider project involves a comprehensive framework for change that seeks to fundamentally alter the fortunes of Torpoint through the delivery of a number of initiatives of different scales over many years. In order for this strategy to succeed governance and ownership of the project is required so that a momentum for change can be properly established and so that on-going responsibility exists to organise the projects that will effect change.

Whilst governance of the overall project could be led by Torpoint Town Council as the commissioning organisation, a multi-agency approach to co-ordination and

delivery may well be more likely to succeed – including the possibility of private – public sector partnership. Investigation of the potential for a multi-sector governing organisation would be sensible.

For change to be instigated will require sustained attention and a dogged determination over many years. This will be made easier if early successes can be established on the ground that begin the process of change – making a real difference to the quality of peoples lives and to the perception of the image of Torpoint.

Making change happen – focuses on identifying how delivery can be made to happen.

It concerns getting things moving quickly, governance to ensure that the appetite for change is maintained into the future, implementation, project management, identifying funding sources, the importance of maintaining a strong momentum and an appropriate quality, and the need for monitoring and review.

Delivery + Governance, monitoring and review

The Vision for Torpoint identifies immediate projects that will start a process of change quickly and in a way that will get things done on the ground. Quick wins and short-term projects have been selected intentionally so that they respond to issues and frustrations identified by local people in their everyday lives.

Delivery of these projects needs to be championed by the Town Council with support from the project partners. The Council is in the best position to make change happen with support from key funders, landowners and the local community.

'No one would pretend that there are any quick and easy solutions. While some may still dream of a return to halcyon days, most of those with responsibility for the future of seaside towns recognise the urgent need for change. For some this means the initiation of

the urgent need for change. For some this means the initiation of a process of masterplanning; for others a reassessment of strengths and assets, and using these to meet the demands and the opportunities of 21st century lifestyles'

Shifting Sands, Design and the changing image of English Seaside Towns
English Heritage, CABE

'Most visitors to Torpoint do not stop and explore; they pass through on their way to or from the ferry and most of all take away a false impression that little of historic interest survives in the town'

Cornwall & Scilly Urban Survey



Torpoint Town Council Christmas celebrations **proposal March 2026**

During the discussions regarding the Christmas lights in the full council meeting held in September 2025, I asked if we as a council could consider using the funds we pay for the Christmas lights each year to engage the community in the decorating of the town instead. At the time this was dismissed, due to perceived lack of time and I believe the thoughts that I wished to remove everything we already do. A comment was made about telling the community there would be no Christmas tree.

This was not what was intended by my question. At the end of the discussions it was suggested that if there were any further ideas for the years ahead, these could be proposed and discussed in early 2026.

It states within the Town council meeting minutes 18th September that it was resolved to agree the 3 year hire contract with the Festive Lighting Company with a review to be carried out by (full) council within 6 months, should an alternative to the Christmas lights be proposed.

Recorded at F&O committee 29th September 2025.

'The purchase order has been placed with Festive Light Company for the three year hire of lights at the agreed price'

However, in February 2026 F&O committee it is recorded the following:

With the council being satisfied with the works undertaken by MHLS Ltd, Clerk is Directed to record in the minutes, the continued use of their services for the next two Years, in line with the agreement currently in place for the hire of Christmas lights, From Festive Lighting Ltd.

Clerk is directed to contact Festive Lighting Ltd, to ascertain whether there could be a

Reduction in the quantity of cross strings hired, from six to five, for the next two years

And ask whether there is an opportunity to travel and visit their warehouse to select Alternative cross strings for future years.

The above directions have been agreed prior to any review at Full council taking place, The agreement in September for a review by (full) council within 6 months, would give a timeline indicating the March full council meeting, which has not yet taken place, yet these decisions have been agreed.

Since September, I have had the perfect time throughout Christmas 2025 to research and formulate potential ideas to create Torpoint Community Christmas .(the name is irrelevant at this point).

I have utilised extracts from Our town strategy and The Vision for Torpoint, where it emphasises the need for growth, community and inclusiveness, the importance of delivering our vision and the impacts if we don't.

Town council strategy – Mission and strategic objectives:

First point –

“Community at the heart of everything we do, providing opportunities for our residents, community groups and businesses, where no one is left behind.”

Third point - community growth and sustainable development

‘Delivering the vision for Torpoint’

Visionary objectives:

1, Stimulate town centre

3, Strengthen the community

This proposal looks at all of these points and supports the quotes we as a council are pledging.

These suggestions are not to replace the work and commitment this council have put in and continue to do so for our Christmas celebrations, they are about improving inclusion and potentially bringing the community closer to celebrate. Bringing about a positive change.

The underpinning idea here is to bring together all of the fantastic events and celebrations that already take place in our town and introduce a few new ones.

I have taken the time to liaise with the Torpoint Archives who have generously researched and provided a flash drive with pictures of festive celebrations from the past, I have actively been a part of the Torpoint celebrations, as well as looking into other local towns and how they celebrate.

Not to mention the countless soppy Christmas films that I have watched over the years, that are all about community, sharing and celebrating.

I would urge all councillors to view this proposal with an open mind and looking into how we increase inclusivity within our community especially at Christmas.

I am certainly not indicating that the town council need to facilitate all of these suggestions, there are many community groups, businesses and individuals that I am sure would like to be involved.

We are all aware of the decline in the high street, with many local businesses closing, leaving shops empty. The cost of living that is impacting many of our families and individuals. We know we have many challenges ahead with our schools and YMCA facilities and our community are feeling this.

The thought process here is to bring life into Torpoint, not only the high-street but the town, lifting spirits whilst we face these challenges. Our strong sense of community has always been of paramount importance to us.

This being the sole reason my family and I returned to Torpoint many years ago. Community is what the town is known for and we all know right now, we need our community more than ever, so why not look at Christmas with a deeper community outlook?

We have so many events that take place throughout the year, especially during the lead up to Christmas, some on the same day in different parts of town.

I have been informed that there used to be an events diary held in the library, a few individuals have asked for this to return as they found it useful. I am aware we have the diary dates that are issued in the newsletter and are available digitally.

People have expressed that they used to like this diary system for organisations, businesses and individuals to add events and look at what is going on in the town.

Perhaps we need something like this especially in the run up to the festive period to reduce overlap of events?

We know not everyone uses social media or online services and social media posts can be lost.

Last December there were 4 events going on the same day, all around the same time in 4 different locations.

We are aware that Torpoint light switch on is attended by the majority of the local community, by adding a few other events, offering inclusive options and tweaking a few that are already running, we could further engage our community and attract more attendees. Giving our residents a further sense of belonging and achievement.

Holding workshops from August/September inviting the community to help decorate Torpoint:

Every community group and business offered the chance to customise their own bunting – using waterproof burlap material.

Could we line the entrances to Torpoint and the high-street?

Wrap around the lampposts ? (Similar to Liskeards wool fair ?)

Guinness book of records here we come again, can we beat 2012's 14000+ ft, with 11,700+ individual flags?

This was a huge achievement with many towns not knowing they were competing unofficially, which made Torpoints record part of a much bigger nationwide celebration – 2012 Jubilee.

We have a huge amount of community groups, businesses, schools etc that could be invited to take part, they do not necessarily have to attend the workshops, so long as their flags are received by the deadline given.

How amazing would it be to be greeted by Christmas when you enter Torpoint?

With small lights to highlight the bunting in the highstreets.

*I recognise there may be a charge to put these up.

- Maintaining our main Christmas tree
- Each shop front/business to have a community handmade wreath.
- The window competition
- Christmas treasure hunt
- Bows created for the remembrance tree – to be added after the tree lighting. These could be purchased for a small price?
- Lantern parade as is already in place, perhaps more community groups, businesses could be invited along?
- Street market held on the same day as the light switch on , which could include roasted chestnuts and candy floss.
- More activities for the children ? Fair rides etc?

What about starting earlier on light switch on day?

Why not engage the cornerstone Church to host their Christmas fayre and hot choc early afternoon/evening to compliment the street market.

Christmas crafts at the library

Engage with Mrs browns bakery to see if they would make a large batch of gingerbread.

-Gingerbread house decorating late morning with judging after light switch on ?

-Carol singers / band/choir ?

Weekend closer to Christmas, what about holding a Christmas community get together – everyone welcome ? (Cornerstone church perhaps) the heart of the high street.

- Best Christmas jumper / ugliest Christmas jumper competition
- Christmassy raffle , food hampers etc (these could be donated)
- Eggnog, mulled wine and mince pies/Christmas biscuits
- Festive music

- Displays from the archives, showing Christmas celebrations from the past.
- Gift giving for those in need

As these get together build over the years, the hope is they will become self sustaining and give the whole town something to look forward to.

Other town examples :

Liskeard held an amazing Christmas light switch on event which included dedicated quiet spaces and activities for any residents and visitors with additional needs.

Which included the Torpoint sea cadets performing festive tunes during the lantern parade.

kids crafts, lantern parade, fireworks display and circus performances. Christmas at the museum, Christmas at Stuart house and Christmas at the library.

Their accessibility information was especially interesting, very detailed for each area and event space. Taking into account noise, parking and disabled toilets alongside accessible drop off points. With the public hall, library and museum open for anyone who required quiet time in a quieter, calmer environment.

Saltash – although hindered by the weather, held:

Santa fun run, Best dressed dog, Lantern parade, fireworks, Santa's on bikes, indoor market and a photo backdrop.

I realise we are not Liskeard or Saltash, we are Torpoint and we are community driven, lets show what we can achieve together.

This proposal is a working document that can be adjusted and added to, I hope you will agree not out of scope or our towns capabilities.

Some of these ideas will come at a cost, although, after looking further into costs, this would not be a significant amount , for the potential gain for our town and our residents.

Last year we spent £ on our Christmas lights.

By adopting a community first approach we could financially support the above proposal and save an element of last years cost year on year, as engagement grows.

As I am sure you will see, this proposal has in no way indicated Torpoint has cancelled Christmas and Torpoint will no longer have a Christmas tree, in fact I strongly believe its the opposite.

“Change brings opportunity” commonly attributed to Nido Qubein.

