

## HIGH BICKINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

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### **Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting, Wednesday 9 January 2019 at 7.30pm in the Community Centre, High Bickington**

**Present:** Peter Worrall, Steve Alford, Adam Bunting, Jim Hutchings, Roger Keen, Neil Parker  
**In Attendance:** County Councillor Andrew Saywell  
Michael Clarke  
Helen Carn  
Di Carter – Clerk

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the first meeting of 2019. He wished everyone a happy New Year and invited Councillor Saywell to report to the meeting.

Councillor Saywell said he would like to add his tribute to Councillor Stella Burrows – he had not known her well but was aware of her long service to the community, particularly her involvement with the Neighbourhood Watch and the Police. He wished to send his sincere condolences to her family and friends.

Councillor Saywell said that at the November Parish Council meeting, Stella Burrows had raised a concern about cold callers from the Ordnance Survey – he felt he should have advised reporting such calls to the Trading Standards Office and has given the Clerk contact details. This information will be placed on the Parish Council website. Any calls giving rise to concern should be reported – there are a number of scams currently being circulated and everyone is warned to be on their guard.

Devon County Council is in discussions regarding the budget; it is likely that the allocation from Central Government will be £18.75m. more than anticipated. This will enable more funds to be made available for children's services and highways. Councillor Saywell stressed that this is funding for capital expenditure, not revenue money. He hopes that it will enable more patching work to be carried out on minor rural roads and will liaise with the Parish Council to establish priorities in our village. He outlined pressures on the County budget, but assured Councillors that Devon is in a reasonably sound financial position compared with some Counties.

The Chairman said he felt capital money spent on patching work, rather than temporary pothole repairs, is a more economical use of money, as they provide a more permanent result. Councillor Saywell agreed with this view.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Saywell for his report.

Following a discussion at the December Meeting, Councillors had asked the High Bickington Community Fund to advise on how they would like the donation of £500 to be allocated. Helen Carn, representing the High Bickington Community Fund Committee, said that at their meeting on 8 January, the Committee had agreed to ask the Parish Council to fund the engraving of the metal sign to be placed on the beacon; the remaining funds to be donated to the British Legion. This request will be confirmed later in the formal meeting.

Michael Clarke reported that he has been asked to stand as the Conservative candidate for Torridge District Council in the May elections, replacing James Morrish who is standing down. Following a discussion on our recent concerns about a regular contact with Torridge and ways in which we felt this could be improved, Councillors wished Michael Clarke well and said, if successful in the election, they looked forward to working with him to ensure a closer information sharing relationship with Torridge District Council in the future.

County Councillor Saywell and Michael Clarke left the meeting.

The formal meeting was convened at 7.53pm.

The Chairman said he felt sure everyone was aware that Councillor Stella Burrows had passed away suddenly just before Christmas and the Parish Council thoughts and best wishes go out to her family at this time. He said his first meeting with Stella was in the last century when, along with others, he took part in a village survey. After her teaching days Stella was heavily involved with the WI and the Historical Society and for over 20 years served as a Parish Councillor. She would update us with information from the Police in her role within the Neighbourhood watch scheme. Stella was also a Director of the CPT Ltd, helping to keep the project moving forward and updating the Parish Council on any developments. Stella was always ready to help with any groups or individuals within the Parish. On a lighter note, the Chairman said that had Stella lived some 50 yards further north she would have come within North Devon District area and would not have been able to serve on the Parish Council! He said we will all miss her and the memory of her continuing concerns about the Pound Lane junction will linger for many years to come.

1. **Apologies for absence** – PFCSO Sandra Brown, Charmaine Coxon
2. **Parish Council:**
  - (a) The Chairman welcomed Mr Neil Parker as the newly co-opted Councillor; he fills the vacancy which arose following the resignation of Steve Galliver. Neil Parker has met with the Clerk and signed all necessary forms which will be duly recorded as required.
  - (b) Current vacancy – Due to the passing away of Councillor Stella Burrows, a further vacancy now exists on the Parish Council. Following a discussion Councillors agreed that despite the impending elections in May they would like to recruit a new Councillor and the Clerk was asked to take this forward.
3. **Declarations of interest:** None
4. **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 12 December 2018.** 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 12 December 2018**
  - (a) Disabled parking bay outside the School – The Chairman said he would like clarification about the hours the restrictions would be in operation. The Clerk was asked to write to Highways and the School to obtain more details on the restrictions being applied.
6. **Police Matters**

The Clerk circulated a copy of the new layout for Police reports; this was not felt to be very helpful compared to previous detailed reports. The Clerk will take up Councillors' concerns with PFCSO Sandra Brown.
7. **High Bickington Community Property Trust Ltd**

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

Adam Bunting had nothing to report.

The Clerk reported that she is submitting our claim for TAP funding based on the quotation from SNC South West Ltd for a disabled swing and goalposts. Other funding is also being followed up.
8. **Matters Raised by the Chairman –**
  - (a) Parish Council car park – The Chairman said he will again speak to the owners of the BMW car parked in the Mill Road car park. A cover has now been placed over the car, despite assurances that it would be moved immediately after Christmas. The Clerk was asked to ascertain what rights the Parish Council has to enforce parking restrictions on land it owns.
  - (b) Directory - The final details are now being collated and will be sent to the Printer shortly.
  - (c) District Councillor attendance – it is understood that James Morrish will not be standing at the next election and Michael Clarke has been selected to stand as the Conservative candidate. We will be writing again to Jane Whittaker, Leader of Torridge District Council, to register our concerns about the recent lack of contact.
  - (d) World War 1 Celebrations – following earlier information received on the wishes of the High Bickington Community Fund for the allocation of the £500 held by the Parish Council, it was agreed by Councillors present that the Parish Council would pay for the engraving of the sign to be placed on the beacon to commemorate those lost in the War, any funds remaining would be paid to the British Legion. Steve Alford will obtain quotes for the engraving and confirm wording for the sign.
10. **Maintenance:**
  - (a) Highways –
    - (i) The report from County Councillor Andrew Saywell was welcomed, and the Parish Council will continue to press for urgent works to be carried out on areas of concern in the village.
    - (ii) Grit bins and ice patrols: The Chairman circulated copies of his proposed policy for dealing with the servicing of grit bins and spreading of grit in icy conditions. All Councillors present approved the policy, which will now be passed to our Snow Warden, Peter Tucker, and to Devon County Council. The Clerk is following up a request for a further grit bin on North Road alongside the Beacon crossing to allow for gritting to the pathways in that area.

- (iii) Bus Shelter cleaning – The Chairman reported that the leaders of the Youth Club have been unable to obtain sufficient parental consents to enable them to carry out the bus shelter cleaning. This was regrettable and a further effort will be made to try and encourage more support. If the support is not forthcoming, the Youth Club will refund the donation of £125. Jim Hutchings kindly offered to continue to clean the shelter for the time being.
- (b) Footpaths and Byways – Roger Keen has carried out his annual survey of footpaths and everything is in order. He will also complete the annual P5 forms from Devon County Council.
  - (i) Mill Road Copse – copies of the report from David Venner were circulated to all Councillors. Following a discussion it was agreed that a volunteer working party be formed to carry out the recommended works; ie clearing brambles and cutting back overhanging branches on a property in Church Meadow. The Chairman will confirm with the owners of the adjoining property in Mill Road their proposals for a new hedge to be planted alongside their boundary.

## 11. General Finance

- (a) Barclays current a/c statement 28 December 2018 **£15,046.26**  
 Cheques not cleared:  
 100798 HB Youth Club – bus shelter cleaning £125.00  
 100801 D Jones – grasscutting Sept/Oct £105.00  
 100802 Ramblings Sub £7.50 £237.50 **£14,808.76**  
 Cheques to be issued:  
 100807 HB CPT Ltd – hall hire Oct/Nov/Dec £41.25  
 100808 D Carter – Sal Dec £297.01/Exp£41.92 £338.93 £380.18 **£14,428.58**  
 Councillors present agreed to the release of the cheques listed.
- (b) Finance Committee – two vacancies now exist on the Finance Committee, one cheque signatory and one non-signatory member.  
**Decision:** Councillors present agreed that Steve Alford be appointed as a cheque signatory member on the Finance Committee and Neil Parker be appointed as the non-signatory member. The Clerk to make the necessary arrangements with Barclays Bank.

## 12. Planning

- (a) **Applications circulated since December meeting:**  
**1/1296/2018/FUL**  
 Demolition of existing outbuilding and conversion of barns with link extension to form no 1 dwelling including erection of double garage.  
 Town Farm, High Bickington  
 PC Comment: The Parish Council is unable to comment on this application due to declarations of interest from some Councillors and a lack of a majority of Councillors able to vote.  
 TDC Comment:
- (b) **New Applications:**  
**1/1352/2018/TRE**  
 Lift and clean the crown of 2 no. beech trees (to include the removal of a long branch on 1) and remove 1no. Beech tree subject to TPO 1/003/2010  
 Ebberley Hill Barton, Torrington.  
 PC Decision: The Parish Council feels this is a matter for decision by Tree Preservation Officers and does not feel able to comment.  
 TDC Decision:
- (c) **Decisions: none**

## 13. Correspondence not included elsewhere on the agenda -

- (a) Letter of thanks from Citizens Advice Bureau for the PC donation of £100.
- (b) DALC – Invitation to make a nomination for the Royal Garden Party 2019 – There were no names put forward.
- (c) The Chairman reported that an expression of concern has been raised by a member of the public about the possible closure of the Old George Public House and it's potential change of use to a residential dwelling. The resident felt this would be a sad loss to the village. The Chairman said the Parish Council cannot comment until such time as an application for change of use is submitted, but would be willing to pass on names of other concerned residents.

**14. Items for Information: None**

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

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.37pm.