

PRESENT:

North Ward:

Councillor D Bushby  
Councillor P S Christie  
Councillor J Herron  
Councillor T Johns

South Ward:

Councillor S Inch  
Councillor Mrs S Langford  
Councillor P Lawrence

West Ward:

Councillor Mrs K A Corfe  
Councillor C Hawkins

East Ward

Councillor J A Craigie  
Councillor Mrs R M Craigie  
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)  
Mr B Hopkins

Prior to the start of the Meeting the Chairman led the Chamber in two minute's silence to respect the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

58. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor D Ratcliff (West Ward – illness).

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

Councillor P Christie declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 17 (Trustee, Bridge Trust).

60. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION OF 15 MINUTES DURATION

There was no public participation.

61. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 August 2022 were approved as a correct record.

(Vote – For: 13, Abstention: 1, Against: 0)

62. ACCOUNTS

It was proposed by Councillor Bushby, seconded and

RESOLVED: That the List of Payments be approved.

(Vote – For: 14, Against: 0)

### 63. DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (COUNCILLOR) REPORT

In the absence of a report from Councillor Wilton-Love, Councillor Mrs Hellyer simply advised that repairs will be affected to the Long Bridge this month.

Councillor Inch expressed disappointment at the non-attendance of Councillor Wilton-Love believing that where a DCC councillor is unable to attend a scheduled meeting then a written report should be provided.

He indicated that he had wished to raise concerns with Councillor Wilton-Love about cuts to Stage Coach services.

Councillor Mrs Hellyer advised that the cuts were mainly in the Exeter area. There had been meetings with DCC regarding delivery and performance. Stage Coach are experiencing a driver shortage; post pandemic many drivers had their heads turned by lucrative driving offers elsewhere, given their qualifications. She intimated that it takes a minute to lose a driver but sixteen weeks to train them.

Councillor Mrs Hellyer confirmed that Bideford was not affected by the cuts to Devon services.

Upon questioning she explained that the Long Bridge had been "hit with force," bricks that had been knocked into the river had been retrieved. There was no CCTV footage resulting in no claim against the perpetrator.

Councillor Lawrence advised that he had read on social media that there were changes to the Bideford timetable for the 75 and 75a services. Councillor Mrs Hellyer identified that they were Torrington routes.

### 64. COMMUNITY ENERGY PRESENTATION

a. The Chairman welcomed Mr Hopkins to the Meeting and invited him to address the Chamber.

b. Mr Hopkins read from a written report, which is enclosed and forms part of these Minutes, that had previously been distributed to Members.

c. Councillor J Craigie, Chairman of the Decarbonisation and Environment Committee, thanked Mr Hopkins noting that in 2013, the Pannier Market hosted the first Energy Fair in North Devon.

He spoke of the challenges and frustrations faced in moving forward the Climate agenda. There had been issues with a billing system, for Community Energy, where the recognised provider had removed the offer. Planning constraints for on shore Wind Farms. On a more local level Western Power Distribution would only allow one roof area of the Pannier Market for solar panelling where several could be used. The funding of the Green Garden Project by TDC, through Lottery Funding, precluded other applications to the fund for other initiatives.

In referring to Plymouth University's "Net Carbon Vision" art project he had personally invested a great deal of time in the Project, had been promised a Bideford result yet a South Devon community reaped the rewards. He concluded that the smaller towns were frustrated by the actions of the larger authorities but noted that DCC were doing the best in accessing funding resources.

He indicated that the Decarbonisation and Energy Committee would consider membership to Community Energy England and funding for a Community Champion.

Councillor Christie noted, with concern, that the contract of the Climate Action Officer, engaged jointly by Torridge District and North Devon Councils, was coming to an end.

He confirmed that the Local Plan, currently being considered, does not allow for onshore wind farms.

Councillor Christie welcomed Central Government's indication that those people affected by fracking should be compensated (and the wider implication).

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

The Mayor advised that the Chairman of the East-the-Water School Governors has extended an invitation to Members to join the Board of Governors; there are three vacancies. Any councillor who would like to take up the offer should advise the Mayor.

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

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 September 2022 were deferred until the following Meeting of the Town Council (3 November 2022).

### 67. MARKET MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 August 2022 were approved and adopted.

(Vote – For: 12, Against: 0, Abstention: 2)

68. PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 August 2022 were approved and adopted.

(Vote – For: 14, Against: 0)

69. TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 September 2022 were approved and adopted.

(Vote – For: 14, Against: 0)

Councillor McKenzie had been given to understand that the Picnic had been a very good event.

70. ALLOTMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 September 2022 approved and adopted.

(Vote – For: 13, Against: 1)

71. BIDEFORD TOWN CENTRE PARTNERSHIP (BTCP)

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 September 2022 were received.

Councillor McKenzie noted that the BTCP was “holding” £6,000 from the former Chamber of Commerce. He asked if the £2,000 given to the Chamber by the Council had been used.

72. BIDEFORD – 450TH ANNIVERSARY

Councillor Christie noted that the Town Hall plaque unveiled by Councillor Hill, marks the Royal Charter, 1573 which was obtained for Bideford by Sir Richard Grenville from Queen Elizabeth I, creating Bideford as a borough with the power to elect a mayor

December 2023 will mark the 450 years from the first Mayor.

He believed that it was an important event albeit to be celebrated with a new Council.

Councillor Christie suggested that records from each century could be displayed.

He invited Members to consider how the Event could be commemorated requesting that the initiative becomes a standing Agenda item.

The Chairman indicated that the Tourism Committee could assist.

73. COST OF LIVING CRISIS – SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

Councillors Christie, Mrs Corfe and Hawkins recently attended a One Northern Devon Crisis Meeting.

Councillor Christie felt that it had been an interesting meeting with an eclectic Committee drawn from different areas including mental health professionals.

A further “hybrid” discussion Meeting (attendance / zoom) would be held on Wednesday 28 September 2022; nothing practical had been established, as yet.

The Clerk advised that TTVS had been in touch and should like to address the Council in due course.

74. TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL – UPDATE

Councillor Bushby spoke about Brunswick Wharf:

- suggestion of delays

o not caused by TDC inertia

- Government funded grant staged payments in place
- o to be administered by TDC within strictures.

Councillor Christie advised that TDC do not have any real ideas for the future of the Library and that they will only consider economically viable suggestions; the building is not in great condition.

## 75. BRIDGE TRUST

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

He advised that the Trust have a new Steward.

The business of the meeting having been completed, the Mayor thanked the members for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 7.40 pm.

**BIDEFORD TOWN COUNCIL - Accounts for approval at the Town Council Meeting - 27 September 2022**

FY NO	ALLOCATION	YAI	NET	TOTAL
1	6783 R Coombes		128.57	128.57
2	12/9 Acorn	41.16	205.80	246.96
3	16/9 R.A Yates		360.00	360.00
4	16/9 M.S Auto Repairs	25.52	162.62	188.14
5	16/9 Acorn	61.74	308.70	370.44
6	16/9 HMKC		4,216.86	4,216.86
7	22/9 Acorn	61.74	308.70	370.44
8	22/9 Advanced Pallets	7.20	26.00	33.20
9	23/9 Council Staff & DCC Pension Fund Salary and Pension Fund (Sep 22)		16,727.05	16,727.05
10	23/9 Councillors		4,730.80	4,730.80
11	28/9 James Hallam Ltd		1,033.00	1,033.00
12	30/9 Robeda	8.24	41.19	49.43
13	30/9 RGB	7.44	37.18	44.62
14	30/9 Jewson	0.52	2.38	3.10
15	30/9 Tamar Trading	11.47	57.37	68.84
16	30/9 Blights	90.96	454.86	545.82
17	30/9 R.Wooldridge		165.00	165.00
18	30/9 Holsworthy Town Council		80.00	80.00
19	30/9 PKF Littlejohn	260.00	1,300.00	1,560.00
20	DD BT	41.86	209.29	251.15
21	CC10 Microsoft	13.33	66.66	79.99
22	DC22 Mow It	14.47	72.38	86.85
		<b>645.65</b>	<b>31,004.61</b>	<b>31,650.26</b>
	Bank Balances at 27 Sep 22		- Current Account	<b>20,536.68</b>
	Bank Balances at 27 Sep 22		- Deposit Account	<b>371,900.00</b>

## Minute Number 64.

Mr B Hopkins

### COMMUNITY ENERGY PRESENTATION

1) I became interested in this subject when the energy crisis started last autumn. I found that the people around me did not know very much but I had the time to put to study it. I soon realised that St Mary's Church would have to replace it's gas heating system, which was costing £1,200 a month to use in the winter. This could treble in cost!! I have attended many Zoom meetings and webinars and conferences. My career was with the Milk Marketing Board, largely in North Devon as a Farm Business Management Consultant. I also spent many years in Bideford Round Table, Rotary, TVS and TTVS over 25 years.

2) We have a lot of south facing roof space at the church to generate electricity, but it would be generated in the summer days and needed to be used in the winter. It looked as though we could sell it at 7 pence a unit and then buy it back at 30 pence a unit. That is what made me start to enquire about community energy. I contacted Wadebridge and they told me that the market place has changed considerably since they started work in 2010. I started to enquire about what was happening in Northern Devon and soon found direction to Cllr. James Craigie. He put me onto 361Energy and Donna Sibley at Torridge District Council. There has been a lot of work done by the local councils and there are also a large number of planned projects, which will bring renewable energy into Northern Devon, via Alverdiscott. In the market there is no such thing as a green energy supply to a purchaser because all electricity flows through the National Grid without distinction from the source.

### 3) WHAT IS COMMUNITY ENERGY?

Community energy refers to the delivery of community-led renewable energy, energy demand reduction and energy supply projects, whether wholly owned and/or controlled by communities or through a partnership with commercial or public sector partners.

Onshore renewables could boost UK economy by £28.9bn by 2035.

(Community Energy England)

Most experts believe that onshore wind is the cheapest and most reliable source of green energy because it is not reliant on daylight. There has been a lot of objections to onshore wind development by people with little understanding of climate emergency so government is opting for offshore wind, which is relatively expensive.

4) We must be 100% sure that we are right before we make a decision. We must know the TRUTH.

## 5) Bristol Energy

Bristol Energy is forging ahead with its plan to create a sustainable energy company with social value at its heart. From local job creation to staff volunteer days, carbon reduction activities and well-being initiatives, such as training mental health first aiders, Bristol Energy has put an estimated £6.8m of social value back into Bristol.

This is done in co-operation with Thrive Renewables.

“We believe in a clean, smart energy system, powered by the investment of many, which is why we get so inspired by community groups building their own renewable energy projects. For example, we recently teamed up with Ambition Community Energy to get the tallest wind turbine in the country built in our home town of Bristol. And best bit of all? It’s 100% community owned”.

We provided a £4 million funding bridge to get this brilliant community initiative into construction, with groundwork starting imminently and the commissioning of the turbine expected in Spring 2023. With a capacity of 4.2 MW, the 115-metre diameter, 150-metre tip height turbine will be capable of generating enough power for close to 3,000 homes – the equivalent to Lawrence Weston’s domestic use – and will save almost 120,000 tonnes of carbon emissions over its lifetime.

It will also provide a new revenue stream for the local community in Lawrence Weston, with all profits from electricity sales being reinvested back into the area, acting as a driver for regeneration. And the benefits don’t stop there. The group plan to build an Energy Learning Zone to inspire young people and provide training to upskill residents for the zero carbon jobs of the future.

## 6) WESTMILL CO-OP

This is a wind farm in Oxfordshire which is owned by its community by public subscription.

Some of the directors of this co-op are local councillors. Others are experts in energy matters and communications. This is similar to the Wadebridge Renewable Energy Network, which was set up in 2009 with public subscription from 30% of the people of Wadebridge. The market place is different in 2022 so that model does not receive the same subsidies. But community projects involving batteries are being developed, which is a completely different story.

## 7) Councillor participation in Community Groups.

Plymouth University’s “Net Carbon Vision” is an art project, which councillor James Cragie referred to me. Bideford was the only parish taking part north of Ashburton. Pupils at Bideford College took part and won awards for the visions of what Bideford could look like in a greener world. This has all been shared by Devon Carbon Neutral.

Where councillors take part in community activities, like in big cities, a lot of things are happening. In Ilfracombe councillors Nettie Pearson and Sophia Henri have led the development of The Earth Repair Shop, which is a shop in Ilfracombe with an administrator who keeps in touch with many different voluntary groups in Ilfracombe who care about the environment and climate change. [info@earthrepairshop.org](mailto:info@earthrepairshop.org)

Similarly, in Barnstaple, councillors Louisa York and Janet Coates have helped to get a number of things done in Barnstaple. [janet.coates@barnstapletowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:janet.coates@barnstapletowncouncil.gov.uk)

There is a move in Bideford, at the moment to develop a Repair Shop community hub but it needs the council to get to know about it and to assist with making it work well.

People can learn from each other if they have the opportunity to work together. My whole career was getting groups of people together to learn from one another. This enables protest to be turned into action. This is currently being led by Kaye Corfe as an individual who is looking for other groups to join with her. Bideford Town Councillors can help to make this work well.

8) According to Community Energy England, the energy suppliers and the universities there is a great skills shortage in this sector. Community Energy England are addressing by offering subsidised training schemes for “Energy Ambassadors”, which they believe should be in every parish.

National Energy Action / Community Energy England energy advice training – guidance on selection criteria.

<https://forms.gle/vdghqD1t6NxLnhKhs>

This link give some insight into the way the training programme works.

Also, Plymouth University and Petroc offer 3 month internships to graduates to look at specific projects for business and community groups. When I looked at Community Energy England’s map of activity Bideford came up as an activity. It was about Isaac’s Yard. It could be that this sort of help could get this project off the ground in a benefit to that part of Bideford. [sustainabilityhub@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:sustainabilityhub@plymouth.ac.uk)

without the need of spending £thousands on consultants,

9) Community Energy England is a national organisation bringing local groups and councils together to share information and experiences. A lot of the work going on at the moment is experimental and heavily government funded. It the ambition that these

experimental projects will produce business plans within 2 years. That is well within the target of NET ZERO CARBON by 2030. I recommend that Bideford Town Council becomes a member of Community Energy England to be able to enjoy the excitement of the activities going on. The membership fee is currently £150 for a town or parish council. <https://communityenergyengland.org/page/join-us>

Ladies and Gentlemen these are exciting times with the market place changing every day. I invite you to come along and enjoy the fun. Today I learned that 361 Energy is aiming to set up a demonstration of infra red heaters in the Pannier Market and St Mary's Church