

Kingsbridge Town Council

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT & RESILIENCE COMMITTEE HELD IN THE TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE, AT 6.30 P.M. ON TUESDAY 27th JANUARY 2026

Present: Cllr Mike Jennings
Cllr Graham Price
Cllr Mel Rollinson
Cllr Julie Taylor
Cllr Philip Cole
Cllr Julia Wingate

In Attendance: Katharine Harrod (Town Clerk)
0 Members of public

25/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies were received from Cllrs Balkwill, Rawstron, Vann and Yabsley.

25/18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

No declarations of interest were received.

25/19 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:

It was noted the Environment, Transport & Resilience Committee minutes of 23rd September 2025 were approved by Full Council on 14th October 2025.

25/20 FLOODING, SEWAGE DISCHARGES & COMMUNITY RESILIENCE:

01 Emergency Plan Discussion/Feedback and Proposals for Improvement:

A discussion took place regarding the gas emergency that occurred between Saturday 3rd and Thursday 8th January 2026 which resulted in approximately 4,600 homes being disconnected for up to four nights.

Feedback regarding how the emergency was handled:

- Kingsbridge Town Council were able to react quickly to the emergency, sharing initial information with Councillors and public via social media with approximately one hour of the gas main being damaged. We quickly initiated our Emergency Plan as soon as we became aware of the scale of the situation, this helped to alert those people who may not otherwise have received information.
- We also provided advice and updates on Saturday afternoon to Salcombe Town Council and the surrounding affected parishes - and stayed in touch throughout the following days.
- Kingsbridge Town Council Councillors met on the Sunday morning to agree actions and how to provide the best advice and support possible to those affected.
- Wales and West Utilities, with the exception of a little confusion over initial advice, handled the situation superbly. Extra teams were drafted in to help straight away and essential heaters/hot plates/heat packs were readily available early on. Their

staff were always friendly and helpful, something that was both appreciated and embraced by businesses and residents.

- There was a lack of communication from South Hams District Council and the information that we did receive was poor. They had an emergency meeting but did not include the affected Towns/Parishes in the discussion.
- Towns and Parishes are inevitably the first 'boots on the ground' until they are joined by emergency services and the relevant authorities. It is essential they are part of briefings from the start. Local knowledge of the areas and having the means to connect with volunteer wardens, evacuation points and community resources as well as equipment such as 4x4's, tractors etc is essential and must not be ignored.
- South Hams District Council Localities were able to provide a delivery of essential items to Quay House at approximately 4pm on the Sunday, the most effective assistance from them was received on the Monday to Wednesday when our regular Localities Officer, Simon Smith, along with Gary Throgmorton, provided us with numerous deliveries of essential equipment, helped deliver items to vulnerable people and regularly checked to ascertain if they could be providing any additional help. We are very grateful to Simon for all his assistance over this time.
- Not all vulnerable people had registered with their utilities company as being in need of extra assistance, this caused some unnecessary hardship.
- The Kingsbridge community and local businesses were incredible! They rallied around friends and neighbours, collected heating equipment for people who could not leave their homes and various restaurants offered hot food to those in need. Everyone stayed positive despite the unusually cold weather for this area.

What could be improved:

- The person who owns the problem need to be fully responsible for setting up the way they deal with all aspects of dealing with it. This includes:
 1. One source to provide consistent, regular timed communications.
 2. Directly contacting the Towns/Parishes affected and involving them in the discussion from the start.
 3. Identification of vulnerable people as a priority.
- While we were very happy with our response times on this occasion, we need to ensure we can act equally as quickly in the future.
- Not all vulnerable people had registered with their utilities company.
- It is essential for Towns and Parishes to work together, forming a flexible network. In an ideal world, if each town/parish connected (as a minimum) with every town/parish bordering them you could effectively cover any sized area according to the type of emergency.
- Cllr Wingate and the Town Clerk met with other Towns once the supply had been reconnected. The discussion included proposals to better work together to ensure we have a mutually beneficial relationship across the area in the event that we have any future emergencies.
- Towns and Parishes need to advise both South Hams District Council and Devon County Council how they fit into the respective Emergency Plans.

- Contact with second home owners and holiday home owners needs improvement. Not having access to these homes delayed the process of reconnection for many people.

Actions to take forward:

- All Kingsbridge Town Councillors will automatically be a member of the Kingsbridge Emergency Team. Cllr Jennings and the Town Clerk remain as lead contacts in the event of an emergency.
- All councillors will be provided with an annual session re their role in an emergency, to include accessing the resilience store and essential supplies.
- Create a network of 'guardian angels' who can each look after houses in the immediate vicinity of their home – this would have been essential in the event of a failure in the electricity supply.
- Emergency Plan Warm Locations need to be categorised by gas/electric supply to ensure we know where to go depending on the type of emergency.
- The Town Council provision of sandbags needs to come with appropriate instructions to ensure best results when used. Noted that funding recently received includes an element for purchase of tarpaulins to aid with holding back floodwater.
- Incorporate potential distribution centres into the Emergency Plan. Including water distribution in the event of an issue such as cryptosporidium in the water supply.
- Our signage systems require improvement, activation needs to be available via an app and the sign wordings must be interchangeable depending on the message we need to share. Our existing signage relates to flood only and requires someone to attend the signs to activate them. Types and costs for proposed upgrade for two existing signs plus a third proposed sign on Church Street will be brought to a future meeting.
- A laptop upgrade including full system and email access (both Reception and Clerk email systems) is required to enable work to take place from any required location.
- Social Media reminders to be issued regularly regarding:
 1. Sandbag availability for Kingsbridge Residents
 2. DRIP Booklets – we will seek to make these available both as paper copies and online.
 3. Help for vulnerable people via their utility companies. Individuals must register with each provider and if they change companies they need to re-register with the new provider.
 4. Encourage people to have a grab bag with essential items, include details such as layering up to stay warm in cold weather.
 5. How to become a 'guardian angel'.
- Propose an annual meeting (at a central location) with connecting Towns/Parishes to ensure all plans are up to date and all parties know how to obtain and utilise essential support and supplies if required.

02 Kingsbridge Partnership Meeting Update:

The recent meeting of the Kingsbridge Partnership saw members from Devon County Council, the Environment Agency, Kingsbridge Town Council, South Hams District

Council and South West Water meet to discuss the issues surrounding flooding and sewage discharge in the town.

Since tankers have been taking excess water, the situation in the town has eased but still needs further improvement. The resolution is a long-term scheme which would cost in the region of £8m, however, there is no funding currently available, South West Water anticipate bidding for funding in their 2030-35 plan. In the meantime, there is an intermediate plan due to take place for October 2026 at a cost of approximately £500k, this involves laying new pipework to act as a holding tank. We await confirmation of this, we are hoping that it will not be delayed following the discovery of the collapse to the culvert.

25/21 ENVIRONMENT:

Councillors **RECOMMENDED** support of a proposal to add a North/South link to the South Hams Way. The link would run from South Brent to Salcombe via Kingsbridge.

25/22 TRANSPORT:

01 The bicycle hoops supplied by South Hams District Council have been received and will be installed at the earliest convenience. Three hoops at the skate park and three adjacent to Bowcombe Bridge.

02 No discussion took place regarding Fore Street parking. A meeting is taking place on Friday 30th January, after which an update will be provided at the Full Council meeting taking place on 10th February.

25/23 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING: 6.30 p.m. on Tuesday 16th June 2026.

The meeting closed at 7.42 p.m.

Signed as a true record: _____

Print Name & Date: _____

Distribution List: All current Town Councillors, Kingsbridge Town Council Website.
For Information: e-circulation to: Councillor representatives - South Hams District Council and Devon County Council.