

TorreAbbey

Torre Abbey New Beginnings Chapter One

Update July 2025

Context

Following on from the successful Torre Abbey Restoration Project the Council, applied to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) for a major grant to support the next phase of works. These works are required to provide Torre Abbey with a financially sustainable future and to further improve is the visibility and relevance of the Abbey to the local community. Currently Torre Abbey is a loss-making asset for Torbay Council, the project will provide the opportunities to turn this around to a breakeven point by ensuring the whole estate can contribute to income generation.

The Council wants to make the most of all of its assets and in recent years has made a coordinated effort to improve the condition of these assets with work underway at Oldway Mansion and Torquay Pavilion as well as support to the work of Paignton Picture House. Recognising the importance of these assets from a heritage and community perspective. Torbay's culture and heritage provides context for the wider regeneration work and in improving access and curating the site the connection for local people and visitors to these sites provides a range of benefits.

This project, known as Torre Abbey New Beginnings Chapter One, is the first in a two-part project and Chapter Two will follow in succession. Chapter Two is likely to focus on the West Lawn, Carparking Provision, Lower Meadows and Woodland Walk.

When applying to NLHF's Major Grant Programme projects are broken down into two phases – the Development Phase and the Delivery Phase. This derisks the project from a funder and grantee perspective and internally this aligns with the Capital programme controls.

Following a successful Expression of Interest to the NLHF the Council applied for the Development Phase of Torre Abbey New Beginnings Chapter One in November 2024. The successful outcome notified in March 2025. This means the NLHF has released funding for Torre Abbey to develop the project to the end of RIBA stage 3 and has committed to the full Chapter One project in principle. The Development Phase will last approximately 12 - 18 months at the end of which Torre Abbey will need to apply for the Delivery Phase of the project.

Project scope

Torre Abbey New Beginnings Chapter One will focus on the Spanish Barn and the former Pitch and Putt, South Lawn, and ground within 30 metres of the Spanish Barn to enable its use year-round, improve community access and conserve and repair the Grade 1 listed building.

Development Phase:

- Undertake relevant surveys.
- Obtain relevant permissions and consents including Scheduled Monument consent from Historic England.

- Recruit new staff roles – Client and Revenue Liaison Manager, Fundraiser and Stakeholder Engagement and Activity Plan Coordinator.
- Complete Art on Your Doorstep– a partnership exhibition with the National Gallery which is being funded by the National Gallery and NLHF as part of Chapter One engagement activity. This exciting, free to access, outdoor exhibition trail of iconic works reproduced from the National Gallery’s collection will run from Torquay Train Station to the Stand via Torre Abbey and the Upper Meadows. Running for 6 months from March 2026 it will have a programme of community and stakeholder engagement around it.
- Undertake stakeholder engagement.
- Develop Activity Plan.
- Communicate the aims of the project and acknowledge funding.
- Write and begin implementing fundraising strategy for Delivery Phase.
- Procure the Design Team.
- Technical design to RIBA3.
- Evaluation to inform Delivery Phase.

Delivery Phase:

- Conserve, repair and upgrade the Spanish Barn.
- Landscaping and interpretation of the former Pitch and Putt based on stakeholder engagement outcomes from the Development Phase.
- Create a new ancillary support building for the Spanish Barn and a new visitor welcome outside of the current pay barrier – to include a retail space.
- Develop community events and provision of wellbeing spaces.
- Deliver Activity Plan.
- Commission a Conservation Management Plan.
- Evaluation.

Project Objectives

- Conserve and repair the Spanish Barn to ensure its structurally sound.
- Upgrade the Spanish Barn infrastructure to allow for year-round use.
- Build a visitor welcome and retail area outside the pay barrier to encourage footfall inside the abbey and open retail to a wider market.
- Improve income generation potential to ensure Torre Abbey breaks even in 2030 and generates a 10% profit by 2032.
- Improve understanding of and accessibility to the whole site by 2030.
- Improve the well-being of the local community by providing free to access fitness facilities and access to a wider range of cultural and community events by 2029.
- Create a dedicated ongoing maintenance budget to ensure that Torbay Council can plan for cyclical maintenance and reduce reactive spend creating an overall funding spend. Note this is a contract requirement of the NLHF.
- Make the site up to 75% carbon neutral by 2030. In line with the Government’s requirement to cut the emissions of public buildings by 75% by 2037
- Manage the 100% of the site to a standard appropriate for the legal requirements of the Scheduled Monument designation by 2029.

Programme

Development Phase

Task	Start Date	End Date
Prepare Development Phase application	August 2024	November 2024

Submit Development Phase application	November 2024	
Decision re Development Phase application	March 2025	
Design team procurement & Appointment	April 2025	June 2025
Develop architectural and landscape designs to RIBA 3	April 2025	January 2026
Recruit Project team	May 2025	June 2025
Undertake Surveys including ecology, archaeology, topographical, geophysical, arboriculture, drainage, flood, ground investigations, and unexploded ordnances	July 2025	October 2025
Develop fund raising plan and secure additional match funding for Delivery Phase	July 2025	May 2026
Pre-application discussions with Historic England & Torbay Council Planning Department	August 2025	January 2026
Develop and deliver stakeholder engagement strategy in collaboration with the Torbay Council Comms team	August 2025	May 2026
Develop activity plan for Delivery Phase	December 2025	May 2026
Submit planning and Scheduled Monument consent applications	February 2026	
Art on Your Doorstep engagement exhibition	March 2026	September 2026
Receive relevant permissions and consents	May 2026	
Final report and evaluation to NLHF for Development Phase	June 2026	
Outline Business Case to Capital Growth Board for approval based on if funding bid successful	June 2026	
Prepare Delivery Phase application	April 2026	June 2026
Submit Delivery Phase application	June 2026	
Notification of success	October 2026	

Delivery Phase Action Plan

There is less detail available for this phase as it will be heavily informed by the Development Phase.

Task	Start Date	End Date
Confirmation of OBC from CGB once funding confirmed	October 2026	October 2026
Develop the project to RIBA 4	November 2026	January 2027
Stage 4 Cost plan and risk register	February 2027	February 2027
Delivery phase procurement for contractor(s)	February 2027	February 2027
Full business case to CGB	May 2027	May 2027
Delivery Phase works	June 2027	June 2028

Budget

Summary of Project Costs

Phase	Total Costs	Total contribution	Grant Request	Grant Percentage
Development	£561,352	£211,352	£350,000	62%
Delivery	£4,906,976	£1,000,000	£3,906,976	80%
Both phases	£5,468,328	£1,211,352	£4,256,976	78%

Contribution breakdown

Phase	Torbay Council Cash	Torbay Council in kind	NLHF Grant	Other fundraising including other grants and FOTA
Development	£186,352	£15,000	£350,000	£10,000
Delivery	£450,000	£25,000	£3,906,976	£550,000
Both phases	£636,352	£40,000	£4,256,976	£560,000

Risk register

Below there is a summary of the highest risks associated to Development Phase a full risk assessment can be made available on request.

Risk No.	Risk Description	Probability	Impact	Risk Score	Response	Date Identified	Owner	Current Status/ Mitigation/ Contingency	Date Last Updated	Status	Residual Probability	Residual Impact	Residual Risk Score
5	Market failure to provide quotations in time delays programme.	4	4	16	Avoid	01/11/2024	Project Team / Contractor	Engage key suppliers early in design process. Key supply chain members identified early on through design process	06/05/2025	Open	3	3	9
23	Shared access arrangements for Staff and Contractor proves problematic and disruptive to either or both parties	4	4	16	Reduce	01/11/2024	Torbay Council	To work closely with the operational team and plan through shared access routes. PD to provide H&S advice and articulate plans and constraints to the Contractor through the Pre Construction Information Pack (PCIP)	06/05/2025	Open	2	4	8

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34	The design progresses slowly delaying either the planning application/ decision or the tender documentation.	4	4	16	Avoid	01/11/2024	Project Team	Planning permission required to be split into two parts to divorce the chapel works due to the presence of bats. This would still be tendered as on project but phased commencement. TW to illustrate broad programme for ecology and planning for chapel works in 2023.	06/05/2025	Open	2	2	4
41	Funding not available/Conditions of funding not being met.	4	5	20	Avoid	01/11/2024	Project Team	Ensure funding is available prior to design progression at each gateway.	06/05/2025	Open	2	3	6
62	There may be a delay or onerous conditions imposed by planners on the project	4	4	16	Avoid	01/11/2024	Project Team	Works progressing in line with approval	06/05/2025	Open	3	3	9

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13	May encounter unforeseen events (site contamination, archaeological, ecology, environmental, utility pipes/cables, other unexpected previous construction)	4	4	16	Reduce	01/11/2004	Project Team	Ensure all necessary surveys & reports are completed prior to tender package compilation to reduce risk of discovery of unknown underground items. Use the services of a structural engineer to ensure design works & advise on existing construction.	06/05/2025	Open	3	4	12
23	Shared access arrangements for Staff and Contractor proves problematic and disruptive to either or both parties	4	4	16	Reduce	01/11/2004	Torbay Council	To work closely with the operational team and plan through shared access routes. PD to provide H&S advice and articulate plans and constraints to the Contractor through the Pre Construction Information Pack (PCIP)	06/05/2025	Open	2	4	8

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62	There may be a delay or onerous conditions imposed by planners on the project	4	4	16	Avoid	01/11/2004	Project Team	Works progressing in line with approval. Maintain close liaison with Development Management	06/05/2025	Open	3	3	9