

# BICKLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

The Council Offices, The Woolwell Centre, Darklake Lane, Woolwell, PL6 7TR

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## Minutes of a meeting of Bickleigh Parish Council held on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2026 at 7.30pm at the Woolwell Centre PL6 7TR

**Present:** Cllr Larry Taylor (in the Chair), Cllr Andrew Clarke, Cllr Gary Stewart, Cllr Geoff Pithouse, Cllr Nicky Hopwood, Cllr Jackie Taylor, Cllr Marcus Laine (part meeting), Mrs Helen Broughton (Clerk)

**In attendance:** Cllr Brian Hill (attending virtually), 3 members of the public and the County Councillor.

**Minute number:** 260226:

### **Open Forum**

*A Trustee of the Woolwell Centre Trustee was present due to a grant application being considered at the meeting. She also requested a meeting between Trustees and Councillors.*

*The Woolwell Centre Operations Manager was attending due to a further grant application that had been made for a coffee machine.*

*The Chair of Woolwell in Bloom advised that she was replacing planters and circulated a design. The Parish Council indicated its support for this project.*

1. **Apologies for absence**  
Received from Cllr Paul Blight and Cllr Brian Hill (attending virtually).
2. There were no **pecuniary and other interests** pertaining to items on the agenda.
3. There were no **dispensation requests**.
4. **Minutes**  
It was resolved to approve as a correct record the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2026. These were signed by the Chair.
5. **Co-option**  
Mr Marcus Laine introduced himself and gave his background.  
It was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed to co-opt Marcus Laine onto the Parish Council.  
  
Marcus Laine joined the meeting.
6. **Reports and updates**
  - i. County Cllrs Report. A written report had been circulated by the County Councillor (appendix a) and Cllr Carson through the headlines. There was some discussion

regarding a grit bin for Maristow and it was suggested that the Parish Council have a Snow and Road Warden.

- ii. The District Councillor had nothing further to report.
- iii. The Government has responded to the LIOF proposal with a variation to the 4-5-1 model, under which Plymouth would incorporate additional areas including Bickleigh, Woolwell, and Roborough. It was considered important that Parishes are retained. County and District Councillors would work to ensure a smooth transition.

**7. Clerks Report**

The action list was noted.

**8. Finance and Administration**

- i. Receipts and payments against budget as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2026 were reviewed and noted.
- ii. Bank reconciliations to the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2026 were reviewed and approved.
- iii. The asset register was reviewed. Items not owned by the Parish Council had been removed and it was agreed to additionally remove the Jubilee bench and memorial bench.
- iv. The Financial and Administrative Risk schedule and Statement of Internal Control were approved.
- v. A grant request from the Woolwell Centre for £2,750 for a new coffee machine was considered. The Council rejected the application.
- vi. A grant request from the Woolwell Community Resource Trust for £20,000 to support community initiatives was considered. The Parish Council had budgeted £15,000 for 2026/27 and it was therefore agreed to approve a grant of £15,000. This would be paid in one lump sum in the financial new year (April).
- vii. The following payments were approved and it was noted that invoices had been sent electronically to councillors and verified by the Clerk and Chair.

**Pre-paid**

SUPPLIER	DETAILS	TOTAL	VAT	NET
Cutec	Microsoft fee - Feb	73.66	12.28	61.38
Totally Guttered	Gutter clearance	425.00	0	425.00
Scott Boyland	Weed clearance	82.50	0	82.50

**For approval**

SUPPLIER	DETAILS	TOTAL	VAT	NET
H Broughton	Salary February	730.01	0	730.01
NEST	Pension February	69.62	0	69.62
Woolwell Centre	Room hire March	52.00	0	52.00
Cleanwise	Bus shelter cleaning	38.00	0	38.00
Ace Fire Alarms	Fire annual monitoring	237.00	39.50	197.50
Ace Fire Alarms	Annual inspection / Service	321.00	53.50	267.50

**9. Woolwell Centre**

- i. It was agreed to acceptance of a 999-year lease.
- ii. Flooding specialists had visited the Woolwell Centre and reviewed action necessary to alleviate external flooding. Cllr Hopwood would circulate more information when it was available.
- iii. Expenditure to repair guttering at a cost of £485.00 was approved.
- iv. Issues with car parking were postponed until the next meeting.

10. **Planning:**  
3779/25/FUL - The Dartmoor Diner, Tavistock Road, Roborough PL6 7BD  
Amendments and alterations to existing building including roof works and installation of external staircase and creation of first floor fire escape.  
**The Parish Council had no objection subject to consideration of a no right turn south.**
11. **Area maintenance and improvement**
- i. A contractor had begun the killing of weeds on kerbsides. Arborcure had agreed to remove dead wood from a hedge.
  - ii. The issue of increased dog fouling was considered. Signage needed renewing / replacing and it was agreed that Cllr Hopwood would approach South Hams District Council to request that this was done. The issue of dog fouling and throwing waste bags into the surrounding trees and hedges will continue to be monitored.
12. It was agreed that the Parish Council contribute Easter eggs for the annual egg hunt organised by the Woolwell Centre, Cllr Hill would purchase the eggs and deliver.
13. **Roborough Village Hall:** Cllr Pithouse gave an update.  
The new Secretary was working hard and quotes for refurbishment were being obtained. 9th May is Centenary day and the Parish Councillors were invited to this event.  
Cllr Pithouse would suggest to Trustees that they might like to apply for a £200 community grant from the Parish Council towards this event.
14. **Grass cutting**  
Tenders for the 2026-2028 grass cutting contract had been circulated and were considered by the Council. It was agreed to appoint Arborcure as the contractors.
14. The **date of the next meeting** was noted as 26<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at the Woolwell Centre. Cllr Pithouse would explore the Parish Council meeting every other month at the Roborough Recreation Hall.
- The meeting closed at 8.56pm

## Appendix A

### DCC report, Cllr Tony Carson

#### DCC Budget.

The DCC Budget was agreed at Full Council on the 24<sup>th</sup> February.

1. **Devon County Council's 2026/27 budget totals £873.2 million, with a 4.99% Council Tax increase and strategic investments in social care, children's services, and highways.**

#### Overview of Revenue and Capital Budgets

The **proposed service budget targets** for 2026/27 total **£839.2 million**, representing a **4.1% increase** over the 2025/26 adjusted base budget, with the **net budget recommended at £873.2 million**. The **Council Tax rate** is set to increase by **4.99%**, including a **2% Adult Social Care precept**, generating a total Council Tax requirement of **£610.26 million**. The **capital programme** for 2026/27 is **£201.5 million**, with indicative investment plans extending to 2030/31.

Devon County Council

Devon County Council has shifted from central government reliance to **Council Tax funding**, which now accounts for **82.3% of the net budget**, up from 56.5% in 2013/14. The 2026/27 settlement consolidates over **30 grants into five main streams**, including the Revenue Support Grant, creating more flexibility but also increasing local tax burdens. Business rates have undergone **full revaluation and new multipliers** for retail, hospitality, and leisure, affecting local revenue.

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#### Key Expenditure Areas

- **Children and Young People Services:** £268 million, including support for children in care, early help, education services, and foster carer allowances, with a **£19.1 million increase**.
- **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND):** £69 million allocated, impacting Band D properties by an extra £89.91.
- **Highways and Infrastructure:** £15 million in new capital funding for targeted maintenance, plus £4 million in revenue for drainage, gully clearance, and vegetation management. An additional £10 million per year is planned across the remaining five-year Medium-Term Financial Plan.
- **Adult Social Care:** Costs are impacted by the **National Living Wage increase**, adding £14.3 million in pressures.

#### Inflation and Cost Pressures

The budget accounts for **£15.6 million for inflationary pressures**, with the National Living Wage rising to **£12.71 per hour** for adults and higher rates for younger workers and apprentices. These increases affect social care and other demand-led services.

Devon County Council

## **Staffing and Reserves**

The **number of FTE staff** is projected to increase due to in-sourcing, apprenticeships, and investment in Children's Services. The **County Fund Balance** is maintained at **£16 million**, with **general earmarked reserves of £129.4 million** and additional statutory reserves for On-Street Parking and Public Health. Devon ranks **3rd from the bottom among county councils** for reserve levels, though this is an improvement from the previous year.

### **Local to Bickleigh Parish.**

I visited Watery Lane, Maristow at the request of a resident to discuss salt spreading in cold weather.

I was told by Devon County Officers that they are unable to provide a Grit Bin for this remote location.

It was suggested that a few bags of salt could be delivered to the location but it would have to be ordered by a Parish Council Snow Warden.