

BLACK TORRINGTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday 14th January 2015

1 In Attendance: Cllrs. Adams, Down, Nutt, O'Donoghue, Bray, Riches Mills, Roberts (Chair), Cllr. Tabor (TDC) M.Taylor. (Parish Clerk),

2 Apologies for absence: C.Wright

3 Declarations of interest relevant to this agenda: None.

4 Open Session.

Mark James (Community Police Liaison Officer) spoke briefly about a recent burglary and in more detail about a phone scam targeting elderly and vulnerable people resulting in them losing funds. Details of this appeared in the last issue of BT Times (page 32).

Phil Hackett from Sheepwash Parish Council spoke about the proposed flood detection system which has received funding to proceed but only for Dipper Mill Bridge. This restriction is due to funding constraints and a lack of commitment from Sheepwash PC to commit to ongoing maintenance.

The Chairman pointed out that Black Torrington bridge has been the site of several flood related incidents requiring the attendance of the emergency services. Emergency services themselves could be compromised at times of flooding. Black Torrington PC is prepared to maintain the signs at the bridge as the cost is estimated to be approximately £60 once every two years.

The future of the local bus service is under scrutiny and the local parish councils should work together to protect this dwindling facility.

Cllr. Tabor informed the Council that the Transformation Process is making progress and local partnerships are being developed. Apparently services will be covered until 2020 but we are uncertain what this means to us especially in relation to our public toilets. Cllr. Tabor suggested that contingencies for some extra funding be made to cover possible future service cuts. There should be consultations before cuts to services are made. The Holsworthy TDC office will remain open but that in Torrington may well close. Bridge Building in Bideford may close with its services being transferred to Riverbank House.

5 Approval of minutes of 14th November :

These had been circulated prior to the meeting. They were approved unanimously following a proposal from Cllr. Nutt seconded by Cllr. Down.

6 Matters arising from previous minutes:

- *Neighbourhood Watch:* The Clerk to obtain details about registering with the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme before purchasing Neighbourhood Watch Signs.
- *Street lighting times* were clarified by the Highways Department. A petition for all-night lighting is apparently being drawn up for presentation at the next Council

meeting. However as some parishioners may prefer dark skies at night, no decisions will be made until the views of the community are apparent.

- *TaP funds*: Cllr. Adams to purchase bulbs etc. to enhance roadsides. Budget allowance of £150. This will be done in preparation for planting at the appropriate time.

7 Asset Register.

Cllrs. Roberts and Down have carried out a survey of the Council's possessions in preparation for drawing up the Asset Register.

The draft register was presented to the Council and no alterations were necessary. It will now be sent to the insurers for confirmation of insurance cover.

8 Budget preparation.

The current budget details and proposed changes have been circulated to councillors and suggestions incorporated into the draft budget approved in the meeting.

The parish precept has remained constant for several years and in line with other neighbouring parishes it has become necessary to increase the precept especially as TDC may well devolve some of its costs to the local parish councils.

Following a suggestion from Cllr. Adams it was agreed to consider no longer producing the BT Times with a coloured cover, previously paid by sponsorship, as this could save about £600 p.a. Enquiries will be made to discover possible alternative sources of printing and also rates paid by advertisers in similar community newsletters.

If a *Volunteer Advertising and Sponsorship Manager* could be found, the BT Times could earn even more revenue for the community.

The Playing Field Committee submitted a request for a grant of £2000 but as it was considered that the PFC should do more to raise funds the Council agreed to provide £1000.

The Public Toilets may become a parish responsibility but TDC has not made a final decision on the matter of public toilets throughout the district. £1000 was included in the budget for such an eventuality but the overall cost may be in excess of £2000.

The Parish Precept was agreed at £7500. This equates to a Parish Precept of £3.08 per month for an average Band D household.

9 Street Lighting.

Cllr. O'Donoghue suggested that the Council request the Highways Department to arrange for all-night street lighting as this might act as a deterrent to night time crime. Apparently a petition is being arranged which may be presented to the council at its next meeting. Some parishioners however might prefer night time darkness. The matter will be aired in the next BT Times. No request will be forwarded until the views of the community are obtained.

10 Planning.

No new applications received.

11 Playing Field Committee Report.

Average income for the last three years including receipts from the fireworks, share of the fete proceeds, Fun Day, Barclays Matched Funding and other events and donations is £3569. The average expenditure over that period is £3893 which is largely spent on grass cutting, fireworks, playground inspections, membership fees for Playing Fields Association, and incidental repairs.

Consequently the committee is applying to the Parish Council for a grant of £2000-£2500 in order to improve facilities rather than simply maintain them. £1000 was allocated in the draft budget.

The Black Torrington Playing Field Charity (300771) is registered with the Charity Commission which accepts that Black Torrington Parish Council is the only rightful Trustee, the official and only land owner. The Charity Commission does not recognise any of the draft Schemes sent to them dated 2002 and 2003, nor one sent to them in 2013 by the then PFC Committee.

The Playing Field Committee (PFC) is a management sub-committee of the Parish Council developing and maintaining the property on behalf of the Parish.

The PFC will comply with the requirements of the Parish Council Insurance policy especially regarding matters of Health and Safety.

The Fields in Trust (FiT) confirm that the Playing Field is not currently registered as a Queen Elizabeth ii Field.

FiT is working with the Council to endorse the application. Having examined all the legal documents, including the Land registration, and corresponded with the Charity Commission, the PFC is fully satisfied of the legal position as outlined above. The final FIT/QE2 Agreement will be circulated to all Councillors for final comment, prior to its signing.

No further legal or contractual action is required or expected.

All Parish Councillors present accepted their role as Trustees of the Playing Field Charity without comment.

12 Village Hall Report.

The kerbing has been installed and funded. Plan Specification quotations from three structural engineers were presented for the construction of a retaining wall of the car park for when it is extended. The quotation of £380+VAT was accepted as it was significantly lower than the others. Following receipt of the Plan Specifications, quotations from builders will be obtained. Council agreed to accept the cheapest of the three quotations received.

The land on which the Village Hall and Village car park is situated is confirmed as Parish Council registered land.

13 Correspondence:

- Response from Highways re: street lighting times.
- Notice of meeting of Holsworthy Area Advisory Group.

14 Financial Statement and approval of payments.

The Financial Update Statement to 14/1/2015 which had been previously circulated to members was presented and approved.

Current Account holds £3894

Reserve a/c holds £3175.60

15 Items for consideration at the next meeting Wednesday April 8th 2015