

HIGH BICKINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Mrs Di Carter, 12 Church Meadow, High Bickington, Devon, EX37 9DT

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Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting Wednesday 9 May 2018 at 7.30pm In the Community Centre, High Bickington

Present: Peter Worrall, Steve Alford, Adam Bunting, Stella Burrows, Charnaine Coxon, Steve Galliver, Jim Hutchings, Roger Keen

In attendance: Richard Haste – Waste and Recycling Manager, Torridge District Council
County Councillor Andrew Saywell
4 members of the public
Mrs Di Carter – Clerk

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. He said he was disappointed not to see more members of the public at the meeting to hear about the recently introduced waste and recycling arrangements.

1. Apologies for absence - PFCSO Sandra Brown/

- 2. The Chairman invited Richard Haste, Waste and Recycling Manager at Torridge District Council to report on the new waste and recycling service being provided by Torridge District Council. Richard Haste had brought and displayed a wide selection of items which can now be recycled, together with examples of the new boxes being provided.**

Richard Haste said he had worked at Torridge District Council for 30 years in the Waste and Recycling Department and as a lifelong resident of the Torridge area he was well aware of the requirements of our rural community. When South Molton Recycling went into liquidation, Torridge put in place interim measures to ensure the service was maintained, however the costs had become unsustainable due to budget restraints. New plans were therefore required to provide a service which was in line with what residents had come to expect but was cost effective. New vehicles have been purchased which identify and sort waste. Richard Haste gave examples of what will now be recyclable – the range of containers has increased and in addition they are now able to take small electrical items, paperbacks, CDs (put in carrier bags).

To accommodate the new arrangements all households will be provided with a green box for plastics; a black box for glass; a small kitchen caddy for food waste and a larger caddy bin for kerbside collection of food waste. Green bags and brown bags will continue to be used for paper and cardboard as at present.

At present the only items not recyclable are black plastic and clingfilm – this is a matter which is under discussion with supermarkets etc who say their customers demand long shelf life for perishables and this packaging is currently the only way to deliver this.

Garden waste will now be collected fortnightly at a charge of £35 p.a. - at this price Torridge is the cheapest provider for the service in Devon – other District Councils are charging £50-£60 p.a. Coded security stickers have been issued to those signing up for this service.

To date 3,300 residents have subscribed to this service. It will not operate from the 2nd week in December to the 2nd week in January each year to reflect minimal need.

Biodegradable bags for food waste are available at a number of local outlets.

All waste items which can be sold for recycling are dealt with accordingly – those items not currently suitable for recycling go to landfill.

Following Richard Haste's presentation there were a number of questions -

Charnaine Coxon queried the reasoning for asking for certain items to be put in plastic carrier bags which are not recyclable - Richard Haste said that, although not ideal, at present this is the only option available.

The Chairman queried how reliable the new security stickers allocated to those who had paid £35 for garden waste would be; along with others, he had to take his bin to a location away from his property. Richard Haste said the vehicle operators have been servicing the area for some time and will continue to do so; they know the properties well; any bin with a collection sticker attached will be easily identifiable as allocated to a registered property from new technology being issued to waste collectors. He had no concerns about the security of the system.

Richard Haste acknowledged that the charge for garden waste particularly affects those with small gardens who have no means of disposing of this waste within their own land. He urged everyone to compost garden waste wherever possible. There is a lot of information available – the Parish Council website contains copies of relevant information.

The Chairman thanked Richard Haste for his very informative and helpful presentation.

3. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 10 May 2017

The Minutes of the meeting were agreed, adopted and signed by the Chairman. There were no matters arising.

4. To receive any reports from County and District Councillors and the Police.

The Chairman invited County Councillor Andrew Saywell to report to the meeting.

Councillor Saywell reported on his first year in office and thanked the people of High Bickington for their support and kindness both at the election and afterwards; he regarded it as an honour to represent the village and had strived to do his best for the 18 Parishes he represents.

He had attended most of the Parish Council meetings during the year and one particular issue he has been working on is to try to improve the poor mobile phone reception in the village. A meeting with BT/EE is due to be held on Friday 11 May.

At election Councillor Saywell had highlighted his priorities: to revitalise Torrington's economy, to ensure that our main rural roads are properly maintained, to fight for fairer funding for Devon's schools and oppose any downgrades to the local health services, particularly at North Devon District Hospital.

He was pleased to be able to report progress on all of these – there is now a 24-hour cash machine in Torrington and he is working closely with Torridge District Council's Regeneration Officer to be able to secure a meeting with the Chief Executive of the Local Enterprise Partnership to discuss some of the challenges the town faces; to show him the derelict Creamery site and also discuss what opportunities there are for economic development in the Torridge area.

Improvements have been made to both the A386 in Merton, and the A3124 outside Rosemoor Gardens. The A377 is currently undergoing repairs.

Devon County Council has secured an additional £7.5m worth of funding for schools from central government and although there is still a lot to do and a long way to go to get parity with the national average, there is a considerable improvement from eight years ago.

The Health authorities have announced that there would not be any downgrading of acute services at North Devon District Hospital.

The majority of casework has related to Highways issues – it is now much easier to report problems online at the following website: <https://new.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/report-a-problem>.

An increase in the County budget of £6.5m will be used specifically to fund improvements to drainage, patching and potholes. Since the “beast from the East” weather the government has announced a further £4.5m for Devon highways to repair storm damage.

Councillor Saywell said he is aware budget increases are not welcome, however this year's rise, in addition to funding the Highways budget, helps to fund an increase of 6.1% (£13m) in the Adult Care and Health budget, and a 5.5% (£6.5m) in the Children's Services budget.

During his first year Councillor Saywell has spent time with the Children's Social workers and getting experience of the work they do. There are over 700 children in care in Devon – those with severe mental health problems through to cases of child sexual exploitation. When he asked how many cases of sexual exploitation are dealt with in Devon, the response was “every day”.

Councillor Saywell said he was keen to highlight the other aspects of what Devon County Council does alongside highways issues.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Saywell for his report and his continued support and help to High Bickington.

Councillor Saywell left the meeting.

(Councillor Saywell's full report can be viewed on the Parish Council website – highbickingtonparishcouncil.co.uk).

Stella Burrows read a written annual report from PFCSO Sandra Brown listing the 17 crimes which had occurred during the year. *(Available in full on the Parish Council website).*

5. **Chairman's Review of the Year**

The Chairman said this will be his third review and this year has seen a great deal happening in the village. We had to say goodbye to Andy Boyd as our County Councillor and welcomed Andrew Saywell in his place. Councillor Saywell has taken on a number of issues and has worked hard on behalf of our village.

The Parish Council campaigned, along with Burrington, to get Kingford Hill included on the gritting schedule, but despite our best efforts we were informed that there was insufficient traffic movement to warrant gritting.

We also, with the support of District Councillor James Morrish, embarked on a long battle regarding the planning application at Forest Park Lodges at Kingford Hill. Despite being called in Planners did not feel a site visit was necessary and approved the application. This was not felt to be a very democratic response.

Both District and County Councillors have visited the majority of meetings which is an improvement on previous years.

Major changes to waste and recycling arrangements are taking place.

We had to say goodbye to Councillor Norah Hale during the year and following consideration of two applications, Charmaine Coxon was invited to join the Council.

The telephone kiosk has finally been decommissioned and is now a book exchange, thanks to the hard work of Charmaine Coxon.

The new school classroom has been completed. David Brown retired from the CPT Ltd. His work on securing affordable and other housing, the community centre, and workshops is a legacy for the future prosperity of the village.

Annual grants were awarded to local clubs and groups within the parish.

The Devon Air Ambulance night landing site has become a reality. Sponsored events at the Golden Lion public house raised over £1,500 and the Chairman thanked Barry and Jen and all their customers for their support. Further funding is being sought to put in a permanent pathway from the mast to the existing path.

The Chairman said he is constantly amazed and grateful for the way in which the people of High Bickington rally round for good causes.

The new Highways maintenance firm – Skanska – have carried out resurfacing work to a good standard, but lack of funding from central government causes problems.

The topic of mobile phone reception is being followed up with Councillor Saywell and a meeting with BT and EE is due shortly.

New swings have been provided at Barton Meadow play area, thanked to grants from many organisations, including the Lions Club, Tesco's, High Bickington Community Fund and both District and County Councillors. The Chairman thanked Adam Bunting for his work in the play area.

The community shop has proved a much needed resource in the village and the Chairman thanked all those involved with the running of the shop.

Storm Emma caused one of the wettest winter/spring months for many years, and we experienced significant falls of snow. Community spirit came to the fore with volunteers helping anyone who needed assistance.

The Chairman said Councillors and volunteers put in a lot of work behind the scenes and the public are not always aware of this.

The Chairman thanked the Clerk for her work during what has been a very busy year.

(The full report can be viewed on the Parish Council website – highbickingtonparishcouncil.co.uk.)

6. **Finance**

The accounts as at the end of year 31 March 2018 were adopted by the Council at their April meeting and are currently with the internal auditor. There were no further questions on the accounts.

7. **Matters Raised by the Public**

There were no matters raised by members of the public.

8. **Date of next meeting**

Wednesday 8 May 2019 at 7.30pm in the Community Centre.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.38pm.