

HIGH BICKINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting, Wednesday 9th October 2019 at 7.30pm in the Community Centre, High Bickington

Present: **Neil Parker (Chairman)** Councillors: Adam Bunting, Charmaine Coxon, Roger Keen, Chris McWhirter (Bob Boothby (Prospective Councillor) County Councillor Andrew Saywell, District Councillor Michael Clarke David Venner (Presenter), 3 Members of public, Jenny Baker (Clerk)

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Andrew Saywell, County Councillor reported:

Work has begun in Torrington Town Centre re-laying cobbles. There have been recent incidents of individuals tripping and falling due to the state of the pathways so the work is essential. Torrington Chamber of Trade have expressed concerns regarding local road closure and effects on local business. Councillor Saywell would like to reassure everyone that Torrington is still very much open for business and all businesses can be accessed. The car park is accessible during the work. Work is due to last 4 weeks and complete on the 1st November. At the same time as re-laying pavements the Council are installing new crossing points which will enable people to get around town easier, particularly the disabled and those using mobility devices.

Councillor Saywell was pleased to be able to report that the number of 'pot holes' recorded this year is down, attributed in part to the improved repair processes adopted by the Highways Department. County Council are well prepared for Winter taking deliveries of salt into depots. Repairs and servicing of snow ploughs and gritters completed. They are ready for action if required.

Recent announcements from Central Government regarding additional money for Social Care is not quite as hoped and does mean that Local Councils will have to find some of the additional money themselves, which will mean that Councils will need to find the money possibly from increased Council Tax.

Fire Service consultations have now completed and the meeting proposed for November has been postponed to December to allow more time to evaluate the large number of responses.

Councillor Michael Clarke reported:

He had attended a 'County Lines' training session with the Police. Vulnerable children are being targeted in care homes around the country and being brought to Devon towns such as Ilfracombe, Barnstaple, Bideford, Torrington. The drug dealing gangs put the children into properties they have rented and then make the children deal drugs. To report a crime or get advice about County Lines visit www.dc.police.uk/countylines.

One of his roles with the Council is 'homeless reduction' and included in this now, is making people aware of the 'disability grants' available for people at home. Information can be found on the Torridge Website site under 'Housing, Disability Grants. Money is available once a 'needs assessment has been completed.

Two other responsibilities for Councillor Clarke are the 'policy' for dealing with tenant / landlord complaints and being the champion for the Armed Forces Covenant for Torridge District.

Councillor Clarke read a notice he had seen at Dolton regarding parking and suggested High Bickington Council may want to produce a similar document.

Councillor Clarke also wanted the Council to be aware that he had recently donated money from his personal council fund (£500.00) to the High Bickington Village Shop to help towards cost of necessary repairs.

The Chairman invited David Venner to give an update on the proposal that High Bickington Parish Council 'Declare a Climate and Ecological Emergency'. David read from a prepared report which had been circulated to the Councillors prior to the meeting for their consideration. David advised that he had gathered a small group of people together to start to brainstorm ideas on how High Bickington could reduce their carbon emissions in line with the agreed deadline. It was identified that there is a need to find a tool to measure the carbon footprint now and in the future. David reported that some very good ideas were being proposed by the working group. Proposal is that a committee be formed and as many people as possible with the time and desire could be included from the Parish. Initial consultation would take place over 6 months to formalise ideas. A representative from the Parish Council would work with the Committee and report to the Parish Council Meetings. Information gained could be shared on the Parish Council website.

Debate took place between the members of public present and the Councillors. All Councillors were given the opportunity to voice their views about proposals presented and the prospect of High Bickington 'Declaring a Climate and Ecological Emergency'.

Councillor Chris McWhirter referred to a response paper he had prepared and reiterated his views that he didn't feel High Bickington Parish Council should Declare a Climate & Ecological Emergency as in his view the Devon Biosphere area was not in an 'Ecological Emergency' as evidenced by his report. He did acknowledge that there is work to be done to reduce carbon emissions globally and that everyone needs to take responsibility for own their actions.

Member of public, Myc Riggulsford, responded with details of a 'Wildlife Report' he had presented many times to other audiences which states with regard to biodiversity, that the world is facing 30 million species going extinct and here in High Bickington, hedgehogs, frogs, otters, bees and butterflies are all threatened and if we want future generations to see and enjoy them they need protecting. With regard to our ecosystems such as the air we breathe, clean water to drink, soil to grow our crops, all the things we usually get for free from our environment, these too are threatened.

The Chairman thanked David Venner and other members of the public for their input.

(Full reports presented and shared with the Councillors can be read on the Parish Website)

Formal Meeting Commenced:

1. **Apologies for absence** received from Councillor Rosemary Lock and Councillor David Rees. Subsequent to the meeting apologies were received from PSCO Sandra Brown.
2. **Co-option of New Councillor** – the Chairman confirmed that Bob Boothby had agreed to become a Parish Councillor and invited Bob to sign the 'Declaration of Acceptance of Office'. Bob was duly Co-opted to the Parish Council and the Chairman approved the Declaration.
3. **Declarations of Interest** - the Chairman invited any declarations of interest with regard to agenda items, no declarations were recorded.
4. **Decide Council Position on 'Declaring a Climate and Ecological Emergency'**. The Chairman invited the Councillors to consider the proposal presented by David Venner before a vote was taken. The opinion of the Councillors was that although they supported the need for everyone to be mindful of the impact humans are having on the planet they were not in agreement that High Bickington Parish Council should 'Declare a Climate and **Ecological** Emergency'. The Chairman asked if the Councillors wanted to vote on the motion suggested by David Venner. The Councillors voiced their view that they did not agree with the motion as proposed. It was suggested by Councillor Michael Clarke that as the main issue appeared to be concerning the wording of the motion that the councillors may wish to amend the motion. Councillor Mc Whirter proposed an amendment, seconded by Councillor Coxon. A new motion was written:

“We as High Bickington Parish Council support the formation of a working group to consider methods to help the village mitigate the effects of climate change”.

A vote was taken to amend the motion to the revised wording, the vote was carried 4 to 1 in favour. A second vote was taken to accept the motion the vote was carried 4 to 1 in favour. The Chairman confirmed the motion carried.

5. **Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 21st August 2019** – all councillors present confirmed they had read the minutes and accepted them as correct. Chairman signed the minutes.
6. **Matters arising from the Minutes of the Previous Parish Meeting** – no matters raised.
7. **Police Matters** – in the absence of PCSO Sandra Brown no report was available.
8. **Barton Meadow Play Area** –
 - (a) Councillor Adam Bunting submitted a quotation from SNC Playground Specialists for the repair of playground equipment £395.00. Quote accepted and instruction will be issued for work to be completed.
 - (b) TK Play have submitted a revised quote for supply and installation of Basket Pod Swing and Play Youth Steel Goals £8,325.60, previous quote had expired. Quote approved and invoice to be requested and order placed to secure price and avoid further inflation increases.
9. **Matters raised by the Chairman -**
 - (a) Standing orders - Councillors completed their review, Chairman yet to review.
 - (b) The Copse – Applications for grants have been submitted and awaiting response. Dates and leader of working party to be agreed. Proposed by Councillor Adam Bunting that Councillor David Rees may like to take on this role with his expertise in grounds management. The Chairman suggested that initially two dates are required to clear the Copse area beginning of the year and in the Autumn. Discussion on how the Copse can be used will take place at another time.
 - (c) Citizens Advice Bureau Torrington have approached the Parish Council for a donation. Council requested the Clerk respond advising Grants for 2019 have now been allocated and the Council would welcome an application next July to be considered.
 - (d) Disabled Parking – School – Chairman reported a member of the public had complained the painted sign on the roadway had been covered by stones. The Chairman cleared the sign so it was visible again. It was discussed whether additional signage is required, i.e. on the wall, to identify the space and the times it is in use. The Chairman suggested contact should be made with the school to ascertain if the space is suitable for use and if additional signage is required. Council to await response from school before taking any further action.
10. **Maintenance**
 - (a) Councillors Roger Keen and Chris McWhirter confirmed they had met with the Devon Highways team looking at better ways of working and obtaining information from Parish Councils or their road priorities. The team confirmed they have streamlined the 'pot hole' repair process and along with better reporting it is improving their service. Councillors advised the team that Pound Lane is well used and should be on their priority list along with clearing drains which causes most of the problems with water build up and subsequent road damage.

The Chairman suggested that Councillor Saywell should be asked for an update report on the information finding meetings the Highways Department have been carrying out.

Roger reported that the repair of the sign to the Bridleway at Snape had been completed and the invoice should be forthcoming. Roger also confirmed that he had reported to the Clerk damage to pathways in the Barton Meadow Area. The Clerk to contact Devon Council to confirm who is responsible for the repairs.

11. Finance

General Finance

(a)	Cheques issued September (Insurance)	£861.25	
	Barclays current a/c statement 27 September 2019		£15,309.08
	Cheques to be issued:		
	100848 D Jones – grass cutting July & August	£140.00	
	100849 Alan Smale – maintenance Aug/September	£195.00	
	100850 St Mary's Guild	£180.00	
	100851 High Bickington Football Club	£50.00	
	100852 High Bickington Badminton Club	£50.00	
	100853 Quarry Wood Committee	£200.00	
	100854 High Bickington Pyncombe Foundation	£100.00	
	100855 William Dodds & Joshua Tucker Charity	£100.00	
	100856 High Bickington Primary School P.T.A.	£150.00	
	100857 High Bickington Historical Society	£200.00	
	100859 J A Baker – Salary & Expenses August & Sept.	£715.38	
	100860 South West Ambulance Service (Defibrillator)	£2,160.00	
	100861 DALC (Clerks Essentials Course)	£66.00	
			<u>£4,306.38</u>
(b)	Chairman signed External Audit Exemption Form.		

12. Planning:

- (a) **Application received to be circulated:**
1/0853/2019/FUL
Single storey extension and associated alterations
Greenwood, Pound Lane, High Bickington
- (b) **Torridge Decisions:** Alterations and Single storey extension at Moorland View, High Bickington – Approved.

13. No other correspondence received.

14. **Items for Information:** Councillor Roger Keen reported that the bench in Nethergrove Lane is in need of repair. Roger agreed to find out if there is anyone in the village who owns the bench or if the Council need to take action with regard to repairs.

Chairman reported the picnic bench in the playground in Barton Mead is damaged. Adam agreed to inspect and arrange necessary repairs.

15. Next meeting, Wednesday 13th November 2019 in the 1st Floor Meeting Room.

Formal meeting closed at 9.45

Part II (Closed meeting)

Finance Committee discussed correspondence received from grant applicants regarding the non-award of grants. Committee agreed all grants had been fairly considered and awarded based on the information provided. All Councillors agreed the original decisions stand and no grants awarded. Replies to be sent to that effect.