

PRESENT:

North Ward:

Councillor P S Christie
Councillor D Bushby
Councillor T Johns

South Ward:

Councillor Mrs S Langford
Councillor P Lawrence
Councillor S Inch

West Ward:

Councillor C Hawkins

East Ward

Councillor Mrs J Gubb (Town Mayor)
Councillor Mrs R Craigie
Councillor Mrs L Hellyer
Councillor J McKenzie

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs H Blackburn (Town Clerk)
Mrs L Dixon-Chatfield (Asst to Town Clerk)
Cllr J Wilton-Love (DCC)
Mr R Glover -Victoria Park Community Group
Rev. K Beer

022. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor D Ratcliff (West Ward) – personal.
Councillor Mrs K Corfe (West Ward) – personal.
Cllr J Craigie (East Ward) – personal
Cllr J Herron (West Ward) – personal

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

Councillor P Christie declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 20 (Trustee, Bridge Trust).

024. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION OF 15 MINUTES DURATION

No members of the public were present.

025. MINUTES

Councillor Inch drew attention to the attendees list, pointing out that there were not 6 members of the public or 6 members of the Press present, but only 1 of each.

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 May 2022 were approved as a correct record.

(Vote – For: 10, Against: 0, Abstentions: 1)

026. ACCOUNTS

It was proposed by Councillor McKenzie and seconded by Councillor Hawkins, and

RESOLVED: That the List of Payments be approved.

(Vote – For: 11, Against: 0)

027. TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2022

It was proposed by Councillor Bushby, seconded by Councillor Mrs Langford, and

RESOLVED: That the Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31st March 2022 is approved.

(Vote – For: 11, Against: 0)

028. TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE THE ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS WITH THE ANNUAL RETURN FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2022

It was proposed by Councillor Inch, seconded by Councillor Mrs Langford, and

RESOLVED: That the Accounting Statements with the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2022 is approved.

(Vote – For: 11, Against: 0)

029. DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (COUNCILLOR) REPORT

The Chairman invited Councillor J Wilton-Love to give his report. A written report had been circulated to members, and forms part of these minutes.

Councillor Wilton-Love opened by congratulating Councillors Mrs Gubb and McKenzie on their roles as Mayor and Deputy Mayor, respectively.

He had two items to add since sending his report through:

1. A car parked on the pavement in Ford Rise has been there some time. He has investigated the vehicle and found that it has outstanding parking tickets. It is a relatively new white Mercedes Benz, which may be still owned by a finance company. He is continuing with the investigation in order to get it moved.
2. A water leak in Clovelly Road is being investigated but needs to be reported in order for it to go to the top of the priority works list.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Wilton-Love and asked if members had any questions. No members came forward.

Councillor Wilton-Love thanked members and gave leave of the meeting.

030. TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION FROM VICTORIA PARK COMMUNITY GROUP

The Chairman explained to members that details of this item had been emailed to them. She invited Mr Glover to address the meeting.

Mr Glover endorsed the report he had sent for members and explained that having been born and brought up in Bideford he had, over the years noticed the lack of play equipment in Victoria Park. This had compelled him to get involved in addressing the issue.

He had further noticed that not only was there generally a lack of equipment but also that there was very little (if any) for children with special needs. He had conducted a survey from which he had received great response and had moved on to seek quotes for a completely new play area. Quotes had been received in excess of £400,000.

Mr Glover questioned that, with more housing projects coming into Bideford, the funding that comes with them could be used for Play Equipment in the Park. He added that Victoria Park had always been a great asset to Bideford, but he had noticed that fewer people were visiting the Town to use it and he felt that this showed that the Play area was becoming unfit for purpose. He had been disappointed in the results from Torridge District Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (June 2022 meeting) when it was decided that the Play Equipment would not be considered until next year at the earliest. Mr Glover had considered that other works that the Authority had carried out had not necessarily had the urgency that the Play Equipment warranted.

Mr Glover concluded by asking members for their support in his efforts to come to a workable solution to this issue, adding that Victoria Park has always been regarded as a jewel in Torridge District Council's crown and deserved better Play Equipment than it currently has.

The Chairman thanked Mr Glover and invited questions from members.

Councillor Mrs Craigie asked if the quote received included renewing the Park footpaths, Mr Glover responded in the negative, explaining that the costs involved the groundworks and equipment. He added that the Fort was not fit for purpose, and he had received a quote for refurbishing it but the Authority had rejected this move – he considered that refurbishing the Fort would not future-proof it.

Councillor Mrs Craigie expressed her admiration for Mr Glover's efforts and added that money from this Council had been pledged, as well as funding for a disabled swing, neither of which has been used. She thanked Mr Glover for bringing the plight of the Play Equipment to the fore.

Mr Glover advised more and more of the Play Area is being closed off and, in his opinion, was a potential disaster waiting to happen. His extensive knowledge of commercial insurance (having worked in the industry for many years) showed his that there are dangers looming with the high volume of low frequency repair work to equipment. He further questioned the Maintenance Budget set by Torridge District Council for repairs which has not been used for quite some time and is only now being used, he considered where those funds had been used.

Councillor Mrs Langford congratulated Mr Glover on his efforts and expressed her 110% support. She explained that some funding is being used on Play Equipment in various places but that some decisions by the Authority were not supported.

Councillor Mrs Hellyer expressed her disappointment that so much Authority money had been wasted on Play Equipment consultancy in the area and then no upgrades had gone forward. She pointed out that deprivation is high in Bideford and the Park provides free outdoor space for families. She gave her support to Mr Glover and offered to help where she could.

Councillor Christie explained that the Town Council had offered £25,000 and the Bridge Trust had matched that figure, three years since. That funding was probably worth more than, than is today! He further explained that 106 monies from housing developments was for play areas on those developments and, unfortunately, not for Victoria Park.

The Bridge Trust, Councillor Christie reported, would not put any funding in until Torridge District Council commit to the project. He further noted that the Authority could be selling assets, and that Town Councillors who were Torridge Councillors would need to move on these sales. He did point out, however, that monies from these assets are for the whole of Torridge and, with 36 Authority Councillors, not all of them agree to Bideford receiving benefit from those sales.

He asked Mr Glover if he had applied for any national funding. Mr Glover explained that he had tried but recently most funding had been transferred to Covid related projects and also some Nationals were not interested as the Park is owned by a Council.

Councillor Bushy thanked Mr Glover for being the public face for the Play Equipment in the Park. As Chairman of Torridge District Council, he felt embarrassed to hear his fellow Councillor's frustrations and assured Mr Glover that he has made his feelings known and has questioned some of the spend. He would speak with the Chief Executive and the Head of Communities and Place to explain the situation as forcibly as he could. He would further suggest to them that the plan as shown is done in sections. He advised Mr Glover to accept a phased approach if that is what is offered. He congratulated Mr Glover on bringing the issue to this Council and assured him of his 100% support.

Mr Glover concluded by pointing out that any delay will result in increased costs in the future, and, in his opinion, any delay would be negligence.

He thanked the Council for their time and added that he was heartened by their support.

Mr Glover gave leave of the meeting.

31. TO RECEIVE THE RESPONSE FROM TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL REGARDING VICTORIA PARK AND TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL'S PLAY STRATEGY

Members noted the response.

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

The Chairman thanked those members who had supported her at the Mayor's Introduction and at the Parade.

The Town Clerk advised:

That Woolacott's would be installing the Conferencing/Presentation equipment into the Council Chamber on Wednesday 29th June 2022 and thanked Councillor Hawkins for identifying the equipment needed. She advised that Councillor Hawkins would be in attendance during the installation in order to see how everything worked.

Councillor Bushby wished to respond to the Chairman's thanks regarding the Mayor's Introduction and Parade. In particular he wished to point out that this Council has 16 Councillor but only 6 joined in with the Mayor's Parade. Whilst he wished not to criticise, Councillor Bushby felt that when there is a Civic event it should be the duty of Councillors to support it.

033. MARKET MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26th May 2022 were approved and adopted.

(Vote – For: 10, Against: 0, Abstentions: 1)

034. PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

The Minutes of the meetings held on 1st and 22nd June 2022 were approved and adopted.

Councillor Christie, Chairman of Planning wished to thank the Admin Assistant for completing the minutes in time for this meeting.

(Vote – For: 11, Against: 0)

035. TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14th June 2022 were approved and adopted.

(Vote – For: 11, Against: 0)

036. STAFFING, FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 16th June 2022 were approved and adopted.

(Vote – For: 11, Against: 0)

037. PUBLIC WORKS LOAN BOARD

Members had received a Report and Business Case, both of which form part of these minutes.

[Please click here to access the Report and Business Case documents](#) 

The Chairman invited Councillor Bushby, as Chairman of SFGP, to explain.

Councillor Bushby invited members to ask any questions as he went through the various points of the project. He began by explaining that the project had been previously agreed by members unanimously, at Staffing Finance and General Purposes, and from that he, together with the Town Clerk and Maintenance Supervisor, had undertaken talks and meetings with the works contractors.

Councillor Bushby outlined the following points:

That the loan can be repaid quicker than outlined and that this would be advantageous if possible.

That it is essential to seek approval to apply for a Public Works Loan (PWL) and to do this a budget for the current year and draft budget for 2023/2024 needs to be submitted (this is included in the documents circulated to members).

That Planning permission should be straight forward as this had previously been granted on this piece of land. And this needs to be done before applying for the PWL.

A design and build plan will be drawn up before the Planning Pre-meeting and this also needs to be done before applying for the PWL.

Councillor Bushby wished to remind members that the Maintenance Team is a very valuable resource of this Council and that the Maintenance building would be a real asset and stand-out facility.

The Town Clerk thanked Councillor Bushby and added that this item needed the three sections, a, b, and c, to be voted for individually.

Councillor Christie was in favour of the project but enquired as to whether it was necessary to have a consultation to increase the Precept.

The Town Clerk explained that it is part of the PWL conditions and that in order to do this the minutes and Business case would be published on the Council website, and there would be notification published in the Link magazine as well as on social media platforms.

Councillor Christie requested clarification of the quote for £352,000 as it was noted that the price was not guaranteed.

Councillor Bushby had met with the contractors a few weeks ago and discussed this with them. They had assured him that as they would be doing all the works themselves the increase in the costs would be small.

Councillor Bushby concluded that the space the facility provided would lend itself to renting to another/other Town/Parish Council Maintenance Teams. He added that a mezzanine floor would be created to provide space for offices if the need arose at any time in the future.

The Chairman asked members to vote on the three points within this item:

Proposed by Councillor Bushby, seconded by Councillor Mrs Langford, and

RESOLVED: That the approval of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government is sought to apply for a PWLB loan of £500,000 over the borrowing term of 25 years for the purpose of building a Maintenance Team Depot. The annual loan repayments will come to approximately £30,228.

(Vote – For: 11, Against: 0)

Proposed by Councillor Bushby, seconded by Councillor Mrs Langford, and

RESOLVED: that the council tax precept is increased from 2023 for the purpose of the loan repayments by 2.7% which is the equivalent of an additional £2.73 a year on a Band D property. (A consultation via the website, social media, published minutes and the Link magazine with be held on the proposed precept increase.)

(Vote – For: 11, Against: 0)

Proposed by Councillor Bushby, seconded by Councillor Mrs Langford, and

RESOLVED: To apply for Planning permission to build a depot for the Maintenance Team on the land identified at Caddsdwn.

(Vote – For: 11, Against: 0)

38. TO RECEIVE THE RESIGNATION OF COUNCILLOR MRS CORFE FROM COMMITTES AND TO NOMINATE REPLACEMENT COUNCILLORS

Councillor Mrs Corfe had resigned from the following Committees:

Tourism:

It was proposed by Councillor McKenzie, seconded and

RESOLVED: That Councillor Inch is the replacement member for the Tourism Committee.

(Vote – For: 11, Against: 0)

Staffing, Finance and General Purposes:

It was proposed by Councillor McKenzie, seconded and

RESOLVED: That Councillor Hawkins is the replacement member for the SFGP Committee.

(Vote – For: 11, Against: 0)

Planning:

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Hellyer, seconded and

RESOLVED: That Councillor Johns is the replacement member for the Planning Committee

(Vote – For: 11, Against: 0)

Councillor Inch asked about the Standing Order stating that all Councillors must sit on at least one Committee. The Town Clerk explained that this had previously been the case, but that it was not part of the current Standing Orders which are based on the model NALC Standing Orders. She said that this requirement could be revisited when the Standing Orders are next reviewed.

Bideford Town Centre Partnership:

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Gubb, seconded and

RESOLVED: That Councillor Mrs Gubb is the replacement member for the Bideford Town Centre Partnership.

(Vote – For: 11, Against: 0)

039. TO CONFIRM THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE TOURISM COMMITTEE

Deferred from the Town Council meeting of 12th May 2022, the Tourism Committee currently consists of: Councillors, Mrs J Gubb, Mrs S Langford, Mrs K Corfe, D Bushby, C Hawkins, P Lawrence. Members agreed that this had been resolved in item 038 of these minutes.

040. TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL – UPDATE

Councillor Bushby advised that a bid had been submitted for funding for Appledore Clean Maritime Innovation Centre. This would be situated in Appledore Middle Dock and would be looking at ways to address alternative forms of energy.

Councillor Christie reported that the proposed development for Badgers Hill Wood was voted against by Torridge District Council’s Plans Committee and that the developers would be taking the decision to a Public Appeal which was anticipated to take a week.

Councillor Christie reminded members of the second-hand Van Sales site along New Road (just after the Wooda Apartments) and that it was often complained about, many times by this Council. He has recently, to his dismay, discovered that the site has a historical planning application in for more than 140 flats. He has pointed out to the new Head of Planning at the Authority, that this has at no time been put to this Council for consultation. He would keep members apprised of the situation.

Councillor Inch reported that he was somewhat disgusted that when he visited a family grave on the Saturday prior to Father’s Day at the Cemetery that the grass had still not been cut. He had mentioned this previously. He had to take garden tools to clear the grass from the headstone.

Councillor Christie noted this and would raise the subject.

Councillor Bushby explained that since the newly formed Torridge District Council Maintenance Team had taken on the contractor’s tasks, there was, understandably, a backlog of works to be completed. He assured members that the work would be completed and would raise it with the relevant department at the Authority.

Councillor Mrs Hellyer had discovered that parents/grandparents are now allowed to watch their children/grandchildren during their swimming lessons at the Swimming Pool but that it has to be on a rota basis. She considered this to be a very odd approach.

The Chairman thanked Councillors for their updates.

041. BRIDGE TRUST

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

The Chairman thanked Councillor Christie for his update.

The business of the meeting having been completed, the Mayor thanked the members for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 7.53 pm.

	FV NO		ALLOCATION	VAT	NET	TOTAL
1	23/06	Petty Cash	R Coombes		29.54	29.54
2	28/06	Graham Hobbs	Mayor Introduction Parade 12 June 2022 - to be drawn from Mayor's Allowance		20.00	20.00
3	28/06	Blights	Fuel	40.50	202.50	243.00
4	28/06	Nick Sampson Mech Eng Servs	Transport Planters: Handy Cross Site - Bideford Quay	90.00	450.00	540.00
5	28/06	SLCC	Arnold-Baker on Local Council Administration - 12th Edition	0.80	141.00	141.80
6	28/06	RGB	Maintenance Items	3.49	17.47	20.96
7	28/06	Tamar Trading	Maintenance Items	9.04	45.19	54.23
8	28/06	Acorn	Seasonal worker	61.74	308.70	370.44
9	CC08	Pronet Abrasives Ltd	Replacement backing pad x 2 for Makita	2.66	13.32	15.98
				208.23	1,227.72	1,435.95
			Bank Balances at 22 Jun 22 - Current Account	29,232.88		
			Bank Balances at 22 Jun 22 - Deposit Account	490,000.00		

Report Councillor J Wilton Love – Bideford for 23/06/2022

Highways:

- We are experiencing supply chain issues with Highways which is having a knock-on effect of raising costs, I won't pretend this isn't going to have an effect, but we are working to make it as negligible as possible. What that means in real terms is difficult to gauge right now but I can assure everyone we are working as hard and fast as possible.
- After consultation with the Highways Officer, I can confirm that work in Bideford is going to be prioritised looking ahead. As I get confirmations on works to be undertaken, I will pass them on. We have discussed several sites already.
- The footpath from B&M that was requested cannot be placed in the position it was wanted as there isn't enough road to facilitate it unfortunately. The reason there isn't a path there is because the land is privately owned and going out another 1.5m out would make the carriageway too small. There are crossing points for this reason.
- The road markings on Clovelly Road have been listed as requiring replacing.
- The junction at Affinity Outlet is scheduled for a Safety Audit. Given the small number of very minor accidents at this place and, indeed, the positioning and causes of them it would not usually be looked at, but I have requested it as I do tend to agree on the positioning of the lights seems to be causing confusion.
- Cllr Inch and I have been in consultation about the traffic issues at West Croft School. I have had enforcement attend but the offenders simply drive off and then return the next day. I was considering how we try to re-educate people into not parking in the restricted areas with information passed from the school. Cllr Inch has suggested something that worked very well at Park School which is signs put out by the Caretaker at drop off and pick up times physically restricting the problem. I have to say I support this; it seems like an excellent idea. We need to change behaviour and that will possibly be a very effective way of doing it. I had cones put in Abbotsham to stop people parking on both sides of the road as you drive through and it seems to have had the desired effect there, people don't do it anymore and from my understanding it was successful at Park School. I want to resolve that issue; I understand it has been long standing. I have considered attending myself and talking to people too.

SEND Task Group

We have received feedback from an excellent cross section and seem to be making some real progress with identifying the problems in the specific areas. This is a huge piece of work that both Cllr Hellyer and myself are a part of. It has taken time to collate everything needed to identify where the issues are, but we are getting there now, and I would hope by my next address to you we will have made some real, positive leaps forwards. I believe it has suffered from systemic issues and the way to put it right is to address them. There is definitely more to come on this, but I want to assure you it is in hand.

Cllr Jeff Wilton-Love