

PRESENT:

North Ward:

Councillor P S Christie
Councillor D Bushby

South Ward:

Councillor S Inch
Councillor Mrs S Langford
Councillor P Lawrence

West Ward:

Councillor C Hawkins
Councillor D Ratcliff

East Ward:

Councillor Mrs L Hellyer
Councillor Mrs J Gubb (Town Mayor)
Councillor J A McKenzie

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs H Blackburn (Town Clerk)
Mr R Coombes (Deputy Town Clerk)
Sergeant G Clarke (Bideford Police Station)
Mr T Ireson (Burton at Bideford)
Mr I Danby (Burton at Bideford)
Mr R Millward (Burton at Bideford)
1 x Member of the Public

42. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors Mrs K Corfe (West Ward – personal), J Craigie (East Ward – work commitments) and J Herron (North Ward – personal).

43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND ANY REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Councillor P Christie declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 16 (Trustee, Bridge Trust).

44. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION OF 15 MINUTES DURATION

There was no public participation.

45. MINUTES

Councillor Christie referred Members to Minute Number 40. noting that where reference had been made to “a historical planning application,” advising that it had been submitted in January.

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 June 2022 were approved as a correct record.

(Vote – For: 9, Abstention: 1, Against: 0)

46. ACCOUNTS

Councillor Bushby made reference to Item 5, “contribution towards the repair of St Mary’s Clock,” which he regarded as the Town Clock.

It was proposed by Councillor Bushby, seconded and

RESOLVED: That the List of Payments be approved.

(Vote – For: 10, Against: 0)

47. PRESENTATION BY THE POLICE SERVICE

a. The Chairman invited Sergeant Clarke, to address the Council.

b. Sergeant Clarke thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Council.

He outlined his area of responsibility, time in post, staff resource and allocation of one PC and one PCSO to the Town Centre of Bideford, including Jubilee Square.

Street drinking and anti-social behaviour would be combatted with increased foot patrols. He noted there have been more recent reports of criminal damage and anti-social behaviour in the Town Centre.

The Police will work with Torridge District Council in an effort to enforce the Public Space Protection Order, a six hour dispersal order that if breached could lead through a chain of fines to criminal behaviour orders, arrests, Magistrates Court appearances culminating in a removal from the Town. This initiative will run through August.

Sergeant Clarke conceded those with drug and alcohol addictions were mostly homeless, that the Force were safeguarding the Community and carried out their work with a duty of care.

He concluded by inviting the Members to join a patrol in September. (Several councillors expressed a desire to accept the offer; details will be passed to Sergeant Clarke.)

c. Sergeant Clarke invited questions.

Questions / points included:

- Instances of loud revving and the racing of motor cars between 2.00 am and 3.00 am in the vicinity of McDonalds and Aldi; further, racing along the Link Road.
- o There is a Road Police Unit that can take four more regular patrols. Please report issues to the Police and the Environmental Department of TDC.
- When individuals are dispersed, they move to Landvisiau Walk and the Park. It does not remove the problem.
- o There are specialists that the Police can tap into. There is potential for the introduction for a “wet room,” area. The Force are happy to receive recommendations. The issue will be looked into.
- Dealing with individuals who have challenges including mental health and learning disabilities. Do the Police receive specific training is there a High Flow team?
- o There are safeguards in place, reporting systems... The Drinkers do not want support.
- Care must be taken not to vilify / demonise an echelon of society.
- There is an expectation for results from the August Police / TDC axis initiative.
- Was the Police Sergeant aware of the street marshals being organised by the local tradespeople?
- o The Force will seek to work with them, dove tail their resource.
- Suggestion that Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) facilitate the importation of other people’s problems – there are eight. The Police have a duty / obligation to “design out crime,” during the Planning process. They never comment. They should make consideration over future (HMO) applications.
- o There is a Police Architectural Officer.
- North Devon Council in receipt of half a million pounds funding to tackle anti-social behaviour; TDC were not successful in their application.

c. The Chairman thanked Sergeant Clarke for addressing the Council.

48. DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (COUNCILLOR) REPORT

Members had received a written report from County Councillor Mrs L Hellyer which enclosed and forms part of these Minutes.

Discussion ensued on the lack of enforcement of the Mill Street Traffic Order with the same persistent offenders. The White Line attention was welcomed although there is no identified date for the works. There are thirty to forty million pot holes with one, at Ford Rise, now with a plant in it!

Concern that budget savings have been made through the cancellation of identified works.

49. PRESENTATION BY THE BURTON ART GALLERY AND MUSEUM

a. The Chairman invited Messrs Ireson, Danby and Millward, to address the Council.

b. Mr Ireson (Chairman of Trustees) thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Council and introduced Mr Millward (fellow Trustee) and Mr Danby (Director).

Mr Ireson spoke about the responsibility of the Trustees, maintaining the level of expectation attained through funding and delivering of services. It's financial operation is well and secure; it is a wonderful asset. With 200,000 visitors it stands comparison with the 230,000 visiting RHS Rosemore.

The Burton has a significant collection of local art, the high quality museum is recognised nationally and internationally and has been awarded with Arts Council England investment.

There is much out reach work beyond Bideford to villages in the heart of Devon and along the coast, engaging with hard to reach groups including the elderly, disabled, homeless women and those ladies that have suffered domestic violence. (One lady has been so empowered that she had been able to gain employment through their works.)

TDC funding has been trimmed from £172,000 to £140,000 leading to a greater reliance on the sales from the shop and art gallery, which continue to work well.

The "Burton Art Box," a converted Horse Box, takes the Burton to various locations across the Torridge area and offers involvement in free art activities.

Mr Ireson believed the signage in the Town needed improvement and the London Plain trees bestriding the facility need to be lopped.

The Burton value the support of the Council and the Bridge Trust that facilitates the sustainability of local Community Projects.

Mr Danby advised that the facility has ten staff and fifty volunteers and works with twenty two schools from Ilfracombe to Bude. The Homeless Women's Group engagement is operating well. He reaffirmed the work with vulnerable groups and the provision of Well Being Events (in the Park): workshops, music and talks, free events generally. The Burton Art Box is open to invitations.

Sixty five per cent of the visitors are local. The Burton has two collections of "National Significance." It also provides Tourist Information for 250 people each week.

It has won two awards: Best Ceramic Exhibition and Best Art Space.

Discussion followed on door counting, cuts in finance, cost to store the Collections, servicing costs, and the importance of Community work.

Councillor Mrs Hellyer invited correspondence on their signage / tree issues.

c. The Chairman thanked the Burton collaborators for addressing the Council.

50. COMMUNICATION BROUGHT FORWARD ON THE DIRECTION OF THE MAYOR / TOWN CLERK

The Clerk advised that the Bideford Town Band would be competing in the Brass Band National Championships at the Cheltenham Race Course on Sunday, 18 September 2022.

She noted that the BBC Spotlight team would be filming in Bideford on Wednesday, 10 August 2022.

51. STAFFING, FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES (SF&GP) COMMITTEE MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 July 2022 were approved and adopted.

(Vote – For: 10, Against: 0)

52. MARKET MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 July 2022 were approved and adopted.

(Vote – For: 9, Against: 0, Abstention: 1)

53. PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

The Minutes of the Meetings held on 13 July and 3 August 2022 were approved and adopted.

(Vote – For: 9, Against: 0, Abstention: 1)

54. TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 July 2022 were approved and adopted.

(Vote – For: 10, Against: 0)

55. BIDEFORD TOWN CENTRE PARTNERSHIP

The Notes of the Meeting held on 6 July 2022 were received.

56. TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL – UPDATE

Councillor Bushby advised:

- a. TDC have had to shut the popular Victoria Park paddling pool on occasion given that they have had difficulty recruiting an assistant park warden.
- b. TDC are considering options, following recent stays by Travellers, in the Park.
- c. TDC are continuing their search for the best material / solution to assist in the noise attenuation of the Skate Park.
- d. The Environment Centre is awaiting access detail prior to support the Planning application.

Councillor Langford advised that the Torridge Pool viewing area will be opened following repairs by 1 September 2022; there will an increase in all parent under eight viewing, though numbers are limited.

Councillor Christie advised:

- a. The Brunswick Wharf Developers have gone out to tender for the wall, which has serious implications for TDC.
- b. A commercial feasibility study is being conducted for the Library. He wondered if it should not be declared an asset of community value.
- c. He warned against a flood of planning applications where local authorities cannot show a five-year land supply developers can achieve planning permissions on unallocated sites; he cited Winkleigh.
- d. The Ruby Club have submitted a pre-application to build an all weather pitch on the Cattle Market. He intimated that in order for it to be successful it would need to be available for extensive Community use.

Councillor Inch noted that the Cemetery had been cleared.

57. BRIDGE TRUST

Councillor Christie gave detail on income, Estate expenditure, Grants: individual, student, group.

The business of the meeting having been completed, the Mayor thanked the members for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 7.45 pm.

	<u>PV NO</u>		<u>ALLOCATION</u>	<u>VAT</u>	<u>NET</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
1	9/08	Mr A Mitchell	Pollyfield Allotment Site Lock		32.20	32.20
2	9/08	Gingwerweb Ltd	Annual website hosting renewal / Website SSL Security Certificate Renewal		140.00	140.00
3	9/08	RGB	Maintenance Items	2.34	11.68	14.02
4	9/08	South West Heritage Trust	Contribution towards the North Devon Record Office (Oct 21 - Sep 22)		4,000.00	4,000.00
5	9/08	St Mary's Church	Contribution towards the repair of St Mary's Clock		2,000.00	2,000.00
6	9/08	Enterprise	Vehicle Rental	145.08	725.40	870.48
7	9/08	ecoremoval systems	Eco Gum Remover 24 L + stainless steel brushes	28.00	140.00	168.00
8	9/08	DS Electrical	Unit 13 Daddon Court: rent for July + August		1,200.00	1,200.00
9	9/08	R Braddick - Property Account	Twelve weeks storage Christmas Decorations: 12 Jun - 4 Sep 22		72.00	72.00
10	9/08	Acorn	Seasonal worker (w/e 31 Aug)	61.74	308.70	370.44
11	DD	British Gas	Cooper Street: 2 Jul - 1 Aug	3.31	66.25	69.56
12	DD	Clarity	Copy Charge iaw service agreement	8.49	42.46	50.95
				248.96	8,738.69	8,987.65
		Bank Balances at 3 Aug 22	- Current Account	20,274.26		
		Bank Balances at 3 Aug 22	- Deposit Account	420,000.00		

Minute Number 48.

DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (COUNCILLOR) REPORT

Councillor Mrs L Hellyer

During the summer, any white lines/words on the highways within the parish will be repainted, if necessary

My time is busy with the various committees at DCC, the busiest of which are Children's scrutiny and Health and Adult care scrutiny. I am on a task group looking at SEND (Special educational needs and disabilities) and one looking at how to reduce Ambulance waiting times. I am also on the Development and Management committee looking at Planning for Highways, Schools and Minerals. In addition to that, I chair the Public Rights of Way Committee and also the Highways and Traffic Orders committee (HATOC).

Demand for services is higher than ever before, set against a background of rising prices and market shortages. This trend of rising demand pressure and rising prices is likely to continue into 2023, which will create a challenging financial environment going forward.

I recently had a meeting with the Head of Highways. Highways schemes are usually programmed 12-18 months ahead. However, the way things are now, Highways know what work they are doing for the next 3 months, and they know what they *hope* to do for the following 3 months, but after that, nothing is certain anymore.

The highest costs to the authority are the statutory duties of looking after vulnerable children and vulnerable adults of working age.

Since I met with the Head of Highways DCC has said that it has a £30million "black hole" in the budget at the end of Month 2 of the current financial year. This looks set to rise to £40million with staff pay rises, and this is apart for the deficit that we have for our high needs Children's budget. DCC is waiting for a settlement from Central government to refund some of the high needs Children's services deficit. By law Dcc has to present a balanced budget, and economic pressures this year are indicating that it will increasingly be hard to set the budget for the next financial year.

I am told that the costs for out Highways works have gone up considerably and schools transport is another area with a huge hike in costs. We have several contractors who take children with SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) to school, resign as the fuel cost are so prohibitive.

Mostly at my town and parish meetings folk talk to me about Highways issues- usually potholes, drains, speeding and parking. As of the 12th of July, there were 711 recorded potholes awaiting repair. The timescales for these potholes to be repaired is based on a risk-based approach laid out in the current Highways safety policy which was approved by cabinet in December 2020. Our team of Highways Safety Inspectors determines whether the response should be immediate (within 2 hours), next day, in 7 days or 28 days based on the risk to the road user. They can also select a 90-day response for non-safety repairs.

The biggest immediate challenge facing the Highways and traffic Management service is inflation which has seen costs for services rise by approximately 15% in the first 6 months of the year. The service must prioritise safety related works over preventative maintenance, so the reactive response to potholes is unlikely to be affected. The impacts will be felt in the non-safety related cyclical type activities which is likely to lead to a longer-term deterioration of the network.

Devon County Council (DCC) is drafting a briefing for MPs. The service has been in discussion with the Department for Transport, other highways authorities across the Southwest and South of the country and spoken with the chair of ADEPT (Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport) to ensure consistency of messaging.

All the departments have been asked to look to see where they can save money. Obviously all the "low hanging fruit" in savings has been made during the years of austerity e.g., staffing levels have been halved and redundant buildings have been sold off... I have had some of my road schemes that were due to happen next month cancelled and there is very little drainage budget left for this financial year. Emergency drainage schemes will be prioritised.

OFSTED visited DCC in 2018 and found that some Children's services required improvement. They have recently revisited, and despite a new management structure and many positive changes there is still a lot of work to do e.g. to reduce the backlog of annual assessments

and to improve the timeliness and quality of EHCP's (Education and Health Care Plans). The Interim Deputy Director of Children's Services is working closely with the Parent carer Forum to improve communication and outcomes for the Children and young people. The leadership team has demonstrated to OFSTED that they already have a clear understanding of the weaknesses in the service and how to address these, and that they are already taking steps to deliver improvement.

DCC is struggling to fill vacancies e.g., for Children's social workers, but has recently recruited 20 social workers from abroad- mostly from Zimbabwe.

Because of the housing crisis. DCC having difficulty recruiting staff to many areas of the council e.g., educational psychologists, School nurses, Highways engineers, Community Enforcement officers ("traffic wardens") etc. and is looking at buying or leasing accommodation for new starter key workers. For some posts there is a nationwide shortage of recruits.

DCC has written to Stagecoach, who recently reduced their services again. This resulted in 6 routes for school children in the county being affected. Stagecoach has been struggling since the pandemic, as many of their drivers left to drive HGVs for higher wages. It takes them one minute to lose a driver and 16 weeks to train a new driver. That, the cost of fuel and Covid 19, has impacted their service. They have also loaned at least 29 drivers to help out at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham July 28th until the 8th August to help move the athletes around. However, this kind act is also likely to impact on services in Devon.

As you may remember, after the trial of 20mph was concluded in Newton Abbot, Parishes were invited to submit request for 20mph. There were certain criteria, including schools, hospitals and nurseries being apriority and questions about social deprivation. DCC had planned to role out 10 schemes from the many request that were received. I had applied for 20mph outside ETW school in Alverdiscott road and outside St Marys School in Chanters Road. In both cases this would have involved extending an existing nearby 20mph zone.

As we are an area of High social deprivation, I had high hopes. However, for this financial year those hopes have been dashed. Because of budgetary pressures, DCC is only rolling out 4 schemes across the county at a cost of £100,000. I did stand up at the full council and make the case for Bideford and express my disappointment. I will continue to lobby DCC to make sure these schemes are at the top of the list next time.

After all the gloomy news I am pleased to say the work on the "new" library is underway, and that £1.7million is ringfenced.

I am also within touching distance of getting 5 streetlamps for the top third of Old Barnstaple Road towards Manteo Way. This is a popular cut through to town from the estates on Manteo Way but does not feel very safe in the darker months, as it is pitch black with no footway. The streetlights that I got for Mines Road have made a real difference as I discovered when I walked home from our Jubilee celebrations at Pollyfield.

I am pleased to say that drop-in meetings have now recommenced at Bideford Link Centre. The building is due to have new windows fitted and some essential maintenance done at the end of August, and it has been arranged that the "link" can decamp to DCC's youth club building on the pill, until the work is completed. I am now invited to the management meetings at the Link Centre and very soon service users will be able to have representatives at the meetings to say what sort of groups they would like to see at the Link. Previously they had things like mindfulness, cookery, badminton, and some groups they organised themselves e.g. Music and Gardening. DCC pays for this non statutory mental health service but the Devon Partnership trust (NHS) deliver it. They are currently working with local community groups so that the underused building can become a hub with services that will aid the service user's recovery.

There has been some low-level antisocial behaviour in the Biddiblack way play park and I have approached "Space" who run the DCC youth Club on The Pill if they can do some outreach work up there. In the summer holidays they close the club and do outreach work instead and I am hoping that their management will sign off for the youth workers to cover East the water, including Pollyfield and the railway station.

Wearing my Councillor advocate hat, and also my town council Police liaison hat, I have spoken to our Police Inspector and Police Sergeant about the antisocial behaviour in East the water and particularly at jubilee Square. The Mayor, Cllr Gubb, and I were invited to a team building day with the local police sector, and we discussed these matters at length. The Police work in partnership with TDC to distribute the dispersal orders to those exhibiting antisocial behaviour e.g., drunkenness. This is a civil matter, but they ban people from e.g., the town centre for a set time... If the people come back too soon, they have breached the order. The Police need TDC to support them when people breach the dispersal orders as it then becomes a criminal matter, and they can be charged. Town councillors who are twin hatters might be minded to follow this up with TDC. Of course, we also need services to support e.g., Street drinkers and those with other addictions towards recovery

I have £2000 less Locality money this year, but I have been able to divide the £8000 I do have among local community groups in Bideford and my 6 other parishes.

Routine matters such as potholes, overgrown vegetation, blocked drains and gullies, streetlights, damage to signs, damaged manhole covers etc can be reported via the Devon County Council website [Google Devon County council](https://www.devon.gov.uk) report a problem and a page will come up with icons e.g., potholes. Click on the icon and follow the simple instructions.

Alternatively, you can telephone the customer care team. 0345 155 1015

For Highways telephone 0345 155 1004

Out of Hours highways EMERGENCIES ONLY 01392 380 380 or 0345 155 1008

In the event of flooding the control room number is 01392 383329

Mud or Slurry on the roads and Speeding are Police matters.

You can email 101 from a smart phone, or telephone 101

You may find it quicker to go onto the Devon and Cornwall Police website and use the Live chat facility.

There is also the option to email your local police team.

I am always happy for residents to contact me.

Telephone 07828758360 Email: – linda.hellyer@devon.gov.uk