

High Bickington Parish Council
Clerk: Alan Matthewman
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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
Wednesday 8th July 2026 at 7.30 pm in

The Community Centre, High Bickington, Ground Floor Meeting Room

Members of the public were encouraged to attend.

Members attending: Cllrs, David Hunt (in the chair), Adam Bunting, Bev Redman, Mike Naden, Grant Sheldon, Michel Parker

Also Present: Councillor Thomas Elliot (Torridge DC), Councillor Rosemary Lock, (Torridge DC) Alan Matthewman (Clerk)

16 members of the public

- 1: a) **Chair to appoint Parish Clerk as chair of the meeting to transact this business only.**
 Election of Chair of the Council for 2026-27.
 Elected Chair assumes chair of the meeting
 b) **Election of Council Vice-Chair 2026-27**
 Signature of consent to serve notices
 c) **Situation on proposed election/co-option of new councillors**
 The clerk confirmed that TDC had informed the council that, no requests for an election having been received, they were entitled to proceed to co-option. In the light of this it was decided to hold an additional meeting in August, on Wednesday 11th, and the clerk was instructed to arrange this. Items 1a and 1b were held over until that date/

2: **Apologies for absence** – to receive and accept any apologies for absence., Cllrs Cheryl Cottle-Hunkin

3: **Declarations of Interest** – All councillors to submit revised declarations of interest valid June 2026 regardless of whether any changes have been made. None Stated

4: **The Chair will, with the consent of members, suspend standing orders to enable presentations by non-council members and members of the public.**

In view of the number of residents present, virtually all of them having an interest in the CPT housing off Little Bickington Lane, the chair suggested that this issue (listed at Clause 1c) was considered first. A number of the residents set out their concerns regarding what they described as a change in the legal status of their properties as a result to the proposal by the CPT to remove from their leases a commitment to supply heating to most of the properties. The proposal appeared to be that the residents should pay for the provision of gas to each property and incur the full cost of supply thereafter without any financial adjustment from the CPT to the residents.

It was pointed out to them that, although council was concerned at the situation, it had no legal status in the matter which had arisen by nature of the original contracts drawn up under the influence of DCC, their financial resources were totally inadequate to provide assistance and, being to help individual residents, were probably outside the power of the council.

Council were aware that the CPT was faced with severe financial challenges, mainly as a result of the old bio-mass boiler failures and any solution was liable to be difficult. Council understood the concerns of residents and had, at the request of the CPT, agreed to attend a meeting to take on board their view of the situation. It was hoped that DCC would take a more responsible attitude bearing in mind their involvement in the initial contract negotiations.

Another resident raised issues regarding the safety issues on Barton Measure which the Chair confirmed that action was already in hand to deal with the issues raised. There was also a need for the basketball hoop in the school playground needed repair.

- a) **Presentation by Cheryl Cottle-Hunkin (Devon CC):** not present at the meeting
- b) **Presentation by Councillor Thomas Elliott (Torridge DC)** A question was raised as to whether

or not a community status might be raised again on one of the public houses. Suggested that the issue be raised with TDC and also that the Community Centre might be included.

- c) **Presentation by Councillor Rosemary Lock (Torrridge DC):** Cllr Lock raised two issues regarding the minutes for the June meeting. In the first instance, Minute 4c, she stated that she had not said that all the submitted options regarding the LGR had been rejected by the Government. At that time, and still now, no decision had been made public but was expected in the coming days. Minute 8.5 – agreement of the minute should be subject to the change in minutes.

X-Link had now announced a new proposal regarding a substantial BESS facility and a separate Data Centre as two separate issues with a total area of 850 acres south-west of Torrington.

d) **Public Participation**

Each member of the public is permitted to raise one item on which they may speak for a maximum of 3 minutes unless the Chair rules otherwise. Items raised in this section are not required to receive a response at this point in the agenda but may be raised in council when the appropriate agenda item is called.

Chair shall move the restoration of standing orders so that the council can resume the full meeting

- 5: **Urgent Matters at the discretion of the Chair:** To consider any urgent matters raised by the chair or by councillors which may need urgent discussion or be required to be put on the agenda at the next meeting for decision.

Two trees on Barton Meadow need attention. Affecting cars parking. Agreed that action be taken ASAP. No action as yet on the oak tree issues. Cllr Bunting said he had not yet received an updated quote for the initial repairs. Agreed that the damaged swings be removed immediately. Need to raise with CPT that the path with no lighting and a badly damaged fence need to be replaced.

- 6: **Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 17th June 2026,** Subject to the changes agreed with Councillor Lock the minutes were approved as a correct record.

- 7: **Matters arising from the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 17th June 2026.**

- 8: **Internal Audit Report and Clerk's commentary – to be circulated beforehand.** The clerk reported that the internal report, was rather long and detailed. Clerk to present a commentary before the August meeting. Standing Orders and the Risk analysis were the most urgent issues together with the website.

- 9: **Police Matters –**

a) Update on any local police and/or Neighbourhood Watch matters – none available

b) receive report on police activity since last meeting.

c) receive report from Speedwatch group regarding installation of new signage, including grant application to DCC. We still are awaiting a decision on approval of the grant and the erection.

10. **Maintenance**

(a) Highways – To receive a report from Councillor Parker and discussion regarding DCC "20's Plenty" Policy.

(b) Footpaths and Byways – to consider appointment of new footpath warden. Still awaiting a map of the footpaths in the parish.

© Update on Barton Meadow Maintenance and oak tree therein. See Article 5 above.

- 10: **To consider and approve the following policy documents for September 2026**

- 1) Standing Orders
- 2) Revised Risk Analysis

- 11: **Finance:**

Agree accounts to 30th June 2026

Approve payments made since last meeting and proposed further payments.

Three payments were approved, one for the "Tommies" statues, one for Clerks June salary and one for room hire at CPT. All approved unanimously.

12: Planning

a: To receive and comment on other planning applications and any decisions reached00000000

Application 0460 for residential development on the opposite side of the main road which had been raised before. No objections raised.

Application on Pound Lane minor development details. No objection.

b: to update situation on Neighbourhood benefit from solar farm. Still nothing to report

13. Correspondence:

To consider any urgent correspondence received by the Clerk or Councillors since June 2026

Date of next meeting, Wednesday 12th August at 7.30 pm

David Hunt

Acting Chair