

## HIGH BICKINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Mrs Jenny Baker, Homewell Cottage, High Bickington, UMBERLEIGH. Devon EX37 9AY

Tel: 01769 560628 e-mail: [highbickingtonpc@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:highbickingtonpc@hotmail.co.uk)

Website: [www.highbickingtonparishcouncil.co.uk](http://www.highbickingtonparishcouncil.co.uk)

### Minutes of Parish Council Meeting, Wednesday 8 July 2020 at 7.30pm

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

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming everyone, both in the room and on the screen, and thanked the Clerk for making the arrangements to enable the meeting to take place following social distancing guidelines. The Chairman invited Councillor Andrew Saywell to give his report.

#### **Councillor Andrew Saywell:**

I appreciate being able to join the meeting remotely, as I can contribute to the High Bickington Parish Council meeting and also be able to join other meetings being held in the Parishes on the same evening, without having to rush between various venues. As we come out of lock-down I will endeavour to attend in person as many Parish Council Meetings as possible but the ability to join via the computer will be useful. I also feel it would also be a good way to have guest speakers at the meeting.

**Coronavirus:** The statistics on the number of Coronavirus cases recorded in the region can appear a bit misleading. The Government have recorded more tested cases which means the numbers have appeared to jump up considerably for Devon. As of today the numbers are 1190 for Devon, 49 in Torridge, 119 in North Devon. A lot of the information now shown is historical and there has not been a surge in the number of new cases in the region. Public Health England have been sharing local information with Devon County. Daily calls take place with the Devon Director of Public Health. North Devon recorded the last case on the 18<sup>th</sup> June. Torridge had 49 cases recorded yesterday and remains at 49 today but 1 positive case was reported on the 1<sup>st</sup> July so you will see some recalibration of the figures with small increases from time to time. To compare with Leicester for example, they were recording 80 new cases per day before their local lock-down. It's important to note that the demographics for Leicester are very different. Leicester is an area of very high density housing often containing multiple generations of families and a lot of these people are working in factories mostly clothing and textile manufacturing where the spread of the virus is known to be faster. Devon County Council have now launched their Local Outbreak Management Plan and has measures in place to deal with any local outbreak. If there is a small outbreak test and trace will be used to identify those at risk and get them to self isolate. If there is a bigger incidence of cases they will look at where the people work to see if there is a link and if necessary lock down that facility. They will also look at introducing community testing. It is unlikely the whole of Devon would be in lock-down, local measures could be taken at a town or village level but the aim of the plan is to avoid getting to that stage. Comprehensive plans are in place for Devon and the County is ready to welcome back visitors.

Good news for the Highways in Devon, the Government has contributed an additional £27m to the existing Highways Budget and I'm hopeful this this will soon filter down to Torridge.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Saywell for his update on the current situation and Councillor Bob Boothby expressed concern over a conversation he had had with a friend in Woolacombe who was very worried about someone who came to view her home this week who was a resident from the area of Leicester in lock-down. Councillor Boothby asked what measures were being taken to prevent people in the Leicester lock-down area leaving their homes and travelling to other parts of the Country. Councillor Saywell said he would try to find out the answer and report later.

Subsequent to the meeting Councillor Saywell has reported there have been road blocks and large fines issued by the police in Leicester. There are only a few main roads in and out of the city so it has been easier for the police to stop people. The railway has also been cracked down on, hard. The police may not be there 24/7 though, and if someone claims they're on essential travel then they can still travel in or out of the city. There are also lots of local back roads in and out of Leicester which I suspect the police cannot enforce and if the locals are determined to get out they could use those.

If the person who had the visitors from Leicester have the address details then it can be reported to the Leicestershire Police here <https://www.leics.police.uk/tua/tell-us-about/c19/tell-us-about-possible-breach-coronavirus-measures/>

#### **Councillor Rosemary Lock:**

Thanked the Chairman for allowing her to join the meeting via Zoom as she felt it was too early for a face to face meeting. Councillor Lock thanked Andrew for his update on the Coronavirus figures. A copy of some of the Government Guidelines on how to safely open playgrounds and public spaces was circulated to the Council prior to the meeting for their consideration. When a template of guidelines for opening the playgrounds is available from Torridge, Rosemary will forward to the Parish Council.

#### **Councillor Michael Clarke:**

This does not impact directly on High Bickington but possibly of local interest. Torridge have 11 families currently living at the Golden Bay Holiday Village. These are families who were homeless when the pandemic started or who have subsequently lost their rented accommodation. Golden Bay is now preparing to re-open to visitors so alternative accommodation had to be found. Torridge have managed to find them temporary accommodation. Central Government have now given £78,000 to help with the homeless situation and Westward Housing Association have provided 20 new homes, 12 shared ownership and 18 for rent. They are developing 1, 2, 3 and 4 bedroom properties in and around the area. Using the 106 Development Agreement they are planning £25,000 of improvements to Stukely Park trying to improve the homeless situation. Torridge are also looking at whether it is viable for them to become landlords again. They have two possible sites but there are legal ramifications to this.

**Police Report:** PSCO Sandra Brown sent her apologies as she was not able to join the meeting but supplied the following report. There were no crimes recorded in the area last month, 3 incidents reported, 2 vehicle and 1 welfare.

**Comments from members of the public:** The Parish Council have received an email from a resident which detailed several matters which had caused concern over the weekend when the Old George Pub had re-opened. They reported loud noise and anti-social behaviour from patrons leaving when the pub closed on Saturday evening. The email was circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting. The residents concerned have been in contact with Torridge District Licensing Department who have asked that a record be kept of any future incidents. As this was the first day that pubs had been allowed to re-open following the lock-down it was perhaps inevitable that some people would drink too much but this in no way excuses some of the behaviour and lack of consideration for members of the community. The Parish Council appreciate there are residents who have enjoyed being able to visit the pubs again abiding by the social distancing rules.

The formal meeting was then convened:

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Apologies received from PSCO Sandra Brown.
2. **Declarations of Interest:** No declarations received

3. **Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting Held on the 10<sup>th</sup> June 2020.** All Councillors confirmed they had read the minutes and accepted them as correct. Chairman signed the minutes.

4. **Matters arising from the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 10<sup>th</sup> June.** No other matters raised.

5. **Police Matters** – no other matters raised.

6. **Barton Meadow Play Area**

(a) Councillor Michael Clarke provided the Council with a sample of material to be used for a plaque to be inscribed and fitted to the new swing. The plaque will read “This swing is dedicated to the memory of Diane Carter who did so much for this Parish. Also thanks to Coastal Recycling, DCC and TDC” . This is acknowledgement of the generous donations received towards the cost of the new swing and goal posts. The Chairman and Councillor Adam Bunting will agree the exact size and placing of the plaque with Councillor Clarke.

(b) Councillor Adam Bunting confirmed he had spoken to the residents of No.7 Barton Meadow about replacing the hedge at the boundary of their property with a fence. He is happy that a fence can be installed on the existing boundary line and that some of the existing hedge can be maintained on the playing field side of the fence.

(c) The council have considered the necessary steps needed to re-open the Barton Meadow play area safely and feel that it is in the best interests of the Council and the residents at this time to keep the play area closed. They will review the matter regularly.

(d) The tree guards have been removed from the young hedging plants which were planted at the play area earlier in the year. It is thought this was done a little too soon and in order to protect the young plants the guards will be reinstated. Mulching will also be added between the plants in order to give them every opportunity of getting established. A working group will be arranged.

7. **Maintenance**

(a) **Highways**

(i) **Speed Warning Sign.** A member of the public has voiced concern about speeding through the village. As traffic is starting to build up again the speed warning sign will be serviced and put back into operation . The Council will also look at re-positioning the sign at the the Fountain Field end of the village for a period of time.

(b) **Footpaths and Byways**

Councillor Roger Keen reported that Mr Hedges has advised there have been no further problems on the bridleway. Posters which were promised to display on the bridleway have not arrived but have been chased. The dry weather seems to have fixed the problem with the latch not keeping the gate closed but a repair may still be needed in the future if the problem recurs.

8. **General Finance**

(a)	Barclays current a/c statement as at 29 June 2020		£26,202.45
	Less cheques not cleared:		
	100885 Data Protection Subscription	£40.00	<u>£26,162.45</u>
(b)	Cheques to be issued:		
	100889 J Baker Salary & Expenses	£339.16	<u>£25,823.29</u>

## **9. Planning**

- (a) No new planning applications received
- (b) Complaint regarding siting and use of static caravan in a field off Mill Lane.  
Councillor Bob Boothby explained he had been approached by a resident who is concerned that a caravan that has appeared in a field off Mill Lane is being used as a residence without the necessary planning in place. Concern was also raised about the caravan in the field used for dog training. The Council agreed to ask the Torridge Planning Department to investigate both sites and let the Council know if any breaches of planning regulations has occurred.

## **10. Annual Award of Grants**

Each year the Parish Council allocate an amount of money for grants and invite local clubs and organisation to apply. The notice and application form for 2020 was circulated to the Council prior to the meeting. Due to the current situation with Coronavirus it was felt more time should be given to allow completion of the application form. The dates for this year will be: deadline for completion of the form, 18<sup>th</sup> September, Finance Committee will meet on the 7<sup>th</sup> October following the September recess and the decisions will be made at the Parish Council Meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> October.

The application form is to be published in Ramblings and is available to download from the Parish Council Website or a copy can be obtained by contacting the Clerk.

## **11. Correspondence**

An invitation has been received from Devon County Council to attend a webinar on the 22<sup>nd</sup> July to hear about “preparing to deliver a County-wide charging network” for electric vehicles. Councillor Bob Boothby offered to attend on behalf of the Council.

**Next meeting: 12 August 2020**