

BICKLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of a meeting of Bickleigh Parish Council held on Thursday 23rd July 2026 at 7.30pm at the Woolwell Centre, Woolwell

***Present:** Cllr Larry Taylor, Cllr Paul Blight, Cllr Nicky Hopwood, Cllr Marcus Lane, Cllr Jackie Taylor, Cllr Geoff Pithouse and Mrs Helen Broughton (Clerk – virtually).*

***In attendance:** County Cllr Tony Carson and 4 members of the public.*

***Minute number:** 260723/*

Open Forum

Councillor Larry Taylor, Vice Chair of the Parish Council, paid tribute to the late Brian Hill, Chairman of the Parish Council, who had sadly passed away since the previous meeting. Brian had been instrumental in progressing the Woolwell Centre project, regularly attending the site and providing invaluable support throughout. He will be greatly missed by the Council and the wider community. A minute's silence was observed in his memory.

A resident of Leat Walk addressed the Council regarding the trees overhanging her garden. A resident complained that the grass at Hele Close had not been cut.

1. Chair and Vice Chair

It was unanimously resolved to appoint Cllr Larry Taylor as Parish Council Chairperson and Nicky Hopwood as Vice Chairperson for the remainder of the 2026/27 Council Year. The Declaration of Acceptance of Office was duly received.

2. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Andrew Clarke.

3. There were no **pecuniary and other interests** pertaining to items on the agenda.

4. Dispensations

A request for a dispensation had been received from Councillor Marcus Lane to speak on matters relating to the Woolwell Centre. Councillor Lane declared an interest due to his involvement in the operation of the pre-school based at the Woolwell Centre. The request for dispensation was approved

5. Grass cutting and Leat Walk trees

These items were brought forward for discussion.

Councillor Hopwood reported that she had met with the grounds maintenance contractor to identify areas where grass cutting had been missed and additional areas that should be included within the maintenance schedule. The contractor agreed to address these on the

next round of cuts, although it was noted that grass cutting in August was unlikely due to the prolonged dry weather. The contractor had failed to quote for the additional areas requested and this would be followed up.

The Clerk advised that the contractor had been requested to cut the grass at Helen Close and would follow up for a response.

It was agreed that a further tree survey of the Leat Walk trees should be commissioned in light of the prolonged dry weather and reports of galls affecting the trees. The findings of the survey would determine whether any works were required to the trees.

5. **Minutes**

It was resolved to approve as a correct record the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 28th May 2026.

6. **Reports and updates**

a. A written report had been circulated by the County Cllr Tony Carson (appendix A)

b. The District Cllr had nothing further to report.

b. Updates on local government re-organisation were included in the County Cllrs report.

7. **Clerks Report**

The action list was noted. Cllr Hopwood was meeting with the Centre Manager regarding the ceiling tiles and would report back.

8. **Finance and Administration**

- i. Receipts and payments against budget as at 30th June 2026 were noted.
- ii. Bank reconciliations to the 30th June 2026 were noted and approved.
- iii. It was agreed to appoint Joanna Simonds as the internal auditor for the 2026/2027 financial year at a cost of £200.
- iv. A grant request from 1st Roborough Brownies was considered and a grant of £500 was approved.
- v. To approve the following payments were approved and it was noted that invoices had been sent electronically to Councillors and examined and verified by the RFO.

Pre-paid

SUPPLIER	DETAILS	TOTAL	VAT	NET
Dart Forest	Tree decay test	522.00	87.00	435.00
Arborcure	Grounds Maintenance May	1013.47	168.91	844.56
Cutec	Hosting- June	73.66	12.28	61.38
The Plastic Co	Highland benches	1320.00	220.00	1110.00
The Plastic Co	Picnic tables	1056.00	176.00	880.00
Western Web	Accessibility Audit	54.00	9.00	45.00
Joanna Simonds	Internal Audit	200.00	0	200.00
Dodd Group	AHU Maintenance	445.57	74.26	371.31

Dodd Group	1 year maintenance	602.94	100.49	502.45
Cutec	Hosting – July	73.66	12.28	61.38
H Broughton	Salary – June	733.25	0	733.25
DALC	Annual membership fee	1098.92	183.00	915.92
Nest	Pension May	69.62	0	69.62
HMRC	Tax and NI 6 April to 5 July	825.34	0	825.34

For approval

SUPPLIER	DETAILS	TOTAL	VAT	NET
H Broughton	Salary July	733.25	0	733.25
Nest	Pension June	69.62	0	69.62
PWLB	Loan (2) repayment	4362.51	0	4362.51
Western Web	Annual web space SSL cert	96.00	16.00	80.00
ICO	Data protection fee	52.00	0	52.00

9. Planning

No planning applications had been received for consideration.

10. Brian Hill

An appropriate form of recognition to honour Brian Hill was considered and it was agreed that, subject to agreement, to name the plant room at the Woolwell Centre after him.

11. Open Space Maintenance

- a. Three quotations had been received to remove a TPO Beech tree, following a decay assessment survey. It was agreed to request a quote for reducing the monolith to 1-2 meters. The Clerk was delegated authority to proceed with the best value quotation.
- b. It was agreed to contact Mairstow Estates regarding flaying on Blackeven Hill and to request that hedges in New Road be cut back.

12. Roborough Village Hall: Cllr Geoff Pithouse gave an update and there was some discussion on the its future.

13. The **date of the next meeting** was agreed as 24th September 2026.

14. Exclusion of the Press and Public

It was resolved that, pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item owing to the confidential nature of the business relating to legal matters

15. Woolwell Centre

Cllr Taylor would be providing feedback on the draft lease. A meeting had been held with the Trustees and action was agreed.

The meeting closed at 9pm

Appendix A

Bickleigh Parish Council

To the Chairman and members of Bickleigh Parish Council

23rd July 2026

DCC report

Cllr Tony Carson

Local Government Reorganisation.

The big story is the Government's decision, announced on 16 July, to move ahead with a four-unitary-authority model for Devon. This will eventually replace Devon County Council and the district councils with new unitary councils, representing the biggest restructuring of local government in Devon for decades.

I have been put on the Scrutiny Committee for LGR which will scrutinise the process up until March 2028.

Children and young people consultation launched

DCC is encouraging Devon's children and young people to share their views on what it is like growing up in England as part of a national consultation exercise. The council is actively promoting participation this week.

Environment and heritage news

Several positive local initiatives have been highlighted:

Devons Stover Country Park and The Grand Western Canal Park have retained their Green Flag status.

A rare Roman mosaic, elaborate bathhouse and high-status artefacts have been uncovered during a major archaeological project in Mid Devon supported Devon County Council. The discoveries were made during a two-month dig on farmland between Halberton and Sampford Peverell.

Adult social care inspection results

A newly published assessment found Devon's adult social care service has "significant strengths", while also identifying areas where further improvement is needed. The report has been one of the council's major announcements this week.

Political angle

For councillors across Devon, the reorganisation announcement is by far the most consequential issue. Much of the current political discussion centres on:

how the transition to the new unitary councils will work,

what happens to County Hall functions,

governance arrangements up to 2028,

and protecting services during the changeover.

Thirteen parishes will move into Plymouth in April 2028 including Bickleigh when Devon County Council will cease to exist.

A shadow group of 68 Council members will be elected in May 2027 to set up the new Plymouth Authority, and take over the running of the Council from April 2028.

Plymouth City Council will close at midnight on 31st March with the new Greater Plymouth taking control at that point. This is referred as the vesting day.

There will be no elections in 2028.