

High Bickington Parish Council Meeting

11th February 2026.

Question for Public Participation 4 (D) item

My sister, Mrs Risdon and I attended your meeting on the 14th January 2026 to represent the applicants for planning application 1/1000/2025/OUTM. Dwellings at Crosspark. We have a question regarding the process adopted prior to submission of the Consultees Comments.

Following the Public Participation discussion, we listened to your statement during Item 12. That the Council would neither support nor object to the application. Rather it would respond in a neutral fashion, including the comments raised during public participation.

We were surprised therefore, to have our attention drawn to your Consultee's Comments on the Planning Portal, that the Council's position was to Object? Likewise, some of the content within the comment. Not least the suggestion the application was "undemocratic and speculative". Terms we do not recall being used during the course of the meeting, nor recognise. Particularly as the application arose following years of work and a call for applications from Torridge District Council?

We spoke on the afternoon of the 2nd February 2026. Thank you for giving up your time. You suggested the change in decision arose from a closed meeting held sometime after the main meeting? Also, at that meeting Members made a decision to object to the application using reasons provided during public participation on the 14th January meeting.

Having now been able to read the Minutes of the 14th January we note that:

- There is no record of the decision made on the 14th. This would seem strange as it is a relevant and important part of the discussion and debate?
- Neither do the minutes refer to any further meeting? Let alone a Closed session of the Council.
- To clarify the position could you please advise :
 - What process was used to enable the change?
 - Who advised on such a process?
 - If a meeting was held, when and where and what form did it take? Was it a closed or open session?
 - Who called the meeting?
 - Who was made aware of the meeting beforehand and who was actually present?
 - Where are the records of the meeting?
 - Who prepared minutes of any meeting? Also, who prepared the Consultees Comments?

From the information available, it appears that the Council may have adopted a process, that is neither appropriate nor lawful when responding to our application? We understand and appreciate the challenges faced by Local Elected members, who give up their own time to represent others. We are grateful for the work that they do. Also, we appreciate that mistakes can be made. All we seek is a fair and transparent response to our application.

As such we invite the Council to consider its position and the options available to address and rectify this.

Thank you for allowing us the time to raise our concerns.

John Tucker