THE TAW TORRIDGE ESTUARY FORUM

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Draft Minutes

for the October Quarterly Meeting to be held on Monday, 19th October 2026, the Beechfield Centre, Fremington, EX31 3DD at 7.00 p.m.

1. **Welcome, Introductions and Apologies for absence.**
   a. Present:
   Tony Pratt (TTEF/NDYC),
   Jeff Needham (TTEF),
   Eric Evans (TTEF),
   Brian Hopkins (Bideford Sustainability Group)
   David Brain (Environment Agency)
   David Dixon (Fremington Parish Council)
   David Skeats (Westcountry Rivers Trust)
   Debbie Frazer (Devon Wildlife Trust)
   Helen Cooper (Save Our Sands)
   Helen Sheard (Bideford Sustainability Group)
   Jack Philips (Braunton Small Boats)
   John Puddy (Freshspring Trust)
   Ken Hind (Bideford Town Council)
   Liesje Birchenough (Coastwise)
   Mike Moss (Ashford Parish Council)
   Peter Sawyer (Northam Town Council)
   Richard Haste (Bideford Harbour)
   Ricky Knight (North Devon Council)
   Sue Prosper (Love Braunton)
   Tara Jenkins (North Devon Council)
   Tristan Otten (Torridge District Council)
   Tony Bown (Independent)
   Wendy Lo-vel (Torridge District Council)
   b. Apologies:
   Anne-Marie Evely (Earth Action North Devon)
   Chris Salisbury (Taw and Torridge Wildfowling Club)
   Chris Dee (WeBS)
   Elizabeth Dee (North Devon Council)
   Joe Newberry (National Landscape)
   Hannah Nash (Biosphere)
   Mark Howarth-Booth (West Country Rivers Trust)
   Mary Breeds (Braunton Countryside Centre)
   Mike Teare (Bideford and R.Torridge Heritage Harbour)
   Paul Brown (Bideford Harbour Master)
   Peter Hames (Northam Town Council)
   Rose Day (TTEF HM)
   Russel Walters (RMB Chivenor)
   Sally Ramsden (Taw and Torridge River Champions)
   Sue Smith (Bideford Town Council)

Tony Nicholls (Rolle Canal Society)

2. **Guest Speaker; Local Devon Wildlife Trust Volunteer giving a brief overview of DWT in North Devon**

A huge thank you to Debbie Frazer for speaking to us on the National Wildlife Trusts who gave a hugely interesting and informative talk. Debbie outlined the vast scale of the trusts nationally and their ambitious aims to increase the area of land rich in wildlife as well as increasing the amount of visits to those areas. She also outlined activities in the areas most relevant to us at Horsey Island and Swanpool alongside others nearby.

DWT have purchased Horsey Island and are actively working to support the bird populations on the island. They are also managing the land sympathetically, moving with the natural course nature takes the island.

Swanpool has also seen a lot of activity with active management of the site practically and is seeking a formally approved management plan for the site. If achieved they will apply for a Countryside Stewardship Agreement. This site is being used as a monitoring point for the UK Health Surveillance Agency Zoonoses Department.

DWT are increasingly doing more coastal work and have been working with Coastwise North Devon on the citizen scientists program in Lee Bay and Westward Ho! Finding invasive species along with monitoring what was always in this area.

Also on the coast, DWT Marine Strandings Network are monitoring and keeping records of deceased mammals that are washed up on shore with the aim of making links to find potential causes or deaths in mammals at sea.

We also heard about some of the linked services and partnerships that the DWT have and some examples of work achieved together including the reintroduction of Pine Martens and Beavers to the estuary.

3. **20 Minute Refreshment Break (Opportunity for Networking) Donations towards costs welcome**

4. **Minutes of Previous TTEF Meeting: Monday, 20th July, 2026 (Circulated) Amendments and adoption**
    a. EE - noted Sue Prosper was accidentally omitted from the first draft of the minutes, now corrected. Minutes were accepted by the meeting.

5. **Treasurer's Report**
    a. Income £2.50 (Refreshments)
    b. Expenditure £75 (Room Hire)
    c. Balance £2417.70
    d. Advance notice - looking at managing our diminishing balance to ensure our long term stability. This may bring a need for a return of subscriptions.

6. **Reports;**
    a. Planning & Consultation Committee. Reminder to the group that the P&CC meet regularly and are very willing to receive items for our agenda. 12 wreck surveys are now with the Crown Estate who have made a commitment to get started on wreck removal. It is our intention to send them all of the survey data as this progresses. The same information will be passed to Chris Fuller and Paul Brown.
    b. North Devon Coast National Landscape. Noted by the meeting that there is a new Chair and Vice Chair moving forward.
    c. Port of Bideford Harbour Master.
    d. Devon Wildlife Trust
    e. WeBS

f. Formation of Trust Port - Due to Local Government Reorganisations everything has come to a halt at present.
g. White Tailed Eagles. Released on Exmoor and are spreading and settling through the South West.
h. Natural England.
i. Bideford Heritage Harbour.
j. Harbour Users Group.
k. Coastwise. The talks program starts on Thursday in Barnstaple Library. Full details in the report and on the Library website.
l. Taw and Torridge River Champions. Gaining rapidly in numbers and recently achieved some funding for test kits and training in their use.
m. North Devon Council. Rights for Rivers - On Wednesday Torridge District Council are looking at giving rights for the Torridge. On Friday 7pm in Barnstaple in the top floor of the Library will be a talk on River Rights for the Taw and Torridge.
n. Changing climates are causing larger storms and changing temperatures having a huge impact on our environment and will have increasing impacts on our lives.
o. Raising awareness of areas along the Tarka Trail - Stories @ Springfield family Event on Wednesday 28th 3.30-5.30 in Springfield Gardens. Derek Vs Derek film - sharing knowledge of farming in this area in a very entertaining way 18th November at the Plough.- check flyer

7. **Matters Arising from the TTEF Minutes not covered above.** - None

8. **Urgent Matters brought forward by the Chairman;**
   a. Appledore Marine Innovation Centre - Concerns that the units are not yet filled but looking forward to the opportunities that these units can provide. The TTEF are keen to remind that we supported the application based on the marine university educational sector involvement and we are aware that some/all of the university educational groups have pulled out.

9. **Agenda Items proposed for next Meeting (AGM) 18th January 2027**
   a. Due to the volume of business at the meeting there will not be a speaker for the evening.
   b. We will be looking for speakers going forward as usual.
   c. If anything arises that you would like to see on the agenda please get in touch.

10. **Any Other Business**
    a. Jeremy Bell - Raised concerns about Yelland Power Station and disposal of asbestos. TTEF to look into this.
    b. The current development along New Road Bideford is now extending much further out over the river than surrounding buildings. TTEF to look into this.
    c. John Puddy - a group traveled to Spain to look at and seek support for heritage vessels and waterfront activity via festivals as this particular group in Spain are doing so successfully. They are looking at bringing these strategies to Bideford.
    d. Earth Action North Devon, Save the date - Annual Day of Action - Saturday 30th January.
    e. Devon CPRE, Save the date - Understanding the grid seminar - Monday 26th October 11-1.
    f. Braunton Countryside Centre activities and events on their facebook page.
    g. Tony Pratt will be retiring as Chair of the TTEF at the AGM after a vast number of years of service. A huge thank you to him for his work in the TTEF.
    h. P&CC are continuing to look for members. Please contact the secretary if you can help.

11. **Dates and Venues of Forthcoming Meetings**
    a. Monday, 18th January, 2027. (AGM)