

**Minutes of the Black Torrington Parish Council Meeting held on
Wednesday, 9th January 2019, at 7pm, at the Parish Hall**

Present: Cllrs S White (Chair), P Roberts, P Mills, C Lock, E Barns and M Down

In Attendance: Parish Clerk
1 member of the public
District Cllr P Hackett arrived for the end of the meeting

0901/1 To receive and accept apologies.

It was **resolved** to receive and accept apologies from S Floyer & D Haywood,

0901/2 Declarations of interest - None

0901/3 Parish Council Minutes

It was resolved to approve and sign the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 17th November 2018, as a correct record.

0901/4 Matters Arising

Cllr White reported that he had given £20 and some biscuits as thanks to the parishioner whom allowed the Parish Council to connect to his power supply for the parish Christmas tree. Cllr Mills generously donated the tree. Everyone agreed the tree looked splendid when lit up at night. The site would support a bigger tree if such a tree were wanted in years to come.

A meeting needs to be arranged between representatives of Halwill Community Emergency Plan and interested parties from Black Torrington. A post will be put on the Black Torrington Facebook page to encourage people to participate.

The Village Hall Committee are willing to contribute financially to the overflow car park.

It was resolved at the November 17th 2018 meeting to award a grant of £500 to the Friends of Blake House Surgery for their lift appeal. However, the lift appeal is no longer accepting moneys towards the lift appeal and has advertised that sufficient money has been raised. It is not clear if they are counting money that has been promised, in which case they will still need the Parish Council's £500 grant, or whether they already have sufficient funds banked. The Parish Council will seek clarification from the Friends of Blake House.

The Clerk informed the meeting that the Reforge Retreat signs were a matter for planning enforcement rather than Highways. The Clerk was asked to report the signs to Torridge District Council planning enforcement.

0901/5 Order of Business - No change

0901/6 Public Question Time

Standing orders were suspended to allow the public to speak.

David Illman has opened an official complaint against Torridge District Council as he is not satisfied with their handling of the rat problem in the village. He has written many emails to the Parish Council and Torridge District Council. The rats

are currently in abeyance but he feels they will come back if preventative action is not taken.

Cllr White will remind parishioners to be vigilant in the next issue of the BT Times.

Cllr Roberts stated that there will be rats in the countryside that will move back to the villages in spring, all people can do is control them not eradicate them.

Cllr White reminded Mr Illman that the Parish Council has no statutory power in this matter.

Standing orders were reinstated.

0901/7 Councillor Reports -

Ward Cllr Hackett gave a report on “the Retreat”. They paid the fine for breach of planning enforcement and continue to live there.

0901/8 Chairman’s and Clerk’s Announcements

The Clerk reported that DCC had been carrying out random inspections of people’s black rubbish bags to see how much potentially recyclable waste was being sent to landfill.

0901/9 Accounts Due for Payment and Receipts - To examine and agree the accounts due for payment, receipts, and bank transfers for the period 20th November 2018 to 9th January 2019 inclusive and to receive the bank reconciliation.

A bank reconciliation was circulated before the meeting and is appended to these minutes.

Accounts approved for payment -

Date	Payee	Amount ex VAT	Amount inc VAT	For what
09/01/19	D C Osborne	£50.00	£50.00	Parish map frame
08/12/18	Parish Magazine Printing	£233.30	£233.30	Parish magazine printing
09/01/19	S White	£43.99	£43.99	Expenses relating to Christmas tree

Current Account Total For month inc VAT: £327.29

Current Account Total for month ex VAT £327.29

Current Account VAT Total for month: £0

0901/10 Budget

a) Review - To review the budget for the year to date.

A budget year to date sheet was circulated (appended). Many of the figure are estimates as no formal budget has been found.

b) To agree a budget for the financial year 2019/2020

A proposed budget based on best estimates was circulated before the meeting and is appended to these minutes.

It was **resolved** to adopt the Proposed budget.

c) To agree a precept demand for the financial year 2019/2020

The Parish Council has some ongoing projects which might be rather costly and with potential sources of funding being few and far between in these uncertain times, it was agreed to continue to build reserves into the precept request. It was **resolved** to make a precept demand of £10,123 of Torridge District Council.

0901/11 To receive a report from the Village Hall Committee.

The Bingo went well.

0901/12 Overflow car park

We are still waiting for a quote or estimate for the work to be done. Until a quote has been received it is a little tricky to make progress.

0901/13 Black Torrington Playing Field

a. To receive a report from the Playing Field Committee

The Christmas songs on the 16th December made £80. The next event will be a pasty or pie-fest.

b. Progress on new children's play equipment

The finalised play equipment order has placed. A cheque for £7,063 from the Playing Field Committee for its contribution to the new playing equipment has been promised [has now been received cashed – Clerk]. Groundworks cannot be started until the ground has dried out a little.

c. Progress towards clarifying the status of the Playing Field Committee.

There is a need to unambiguously “future proof” relations between the Parish Council and the Playing Field Committee (PFC). A draft constitution for the PFC was circulated before the meeting. It sets out the areas of interest of the PFC and formalises their status as an executive committee of the Parish Council. The PFC needs to discuss the document.

There should be progress towards a final document by the March meeting of the Parish Council.

d. To clarify the legal position of dogs on the playing fields and consider a proposal of Guidelines for dog owners using the playing fields

Parish Councils no longer have powers to make bye-laws relating to dog control. Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Orders were introduced by Torridge District Council in April 2018 to replace the existing Dog Control Orders. The Order requires all dog owners to pick up and remove their dog's faeces and keep their dog on a lead in prescribed areas or when directed to do so by an authorised person. They also define certain areas from which dogs are banned at all times, Black Torrington Playing Field is not one of them. The maximum fine for breaching the Order is £1,000.

Although it is not an offence to put up “No dogs” signs on the Playing Fields it is not actually enforceable. Cllr Down expressed his opposition to dogs on the playing field. The PFC has historically been opposed to dogs on the playing field as it poses a potential risk to children. Dogs are permitted on the path. Cllr Down felt that there were plenty of places to walk a dog without using the playing field. Although he acknowledged that the Parish Council or the

Playing Field Committee may not be able to enforce a dog exclusion notice it would still be worth putting one up as a deterrent. Even if picked up dog faeces present a health risk to children.

Cllr White thought the playing fields should be for the use of everyone including those who wanted to walk their dogs. He felt there is not currently a problem with dog fouling.

Currently most people confine their dogs to the path, few allow dogs onto the playing fields.

A draft wording for signs was circulated by Cllr White before the meeting. Cllr Roberts thought the guidelines should emphasise the point that there is a potential £1,000 fine for allowing dogs to foul public areas and people should be encouraged to report incidents to the clerk or the dog warden

Cllr White suggested an additional dog bin and a bag dispenser should be provided. Cllr Lock thought there used to be a problem with dog fouling in the past and would not like it to become one again.

Cllr Roberts thought a decision should be deferred to allow time for the wording of any policy sign to be refined.

The Clerk was asked to ask Torridge District Council for dog signs.

Deferred until next meeting.

0901/14 To discuss the Black Torrington Times Newsletter, including its future production, editing, advertising and delivery. To consider a proposal to stop hand delivering to every household outside the village of Black Torrington but instead to provide waterproof magazine dispensers to hold copies for outlying areas.

No one has yet agreed to take on responsibility for advertising. The BT times should be self-financing. It costs £233 an issue to print but that is more than covered by advertising.

Cllr White wondered if it would be worth paying a small remuneration to encourage someone to take on the advertising role.

M Floyer is currently co-editor but will take over as editor. He will liaise with Ben Garret for production.

Cllr Roberts thought the biggest problem was with distribution. It takes up to 2 hours to deliver to Chilla, for that chaps that is. The Parish Council restated its aim to deliver a copy to all households in the parish. The idea of a self-service bin was not popular.

Cllr Roberts suggested a small payment for delivery to the outlying areas could be warranted, perhaps £40. The Clerk was concerned about employers' liabilities. He will check. It would be better done by volunteers.

Cllr White thought something should be put in the next issue of the BT Times to try and get people interested in distribution. Cllr Mills volunteered to write an article or advert for the BT Times.

0901/15 Communities Together Fund (formerly TAP fund)

Nothing has been heard from Ashwater PC

0901/16 Police Report

The police were not in attendance. A written report was circulated before the meeting. (Appended)

- 0901/17** **To receive an update on rats in the village.**
Covered in public question time. Ward Cllr Hackett thought any correspondence between Mr Illman and the Parish Council or the District Council is in the public domain so can be printed. He cautioned about how things were phrased in the BT Times as it could give a negative impression of the village and there could be liability if the Parish Council gives advice.
- 0901/18** **Torrige District Council - Planning Applications**
None received
- 0901/19** **Torrige District Council - Planning Decisions**
Noted
- 0901/20** **To note March 6th as the date of the next meeting**
Duly Noted
- 0901/21** **Close**