



# TAW TORRIDGE ESTUARY FORUM

Minutes of the meeting held on Mon. 20th October 2025 in the Beechfield Centre, Fremington at 7.00pm

## Present:

Paul Brown	Harbour Master Bideford & Speaker
Martyn Bennett	TDC
Ian Harrison	Rolle Canal Society
Helen Sheard	Bideford Sustainability Group
Brian Hopkins	Bideford Sustainability Group
Sandra Knight	Coastwise ND
Debbie Frazer	Devon Wildlife Trust
Chris Salisbury	Taw & Torridge Wildfowling Club
Wendy Lo-vel	Torrige District Council
John Puddy	Freshspring Trust
Teresa Tinsley	Torrige District Council
Ken Hind	Bideford Town Council
Matt Edworthy	Gaia Trust
Tristan Otten	Torrige District Council
Mark Cann	Braunton Parish Council
Peter Hames	Torrige District Council
Jeremy Bell	Northam Town Council
Sue Prosper	Love Braunton
Ray Turner	Devon Birds
Tony Bown	supporter
Chris Dee	WeBS
David Dixon	Barnstaple Pilot Gig Club / Fremington P C
John Challis	Barnstaple Town Council
Tom Humphreys	ND Biosphere
Aaron Lowe	Skern Lodge
Mary Breeds	Braunton Countryside Centre
Jeff Needham	Tawstock P.C. & Vice-Chair / Treasurer
Ian Crawford	Secretary
Tony Pratt	North Devon Yacht Club & Chair

**1. Welcome & Introductions:** The chair welcomed everyone and members old and new introduced themselves.

**Apologies for Absence:** Ricky Knight, Chris Fuller, Mike Teare, Justin Gillett, Sally Ramsden, Tara Jenkins, David Brain, Tony Nichols, Andy Bell, Helen Cooper, Russell Walters, Andy Cox

**2. Minutes of Previous Meeting Mon. 21st July 2025:** Amended to confirm farm feedstuff still arrives at Appledore & adopted.

**3. Guest Speaker:** Paul Brown, Harbour Master Bideford gave an informative and interesting presentation about his role as harbour master and Taw & Torridge pilot. Following a half hour overhead projection several points were raised by Forum members starting with the proposed closure of quays under North Devon Council jurisdiction, where PB considered NDC are short sighted as who knows what we will need in terms of these facilities in the next 10/20 years time. Tony Pratt proposed that this issue of the quays be posted on the TTEF website. Peter Hames raised the issue of 'no duty holder' for Appledore which PB considered imperative as it is a busy area. Abandoned vessels in the estuary was mentioned. The prospect of a Trust was raised by Ken Hind to establish some authority in the Bideford port and found support amongst Forum members.

#### **4. Refreshment Break**

#### **5. Reports:**

**a) TTEF / P & C Committee.** Tony Pratt's report had been circulated and he confirmed that despite raising the need for the developer at the Yelland Power Stn site to comply with conditions of planning consent, no reply had been received. Jeremy Bell stated that breaches could be regulated by referring matters to the Health & Safety Executive

**b) Finance Report:** The Treasurer reported that funds stand at £2976-39

#### **c) Estuary Reports:**

- **Bideford Harbour Master** - Paul Brown gave a report that 6 ships had berthed at Appledore and unfortunately nothing at Bideford.
- **Appledore - Instow Ferry** - a report had been circulated

**d) N D Biosphere** Tom Humphries reported that the 10 year Strategy Consultation had enjoyed good participation. The Nature Recovery Plan continues. Community photo competition is on display at Barnstaple Library.

Sensors are being installed on the Taw & Torridge Bridges. Work continues on the effect of pet sprays on river water health ( further detail of Tom Humphries report can be found in the N D Biosphere Report to be circulated and posted on TTEF website)

**e) N D Coast National Landscape:** Joe Newberry's report had been circulated

**f) Devon Wildlife Trust:** Debbie Frazer's report has been circulated. She put emphasis on work being done in coastal areas. A public training day on Saturday 15th November has been set up at the Braunton Countryside Centre

**g) Harbour Users Group:** Mike Teare's report has been circulated.

**h) Bideford Heritage Harbour:** Mike Teare's report has been circulated.

**i) Natural England:** No report

**j) Taw Torridge River Champs:** John Puddy's report had been circulated. JP & Ken Hind are supporting the concept of a trust port for Bideford and are inviting the Forum to support. Whilst the Forum already support the establishment of a Harbour Authority the Chair invited them to send information to him for consideration by the P&C Committee on Fri. 14th November.

**k) WeBS & Website:** Chris Dee's reports have been circulated

**l) Any Other Reports:** Ken Hind reported that Bideford Town Council has a government grant of £1.5 million to refurbish the Pannier Market and plans to extend the right of the building to be a community and events centre

**6. Any other matters arising from April minutes - None**

**7. Urgent Matters brought forward by the Chair:** The threatened decommissioning of North Devon quays will be posted on our website under **Current Issues**.

Jeff Needham reported that he has found a secretary to take the minutes at the AGM in January and that we might have access to a local Parish Clerks journal to promote TTEF meetings. JN has also volunteered to cover the P&CC minutes from January 19th 2026 onwards

**8. Agenda Items proposed for next Meeting:** None proposed.

**3/4**

**9. AOB:** Several announcements were made re events and other issues:

Ken Hind reported that Bideford Town Council will consider the proposal to create a Torrridge and Taw Trust Port. If approved the report it considers and the motion will be circulated to all members of the Forum to seek their approval and support.

Mary Breeds reported that a hedgehog project was to be funded by Devon Environment Foundation.

The Chair presented the retiring Secretary, Ian Crawford with a book entitled 'The Birds of Lundy' in thanks for his services to the TTEF.

**10. Future Meeting Dates: AGM on January 19th 2026 at 7.00pm**