

## HIGH BICKINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

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### Minutes of a remote Parish Council Meeting, Wednesday 10 June 2020 at 7.30pm

**Present:** Adam Bunting (Deputy Chairman) Councillors: Charmaine Coxon, Roger Keen, Chris McWhirter, Bob Boothby, Councillor Andrew Saywell, District Councillor Michael Clarke and Jenny Baker (Clerk)

The Deputy Chairman opened the virtual meeting by thanking everyone for joining and asked the visiting Councillors to give an update.

#### Councillor Andrew Saywell:

Firstly, Councillor Saywell wanted to put on record that in his role as Councillor he is involved with over 16 parishes and many Parish Clerks and found that Di Carter was up there with the best and was very grateful for her professionalism.

The number of Coronavirus cases in Devon currently stands at 824. Of those 36 are in Torridge and despite the easing of some lock down restrictions no significant changes have occurred and the number in Torridge has gone up by 1 only in the last 3 weeks. No new cases reported in West Devon or North Devon.

As previously reported, Devon County Council has been chosen as a beacon Council to work with the NHS on the test and trace tracking system; they are proud to be the only Council chosen in the South West.

DCC Highways and Torridge District Council are working with Torrington Town Council and Torrington shops to prepare for the re-opening of more shops from 15<sup>th</sup> June. Residents are encouraged to support them and shop local. There are no road closures planned or restrictions on parking. One car bay only at the moment is designated to be closed (on South Street outside the Co-op) to allow for safer social distancing on the pavement. It may be necessary to close off other bays in the future but not at present. No crash barriers or one way systems are being introduced.

#### Councillor Michael Clarke:

The first full Council Meeting since the Coronavirus shut down has now been scheduled for the 22<sup>nd</sup> June and this will be a Zoom meeting (virtual by computer/phone link) with up to 36 Councillors joining.

Information has been shared with the Clerk from Trading Standards warning residents about scammers pretending to be from the NHS test and trace team and to be aware of the type of questions genuine callers will ask. Detailed information can be found on the High Bickington News page and Facebook.

Councillor Clarke has previously reported about his work on the 'homeless reduction' project which will be ending soon. There are currently eleven families housed at the Golden Bay Village Park in Hartland and the budget is at £17,000 but the contribution received from Central Government has been only £1,650.

The Disability Grant Scheme has been working well. Everyone who has applied has received half if not all the items they need. Some items are beyond the scheme such as full lifts in houses and concrete ramps but most other items such as stair lifts and lifts to enable access to baths are being provided. These are not means tested and there is no limit to the number of items that can be provided following an review of need.

**Police Report:** PSCO Sandra Brown sent her apologies as she was not able to join the virtual meeting and advised in her report that there have not been any crimes recorded in the area during the previous month. One domestic incident and two vehicle crimes recorded.

The Deputy Chairman asked if any of the Councillors had anything to report from members of the public and they all confirmed they hadn't. The public session was then closed and the formal meeting was convened.

**1. Election of Chairman for Parish Council 2020/21**

The Deputy Chairman asked if anyone had considered taking on the role of Chairman. Councillors, Keen, Coxon and Boothby all declined and in order to facilitate the on-going functions of the Parish Council, Councillor Chris McWhirter put himself forward to take on the role of Chairman for a limited period. Deputy Chairman, Adam Bunting proposed Chris be appointed as Chairman and this was agreed by all other Councillors present. He suggested that the role could be reviewed again in a year by which time the Council hoped it would have been able to recruit more Councillors to join the Parish Council and there would be more members willing to consider the role of Chairman. Adam thanked Chris for stepping forward and invited him to take over the Chair of the meeting

**2. Declarations of Interest:** no declarations received.

**3. Minutes of the Virtual Parish Council Meeting held on the 13 May 2020.**

All Councillors on the call were able to confirm they had read draft minutes as circulated and accepted them as correct. The Chairman will sign the minutes.

**4. Matters arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020.**

The Clerk confirmed that a date has been pencilled in the diary for annual defibrillator training with the Ambulance service w/c 16<sup>th</sup> October. This will be subject to the situation with Coronavirus at the time and if and when the exact date is confirmed a notice will be posted to invite participants. The training is provided as part of the package purchased from the Ambulance service.

**5. Barton Meadow Play Area**

**(a)** At the last meeting it was suggested a sign could be made to meet the Parish Council's obligations to acknowledge the sponsorship they have received towards the cost of the new swing and goal posts at Barton Meadow. Councillor Charmaine Coxon pointed out to those members of the Council who have only recently joined the Council that since the inception of the project back in 2018, many individuals in High Bickington and local organisations have contributed both money and ideas towards this project which means it could be difficult to mention everyone on a sign and important not to miss anyone from this acknowledgement. Sighting of a sign in a suitable place was also questioned. It was suggested that an article in the local newsletter may be more appropriate and would make it easier to recognise all those that had contributed. The Chairman and Councillors agreed that this needed further discussion and agreed to a phone conversation and meeting at Barton Meadow. Outcome of the discussions will be presented to the next meeting.

**(b)** An approach to the Parish Council has been received from a resident about replacing the hedge with a fence at the boundary of their property and the Barton Meadow play area. Councillor Adam Bunting will arrange to meet with the residents on site to discuss how fencing can be installed in a way that maintains some of the hedging along the boundary to the play area and to ascertain if there are any covenants on their property that would prevent fence panels being installed.

**6. Maintenance:**

- (a) **Highways** – nothing to report.
- (b) **Footpaths and Pathways** Councillor Roger Keen reported that he had been contacted by Mr Hedges to report that the gate at Taylors Cottage was not staying closed. Mr Hedges suggested he could arrange for a repair. The Chairman suggested that if the work had not been agreed it might be a job that he could do himself and save the Council some money. Councillor Keen would report back once he has spoken again to Mr Hedges. Councillor Keen also reported that he hasn't received the posters about uses for bridleways which were promised from the Footpaths Co-ordinator and he has followed up.

**7. Finance:**

(a)	Barclays current a/c statement as at 29 May 2020		£26,661.99
	<i>(Money received into the Account:</i>		
	<i>Land Sale Proceeds:</i>	<i>£8,541.00</i>	
	<i>VAT Return Refund</i>	<i>£2,004.12)</i>	
	Less cheques not cleared:		
	100885 Data Protection Subscription	£40.00	<u>£26,621.99</u>
(b)	Cheques to be issued:		
	100887 J Baker Salary & Expenses	£343.54	<u>£26,278.45</u>

Finances were agreed by the Councillors and the Clerk will arrange with the Deputy Chairman signatures on the above cheques.

Annual audited accounts have been circulated and all Councillors confirmed they are happy with the details and that they can now be approved by the Chairman. The application for exemption from External Audit will be submitted. Notice of dates for review of accounts will be posted on the website.

Response to Internal Auditors recommendations has been circulated to the Councillors and actions agreed.

**9. Planning**

- (a) No new planning applications received since the last meeting.
- (b) 1/0228/2020/FUL  
Libbaton Golf Club, High Bickington  
Proposed Conservatory and terrace to clubhouse  
Approved by Torridge Planning Department

**10. Items for Information:**

The Clerk advised that the Council had received an email from the Devon Air Ambulance to advise they are flying again and that they wish to start test flights into the night landing site. The information was passed to the Manager of the CPT who subsequently confirmed the site is ready for use and that they have no problem with test flights taking place. Contact details for both the Parish Council and the CPT have been updated with the Devon Air Ambulance.

The new Chairman closed the meeting and thanked everyone for their participation and hoped that it would be possible by the time of the next meeting to hold a meeting in person rather than via the computer. The Chairman asked the Clerk to circulate his mobile number to all Councillors to enable them to contact him to follow up on matters raised in the meeting and any other matters they need to discuss.

**Next meeting: 8 July 2020**