

**High Bickington Parish Council
Clerk: Alan Matthewman
26 Fairways View, High Bickington EX37 9BZ
01769 560740; 07720 301854**

***Parish Council Meeting
Wednesday 13th March 2024 at 7.30 pm in
The Community Centre, High Bickington, 1st Floor Meeting Room***

Members of the public are encouraged to attend.

**Present Councillors C. Kendall (in the chair) F. Spencer, R Keen, M Parker, N Coipp
Cllr T Elliott (Torridge DC), A. Matthewman (Parish Clerk)
22 Members of the public**

Chair will invite for consideration matters raised by the public.

Upon enquiry by the chair of members of the public it was evident that most, if not all, had attended because they had been told that council was to discuss the proposal to close the High Bickington Surgery. He explained out that this information had not come from the council and the issue was not on the agenda, having been discussed at length at the previous meeting. The clerk explained that following that meeting, and at the request of the council, he had written a letter to the surgery manager setting out the feelings of those present. He then read the letter he had sent (attached to these minutes.)

Hearing what was the programme for the day most members of the public left the meeting having been encouraged to write to the practice in a personal capacity and having themselves asked the council if they would consider inviting representatives of the practice to attend a meeting in the near future. Council agreed to consider this request.

Councillor Saywell having presented his apologies, The Chair invited Councillor Thomas Elliott (on behalf of Torridge DC) to give his report.

Cllr Elliott expressed his interest in the previous conversation and stated that he would carefully follow events as they unfolded. On other fronts he confirmed that TDC had agreed their budget for 2024-25, but this had only been possible by transferring a substantial sum from reserves to balance it. This would create significant problems going forward if the balance could not be properly restored. He was pleased to report that, although homelessness remained a problem in Torridge Area, some significant progress had been made and there was hope this would continue in the coming year.

The Chair declared the formal meeting open:

- 1: Apologies for absence** – Apologies had been received from Cllr A. Bunting and Cllr G. Sheldon (family challenges) and from Cllr Saywell (Vacation).
- 2. Declarations of Interest** – to receive any Personal and/or Prejudicial interests from Councillors regarding matters due to be discussed. Cllr Kendall declared a potential conflict if the surgery issue was to be re-opened as his wife worked there.
- 3: Urgent Matters at the discretion of the Chair:** The Clerk reported on a communication from Devon County Council confirming that an application for planning consent for the Little Bickington Estate would go forward in a matter of a few weeks. Council noted that, following the earlier public meeting the position regarding the development was fairly clear although

the possible loss of health service support in the village was a serious added complication. In view of the scale and concerns raised, Council agreed that the development needed to be called in for full planning consideration. Serious issues involved Sewage and Water issues, access to the site during and after construction, bus services to Barnstaple and Torrington and lack of health and community services.

4. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 21st February 2024

Proposed by Cllr Kendall, seconded by Cllr Spencer the minutes were agreed unanimously as a true record of the meeting

5: Matters arising from the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 21st February 2024: None not covered in the agenda

6: A private meeting between councillors and representatives of Elgin Energy would take place on Thursday 14th March at 6.30 pm. Any outcomes of the meeting would be minuted and published afterwards.

7: Police Matters – Update on any local police and/or Neighbourhood Watch matters

a) receive report on traffic speeds through the village and status of training and set-up equipment received. Consider provision of signs to be placed in North Street: David Johnson (Chair of speed-watch group) and Cllr Bunting: No reports had been received but Cllr Bunting had approached the school to arrange for a competition amongst the children to design signs.

b) receive report on police activity since last meeting: No significant issues had been reported.

8 Maintenance

(a) Highways – To receive a report from Councillor Parker. Nothing to report

(b) Footpaths and Byways – to note any work requiring to be done on local footpaths. Nothing reported

© Defibrillator update: The order had been placed with London Hearts and the invoice needed to be sent.

9 CPT Report: consider report from Cllr Spencer on CPT activity. In view of Cllr Spencer having left the trustees he would have no reports to file in future.

10: Finance:

(a) Agree to payment of any cheques following the meeting and cheques paid since previous meeting.

(b) To note the accounting position as at end February and forecast for full year.

There had been little activity since the last meeting, not helped by the cheque book running out without any replacement being received from Barclays. The situation, which was largely consistent with the original budget, would be submitted at the next meeting.

11: Planning

a: To receive and comment on other planning applications and any decisions reached on prior applications since 21st February 2024. None received.

12. Correspondence:

To consider any urgent correspondence received by the Clerk or Councillors since 21st March 2024. Nothing received not covered by agenda items above

Date of next meeting, Wednesday 10th April 2024

Councillor Colic Kendall

Acting Chair of the Meeting _____

Date _____