

HIGH BICKINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting, Wednesday 13 February 2019 at 7.30pm in the Community Centre, High Bickington

Present: Peter Worrall, Steve Alford, Charmaine Coxon, Jim Hutchings, Neil Parker
In Attendance: County Councillor Andrew Saywell
Councillor Rosemary Lock – Torridge District Council
Di Carter – Clerk

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Councillor Rosemary Lock who will be a candidate for the Torridge District Council elections in May. Following boundary changes the Two Rivers Ward will become two wards with two District Councillors to be elected. She will be standing alongside Michael Clarke who has also been nominated for election to the Council.

Councillor Lock said she has served on Torridge District Council for 12 years, on the Planning Committee for 10 years, as Chair for 8 years. She is also Clerk to Hatherleigh Town Council and a Dolton Parish Councillor. She farms Cleave Farm in Dolton with her husband and is a keen supporter of improving housing and other facilities in rural villages to enable young people to be able to afford to stay and maintain our villages for the future. The new Local Plan has now been adopted.

Torridge District Council budget setting meeting is on 25 February, the recommendation is for a 30p per week increase for Band D properties.

Councillor Lock advised that the Torridge New Homes Bonus can be applied for by Parishes; the Clerk will follow this up for the disabled swing and goalposts at Barton Meadow Play Area.

The Chairman asked Councillor Lock for clarification about disposal of waste cooking oil, a number of residents had raised this issue. Councillor Lock advised the Clerk to contact Richard Haste regarding this.

The Chairman also raised problems the Parish Council has encountered with the Planning Department; we have felt that despite being asked for comments, these are disregarded. He particularly highlighted Forest Park Lodges and Pows Cottage, both developments causing local concern. He felt that when a Parish Council registers a strong concern about an application, we should at least be given the opportunity to have a dialogue with Planners to explain our concerns and their decisions. Councillor Lock said she could assure Councillors that their comments are taken on board and reported in the Officer's decision report. Following a discussion about the Pows Cottage application Councillor Lock agreed to look into this.

Councillor Lock said that a number of new staff have been recruited to the Planning Department and she is hopeful the service will be improved.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Lock for her valuable input and report.

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

Councillor Saywell said that the Nethergrove resurfacing work is progressing well; it was delayed due to work at Dowland being held up because of the bad weather. He has recently travelled around the villages to inspect the state of the roads and has found a number of areas needing attention, although High Bickington appeared to be reasonably good. He also found that many of these had not been reported to Highways on their website and urged everyone to report potholes etc via this facility; the website can be accessed at Devon.cc/report-it and the process is very easy to follow.

Domestic waste will no longer be taken to Deepmoor, it will be shipped to Bristol. The A361 North Devon Link Road improvement works have been given approval and are due to start in 2020.

Councillor Saywell said Devon County Council will also shortly be setting their budget – revenue spending is due to rise from £479m to £494m, £12m will go into Childrens' services, £4.5m into adult care and a modest increase for Highways (this has recently also benefitted from an additional £18.75m being awarded by the Government). To enable these improvements to services, it is likely the County element of the Council Tax will rise by 3.99%. Councillor Saywell said that Devon County Council is improving, rather than reducing, services and their financial situation is good. He felt everyone was aware of the financial constraints facing Councils and hoped they would appreciate and welcome the steps being taken to ensure Devon receives the services it deserves.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Saywell for his report – Councillor Saywell left the meeting.

The formal meeting was convened at 8.05pm.

1. **Apologies for absence** – PFCSO Sandra Brown, Adam Bunting, Roger Keen.
2. **Parish Council:**
 - (i) There is a current vacancy on the Parish Council following the passing away of Stella Burrows; we are able to co-opt and expressions of interest to fill this position will be followed up.
3. **Declarations of interest:** None
4. **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 9 January 2019.** The Minutes of this meeting were agreed and adopted by Councillors present. The Chairman signed the Minutes.
5. **Matters Arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 January 2019.**
 - (a) Disabled parking bay outside the School – The following response to our query has been received from Darryl Jagger, our Neighbourhood Highway Officer:
The disabled parking bay is for the benefit of students at the school but is an advisory bay. Advisory bays are normally provided where parking is at a premium in a residential area not controlled by restrictions. They are for all blue badge holders and are not reserved for an individual. Advisory bays are marked with the word DISABLED, but they don't have a restriction plate showing the blue disabled symbol accompanying them. They can't be enforced and no action can be taken against anyone who parks there although we would point out to people to consider the needs of Blue Badge holders.
The School has confirmed the above but does ask people to show consideration for disabled children accessing the school during normal school hours.
 - (b) World War 1 celebrations: Steve Alford reported that three quotations for the sign and engraving are awaited.
 - (c) Bus Shelter cleaning: The Chairman had been unable to contact the Youth Club and this item will be on the March agenda.
6. **Police Matters**

The Clerk circulated a copy of the Police report which Councillors again felt was lacking detail; she has taken the matter up with PFCSO Brown and is awaiting a reply.
7. **High Bickington Community Property Trust Ltd**

There was nothing to report.
8. **Barton Meadow and other Play Areas**

The Clerk reported that the ROSPA annual inspection is due in March. Efforts to raise funds for the basket swing and goalposts at Barton Meadow play area continue.
9. **Matters Raised by the Chairman –**
 - (a) Parish Council car park – The BMW car has now been moved and following communications with the Torridge District Council Solicitor, it would appear that there is no enforceable action we can take to prevent a similar occurrence. However, Councillors will make every effort to deter long term parking in future.
 - (b) Directory – The draft new Directory has been sent to the printer and a proof copy is awaited.
 - (c) Elections May 2019: The Chairman submitted an article in February Ramblings setting out the role of a Parish Councillor. He will do a further report in March about the role of the Parish Council and the Clerk. The final article will cover the Election itself. The Chairman said it was important that voters understood they can vote for up to 8 Parish Councillors and 2 District Councillors. He hoped members of the public would come forward to serve as Parish Councillors.
 - (d) Devon Air Ambulance: We now understand that the Parish Council has to arrange the publicity for the night landing site – A suggested publicity sheet has been sent to Toby Russell of Devon Air Ambulance for his comments and additional information. Neil Parker suggested it might be a good opportunity to combine the official opening with the Open Gardens day in June.

10. Maintenance:

- (a) Highways –
 - (i) The Chairman said works in Nethergrove Lane are progressing well; a local resident has expressed his delight with the new surface and quality of work.
 - (ii) Grit bins and ice patrols: The Chairman said he wished to thank Councillors and members of the public who helped to spread grit during the recent bad weather. Bins will be checked to ensure supplies are intact.
- (b) Footpaths and byways – In Roger Keen's absence there was nothing to report.
 - (i) Copse, Mill Road: A working party was arranged for Saturday 2 March, 9am – 12 noon to clear the undergrowth and tidy the copse. Anyone wishing to join the group would be most welcome.

11. General Finance

- (a) Barclays current a/c statement 30 January 2019 **£14,553.58**
Cheques not cleared:
100798 HB Youth Club – bus shelter cleaning £125.00 **£14,428.58**
Cheques to be issued:
100809 SLCC Annual Membership renewal £89.00
100810 D Carter January Sal £297.01/Exp £43.78 £340.79 £429.79 **£13,998.79**
- (b) New cheque signatory mandate – The papers have now been completed and returned to Barclays. The signatories in future will be Peter Worrall, Steve Alford and Jim Hutchings.

12. Planning

- (a) **Applications circulated since January meeting:**
1/0060/2019/HPD
Single storey rear extension
6 Church Meadow, High Bickington
PC Decision: No objection as the plans conform to permitted development terms.
- (b) **New applications: none**
- (c) **Decisions: none**

13. Correspondence not included elsewhere on the agenda -

- (a) David Venner has informed us that the information presented at the WW1 exhibition last November has been put into one document; one copy has been given to the School, one will be given to Barnstaple Library and the third will be kept at David's home. Anyone wishing to look at the document can either borrow the copy from David or go to the Library.
- (b) DCC Pathways – invitation to become a member of the Devon Countryside Access Forum – in information pack.
- (c) Statement from Chief Constable re setting of Local Authority Precept – in information pack.
- (d) Notice of roadworks – Road from Cross Park to Week Parks Cross – 10 April 2019.

14. Items for Information: None

15. Date of next meeting: Wednesday 13 March 2019 at 7.30pm in the Pyncombe Room.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.55pm.