

Representatives from 'Save Torpoint Sports Hall', Torpoint Athletic Football Club and members of the public and [Cornwall] Councillor Rob Parsonage were in the public gallery.

MINUTES of the Extraordinary meeting of Torpoint Town Council held on Tuesday 14th April 2026 at 7.00pm in the Committee Room, 4 York Road, Torpoint.

Present: - Town Mayor (Councillor Mrs. J M Martin) Chairman, Deputy Town Mayor (Councillor Mrs. C E Goodman), Mrs. K Brownhill, G J Davis, Miss R A Evans BEM, Mrs. L Fellows, L E Keise, S J Pike, Mrs. J L Reeves, M G Spurling, C R Still and J Tivnan BEM. The Town Clerk & RFO (Clerk), the Town Council Support Officer / Assistant to the Town Clerk were also in attendance.

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| <p>209-25 Apologies for absence: - Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs. S G Bickle, S A Clark, L Hogan, K J Moon and [Cornwall] Councillor Mrs. K Ewert.</p> | |
| <p>210-25 Declarations of Interest relating to matters on the agenda: - a) To receive any declarations from Members of any registerable (5A of the Code of Conduct) and/or non-registerable (5B) interests in matters to be considered at this meeting. i) An NRI (Non-Registerable Interest) was declared by: - Councillor G J Davis – (Agenda items 3a and c. As Director of the Horson Park Community Sports Hub). ii) An NRI (Non-Registerable Interest) was declared by: - Deputy Town Mayor Councillor Mrs. C E Goodman – (Agenda items 3a, b and c as a previous member of the Torpoint and Rame Active Community Network). iii) An NRI (Registerable Interest) was declared by: - Councillor L E Keise - (Agenda items 3a, b and c and the current Chairman of Torpoint Athletic Football Club). iv) An NRI (Registerable Interest) was declared by: - Councillor S J Pike - (Agenda items 3a and c as a previous member of the Save Torpoint Sports Hall Group). v) An NRI (Registerable Interest) was declared by: - Councillor C R Still – (Agenda items 3a, b and c as a previous member of the Torpoint and Rame Active Community Network). b) The Town Clerk to receive written requests for dispensations prior to the start of the meeting for consideration. The Town Clerk summarised dispensations received and the process for granting dispensations with the prepared statement as follows: "I have received 6 applications for dispensation; one Councillor has now submitted their apologies for the meeting. Councillor Davis, Councillor Goodman, Councillor Keise, Councillor Moon, Councillor Pike and Councillor Still. A reminder Madam Mayor, at the Council meeting of Wednesday 23rd April 2025, the Town Council delegated the power to grant dispensations to the Town Clerk.</p> | |

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| <p>As Town Clerk I have reviewed all the applications as received and am content to award dispensations to all six Councillors, who have submitted an application. A copy of the dispensation will be kept with the Register of Councillors' Interests.</p> <p>Councillor Davis' is for today's meeting and he has indicated that he does not wish to participate in any voting.</p> <p>Councillor Goodman's is for today's meeting and subsequent meetings and she has indicated that she does wish to participate in any voting.</p> <p>Councillor Keise's is for today's meeting only and he has indicated that he does wish to participate in any voting.</p> <p>Councillor Moon is for today's meeting (apologies received).</p> <p>Councillor Pike's is for today's meeting and he has indicated that he does wish to participate in any voting.</p> <p>Councillor Still's is for today's meeting and he has indicated that he does wish to participate in any voting."</p> | |
| <p>211-25 Mayor's Announcement / Meeting Introduction</p> <p>Torpoint Town Mayor (Councillor Mrs. J M Martin) opened the meeting with a brief summary of the history of the project along with introductions to the meeting to provide context and clarity for members' and those in the public gallery.</p> <p>"Welcome to tonight's Extra-ordinary meeting of Torpoint Town Council. I have called this meeting as a result of the shock decision made by Torpoint Community College (TCC), and communicated to Torpoint Town Council on 1st April, not to proceed with the 3G pitch project. At the Development and Localism (D&L) committee meeting that same evening Councillors were incensed by this decision and as Mayor, I agreed to call an Extraordinary Council Meeting ahead of the next Council meeting, in order to not allow the 3G pitch to dominate the Council meeting and detract from normal business on Thursday. It is hoped that the Council will be able to agree a way forward on this tonight.</p> <p>The 3G pitch is a project working in partnership with Torpoint Town Council, Torpoint Community College, Cornwall FA, the Football Foundation and the Torpoint and Rame Active Community Group. The funding is in place to deliver this project in its current format on the school's land for dual use by the school and the community. The Governors of TCC have decided that they are unable to proceed with the project due to the financial pressures that the on-going running and maintenance may cause.</p> <p>Myself, the Clerk and the Chairman of D&L were invited to a meeting by Cornwall FA yesterday and they are looking to go back to TCC to try and change their mind by entering into discussions regarding the on-going risks.</p> <p>The tender received for the work is valid until the middle of June so in the first instance this Council should consider supporting Cornwall FA in its bid to bring the school back on side and support the project in its current form.</p> | |

Any new proposal, i.e. a change of site and/or partners would require a complete re-start, we would be back at day 1 and it could take another 3 years to deliver. There is also new criteria to be adhered to for any new applications.

Sports Hall - As far as I am aware the YMCA has vacated the building and have arranged for remedial work to be undertaken. TCC have told me that once the work has been completed, they are likely to offer the YMCA to renege on the lease earlier than 31st August in order to be able to start using the sports hall again for lessons.

I have always maintained in my discussions with the school that both projects, the 3G and the Sports Hall should be for the benefit of the school and the community.

We have received some correspondence from residents' and from Shevioc Parish Council and will look to respond to these following this meeting. We have also had a series of questions from a Save Torpoint Sports Hall group which Councillor Davis as Chair of D&L has considered and will now look provide further clarity on the points raised. Following this I will look to suspend standing orders to allow for any questions or comments from the public."

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Councillor G J Davis read and responded to questions (*in italics*) submitted in advance to the Town Council by the 'Save Torpoint Sports Hall' group:

Part 1: The 3G Pitch

Q1 Status of the funds

Please provide a detailed breakdown of all funds raised for the 3G pitch project, including: the total amount raised to date; any expenses already deducted; who currently holds the funds and in what account or fund; and what the legal position would be if the project does not proceed including whether any funders have conditions requiring their contribution to be returned if the pitch is not built.

All funding promised or received is for the Torpoint School AWP 3G Project at the school which is also the basis of the council's financial allocation. Some of the funding pledges have further conditions that are required to be met, the specifics of which are not all fully known to the Council. The dates of the allocations/expiry are all currently in date but are only dischargeable through the school.

The exception to the pledges for funding is the money that has been received into the council which the council has got possession of for the Torpoint Community College 3G pitch project. These are donations from:

Cllr Gary Davis' Mayor's Charity fund £4,644

St John Parish Council £100

Antony Parish Council £50

Cllr Ewert and Cllr Tivnan Cornwall Council Community Chest £1,000

Total received £5,794

£2,171 amount of the Mayor's Charity allocation went towards the planning permission and has been spent.

Net balance of £3,624

Pledges tracked by the Town Council for the project includes

Torpoint Community College £80,000

Torpoint Town Council £80,000

Torpoint and Rame Active Community Network – circa £15,000 (includes £10,000 from Torpoint Town Council)

Cornwall Council Community Infrastructure Levy of £85,000 (although this could rise £100,000 if required)

Sheviocck Parish Council - £2,000

Circa £277,000 with the remainder of funding from the Football Foundation which would result in the Fixed Build costs with risk to be met.

The council understand there has been costs incurred with the planning and scoping of the project, by the school and the Football Foundation, it is not currently understood by the council whether and how the costs will be covered.

Q2 Funder deadlines

Is there a deadline imposed by any of the project funders by which commitments must be confirmed? Is there a date after which any funding would lapse or must be returned? The community needs to understand the urgency and timescale it is working within.

All funding has been pledged based on the project which the school have rejected. If agreement cannot be reached with the school before the fixed price arrangement is in place, the costs (from the supplier, materials etc.) will likely increase and will require a further tender and potential fundraising. The Council understands the tender has approximately 8 weeks left on the validity.

Q3 The school's stated concern about maintenance

It is our understanding that the Trust's primary concern about the 3G pitch is the long-term maintenance liability once the warranty period expires. If that is the case, would the Trust be willing to explore a stakeholder-backed maintenance reserve fund contributed to by all organisations using the pitch under a formal usage agreement as a way of removing that liability from the Trust entirely? This is a well-established model for community sports facilities across the country.

The council understands the ongoing management and maintenance were both part of the reasons the council understands the school chose not to proceed. The council already offered to discuss alternative management proposals, this was not pursued at the governors meeting with the school deciding to withdraw from the project. The challenge is that the land is owned by the school and as such they will always remain, at the base level, the accountable body.

Q4 A combined community agreement for both facilities

Can the 3G pitch and the sports hall management question be addressed together as part of a single community agreement? For example, as part of a social enterprise/CIC/ Community Benefit Society that takes on responsibility for both facilities, providing the Trust with a fixed income and no management burden, while returning both to sustainable community use. We would welcome the opportunity to present this proposal formally.

The same question was asked of the school at the governors meeting – they refused to consider it at the governors meeting instead voting to reject / refuse the project progressing on the school site.

Part 2: The Sports Hall

We are conscious that the sports hall was not included on the agenda for this meeting. We believe it should have been. The closure of the sports hall on 31 March 2026 with no prior public consultation and no transition plan affects a far larger number of residents than the 3G pitch, and raises serious legal and funding questions that have not yet been addressed publicly. We ask the council to hear these questions and to commit to a further extraordinary meeting specifically on the sports hall.

Q5 Commitment to a further extraordinary meeting

Will the Town Council commit to holding a further extraordinary meeting specifically on the closure of the Torpoint and Rame Community Sports Hall, given that its closure affects the community at least as significantly as the 3G pitch, and given that the legal and funding questions surrounding it have not been publicly addressed?

The council eagerly awaits and has requested information from the school at both the governors meeting and informally about the future plans for the sports hall. This is currently unknown by the Town Council – subject to tonight's discussion we will formally contact them. The council were expecting the management of the sports hall to be clarified with the 3G pitch project as the school got clarification of the exit arrangements and therefore did not need to escalate it further.

Once this is understood this will be on future Development and Localism Committee and Full Council agendas. Unless a specific urgent decision or complex debate is required it is not expected to be the subject of an extraordinary meeting.

Q6 What the council has been told

Has the Town Council received any formal communication from Torpoint And Rame Co-operative Learning Trust about its intentions for the sports hall? If so, will it share that communication with the community? The community is currently being asked to accept a closure with no explanation and no timeline.

No formal or informal information has been provided to the Council other than what has been shared in the press release / newsletters / social media on the intentions of the School / Learning Trust for the Sports Hall.

Q7 The lease position

Can the Town Council confirm whether the YMCA has formally surrendered its lease on the sports hall? The Land Registry records show that the registered lease runs until 17 April 2036 not August 2026 as the community has been told. If the lease has not been formally surrendered, the YMCA remains the legal tenant and the school cannot simply grant interim access. If it has been surrendered, what is preventing the Trust from granting an immediate interim licence to allow community clubs to resume use of the hall?

The council cannot say for certain – this is a question that would need to be addressed by the School / Learning Trust.

Q8 National Lottery funding obligations

Can the Town Council confirm that the sports hall was built by Cornwall County Council's own Lifelong Learning Portfolio using National Lottery funding, under grant conditions that typically require community use to be maintained for 20 to 25 years? Will the council write formally to Cornwall Council asking them to investigate whether those grant conditions remain in force, and to Sport England requesting the same?

This was not a Town Council project and we cannot say for certain; this will be picked up further once the school have provided further information on their intentions to deliver the sports hall from September.

Q9 Asset of Community Value

Will the Town Council formally explore nominating the sports hall as an Asset of Community Value under the Localism Act 2011? Such a nomination would give the community a right to bid if the Trust ever sought to dispose of the facility, and would place the hall's community importance on the public record.

The council could consider this (as could any eligible group), we understand the school have no intention of disposing /selling the site / building. We will (I suggest depending on the outcome of this meeting) be engaging further with the school

Q10 Why only now?

These extraordinary meetings are welcome. But significant events affecting this community — the closure of the sports hall, the withdrawal of the YMCA, and the potential loss of the sixth form all carry consequences for local residents that are at least as serious as the 3G pitch. Will the council commit to a principle that future decisions of this magnitude will trigger a public extraordinary meeting as a matter of course, rather than leaving communities to find out through informal channels?

The council has not been party to the school conversations with YMCA, we understand, the school were surprised by the timing of the departure and we have requested informally to understand their intentions past September. Following the governors meeting two weeks ago the council will be considering their response tonight – it is suspected that the Sports Hall will be part of that response.

Q11 Neighbourhood Plan Objectives?

The neighbourhood plan states 'enhancing sport facilities' and 'providing more opportunities for physical activity for health benefits'. Losing the sports hall will mean that facilities and opportunities for physical activity will be reduced. What action are you going to take to ensure the sports hall and opportunities for physical activity at the facility are not lost?

That is part of the output of this meeting – we are responding to this in the same way you are. We were invited to the School Governors meeting a fortnight ago and with no pre-read or pre-brief and were completely unsighted of the school's challenges.

The school have assured us through our meetings over the last two years they were developing a plan that would be going to governors for their approval, through our meetings the school were offered support and assistance in the development of the business plan by the council if they needed it – this was not requested by the school.

Our Position

We are not seeking confrontation with the school, the Trust, or this council. We have a practical proposal — a Community Interest Company that takes on both facilities, removes

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| <p>financial risk from the Trust, and returns them to sustainable community use. We want to work with everyone constructively.</p> <p><i>The Town Council position is to ensure a sustainable business model is in place for the provision of both the sports hall and the potential inclusion and development of a 3G pitch for both the school and the community. Crucially at this conjecture these are or were planned to be Torpoint Community College facilities and they need to decide how they should be operated; we will work with them and look to support and influence as their process progresses.</i></p> | |
| <p>212-25 Suspension of Standing Orders: - It was resolved to suspend standing orders at 7.35pm, to allow members of the public to speak in open forum. Standing orders resumed at 8.11pm and the meeting continued.</p> | |
| <p>213-25 Following the recent announcement from Torpoint Community College, regarding the 3G Pitch Project.</p> <p>a) To consider: next steps for the project: Considering discussions having already taken place with key stakeholders regarding the current status of the project it was resolved that the Town Council make written contact, on behalf of the town community, with the Torpoint Community College leadership team, Governors and Co-operative Learning Trust to re-open conversation for the options of delivery and management of the 3G Pitch Project. Furthermore, to extend our support and provide assistance to the Community College in the delivery of Sports Hall operations. This may include options for operational management and financial support for both facilities. If at the end of the 8-week period (following the expiration of the current tender) no progress has been made with Torpoint Community College, Torpoint Town Council will work towards establishing a "Plan B". (For the minutes Councillor G J Davis did not participate in the voting.)</p> <p>b) To consider: formulating a response to Torpoint Community College: Given the previous proposal members' were invited to add other key points that they felt important to communicate with Torpoint Community College at this stage. Following discussion, it was resolved to record that the response be the same as at 3a and that the correspondence will be in accordance with previous.</p> <p>c) To agree: to hold the donations received for the project, for a period of time to be agreed. Town Mayor (Councillor Mrs J M Martin) reminded members that Councillor Davis has previously summarised the current funds and as such it was resolved that the funds as allocated continue to be ring fenced for a period of at least 3 months, at which point the town council will be better position to reassess. (For the minutes Councillor G J Davis did not participate in the voting.)</p> | <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> |
| <p>Meeting closed at 8:28pm Town Mayor</p> | |