

BARNSTAPLE TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of The Town Council Meeting
Monday 13th September 2021 at 7.00pm
The Guildhall, Butchers Row, Barnstaple

Present: Councillors:

Cllr A Rennles (Town Mayor & Chairman), V Monk, V Elkins, A Windsor, I Roome, J Hunt, R Knight, J Phillips, J Carter, J Wilsher, L York, P Leaver, Shah, S Yusef, R Mack, J Coates, J Orange & G Marchewka.

Also in attendance:

Mr R Ward (Town Clerk),

Cllr C Leaver (Devon County Council)

Insp. A Wills (Devon & Cornwall Police)

L Clarke (ND Journal)

Mr K Burley (Blue Elephant CIC)

Mr I Williams (Blue Elephant CIC)

Members of the Public:0

51. Apologies for absence

Apologies received from Cllrs M Lovering (Work), V Nel (Work), M Fowler (Health) & E George (Maternity) reasons were considered and approved by councillors (NC).

52. Dispensations and Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Cllrs I Roome, J Hunt, J Phillips, L York, R Mack & J Orange as members of North Devon District Council, have a dispensation under SO66 to discuss and vote on any item on the agenda unless the item refers to a financial or legal agreement or dispute between the two authorities.

Cllr I Roome as a member of Devon County Council, has a dispensation under SO66 to discuss and vote on any item on the agenda unless the item refers to a financial or legal agreement or dispute between the two authorities.

Cllr I Roome for item 63 as a personal friend of Mr Burley and Mr Williams.

53. Minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 19th July 2021, had one amendment to item 48 and were then approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman. (NC)

54. Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor stated how good it is to see the town and life in general opening up as Covid restrictions are being relaxed.

He has attended:

- 14th August the Burma Star commemoration in Rock Park.
- 28th August the Torrington Cavaliers Bonfire.
- 11th September The Veterans Charity reception

This Wednesday, 15th September is the Barnstaple Fair Proclamation, the Town Council will be on display as we will have a live broadcast of the ceremony from the Council Chamber to the Pannier Market and on the internet.

Forthcoming events include:

- Barnstaple Half Marathon
- Bideford Mayor Making
- Hatherleigh Ball

55. Report from Devon & Cornwall Constabulary

Insp. Wills presented his report (attached at appendix one). He proposed to the Town Council that for future meetings he would be happy to respond to questions and themes raised by Councillors in advance of the meeting, via the Town Clerk.

Cllr Mack asked if the Police had seen a benefit from having the PSPO in place. Insp. Wills said that the extra powers had been very useful for dealing with anti-social behaviour issues within the PSPO area.

56. Reports from Devon County and North Devon District Councillors.

Devon County Council

Cllr C Leaver presented her report (attached at appendix two)

Cllr I Roome

- DCC are undertaking a consultation into the service provided through the Link Centres, based in Barnstaple, Bideford, Ilfracombe and Holsworthy. More details can be found on the DCC website. Cllr Roome explained that the Link Centres provide vital support to local mental health services.

North Devon Council

Cllr J Hunt

- North Devon Atheneum will be having a meeting soon.
- At the NDC Planning Committee on 8th September the Westacott development 65448 for 820 houses was approved. The need for a doctor surgery and a second access will need to be revisited
- The next North Devon Full Council meeting is this Wednesday relocated to the cemetery to enable social distancing.

Cllr R Mack

- The motion to allow local councils to adopt proportional representation for local elections has been turned down by Central Government.

- Under the Afghan Interpreters Scheme two families will be coming to North Devon.
- A local group is collecting donations to support refugees, extra help is needed with the sorting of donations.
- A process of choosing a brand for the redevelopment of the town centre is currently being undertaken by NDC.
- The senior management team of NDC has recently been through a reorganisation and all the posts have now been filled.

Cllr I Roome

- The Future High Streets Fund project is currently underway with delivery by March 2024.
- The new leisure centre on Seven Brethren is on track for completion by April 2022.
- Recent indices of deprivation place Barnstaple town centre and Forches and Whiddon Valley with the highest level for Devon.

Cllr J Phillips

- The joint Cemeteries & Crematoria Committee with Torridge District Council has raised concern that the planned changes to the highway on Old Torrington Rd as a result of the Larksbear development. They are concerned that this will have a negative impact on people accessing the Crematorium.

RESOLVED: That the reports from the County and District Councillors be noted. (NC)

57. Committee Minutes

Committee	Date	Page Numbers
Planning & Transportation	22 nd July 2021	31 to 33
Planning & Transportation	12 th August 2021	34 to 35
Planning & Transportation	19 th August 2021	36 to 37

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Committee meetings and the resolutions contained therein be received and adopted in accordance Standing Order 24 (NC).

58. Agenda item 8

Had been added in error and was not considered.

59. Minutes of the Rock Park Trust Management Committee held on 14th July 2021.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Rock Park Trust Management Committee and the resolutions contained therein be received and adopted (NC)

60. To consider reports from Town Council representatives to outside bodies and determine any actions arising.

Cllr R Knight

- Taw & Torridge Estuary Forum and Tarka Rail Forum are still to meet.
- The Bridge Trust – Cllr Knight to provide an update to be circulated with the minutes (appendix three)

RESOLVED: That the reports from the representatives to outside bodies be noted. (NC)

61. Motion from Cllr P Leaver on the Rural Housing Crisis (appendix two)

Cllr Leaver proposed that Barnstaple Town Council declare a Housing Crisis which has resulted in North Devon residents being unable to remain within their communities, causing:

- families to be disconnected,
- support networks to be disrupted or destroyed,
- a loss of community cohesion,
- detrimental mental health effects on residents and their children,
- a disruption to the education of affected children,
- Increased pressure on housing in Barnstaple as families are unable to find housing in their own villages,
- an environmental effect caused through increased journey lengths.

This Council calls on Government to consider the effect that Short Term Lets are having on the ability of North Devon residents to afford to rent or buy homes in their local communities. Specifically, government is invited to introduce measures that:

- Allow local authorities to licence full property lets to a maximum letting period of 90 consecutive days per calendar year.
- Bring about a change in the Use Classes Order to require all planning permission for a change of use from permanent residential to short-term letting.

Cllrs supported the motion, stating that:

- There are a significant number of empty properties that are not being used.
- “Right to Buy” without the building of new council housing has exacerbated the shortage.
- Here is a disproportionate number of people on Universal Credit in North Devon and income in relation to house prices and rents makes it impossible for many local people to find a home.

RESOLVED: to approve the motion and a letter to be sent to the local MP and the Housing Minister (NC)

62. Motion from Cllr L York to not allow bonfires or incineration on Town Council land Currently no site has been allocated for this year’s Barnstaple Fair, the fair

RESOLVED: to approve the amended motion. (16 for 2 abs).

Cllrs Roome, Windsor & Hunt left the meeting at this point

63. Proposal to the Town Council for music events in Rock Park from the Blue Elephant Community Interest Company (attached).

Mr Burley had made a presentation at the start of the meeting to the meeting.

Councillors broadly supported to idea of Rock Park being used for music events. A question was asked about whether it is permitted to fence an area of the park under the terms of it public open space – The Town Clerk to investigate this.

RESOLVED: To ask the Rock Park Committee to consider the proposal and work with Mr Burley and Mr Williams (NC).

64. Questions – Standing Orders 25 and 85

No questions had been received from members of the Council in accordance with Standing Order 25, or from public registered electors in the town in accordance with Standing Order 85.

Meeting closed at 8.40pm.

Chairman.

Signed:

Dated:



Police Report for Barnstaple Town Council

Meeting Monday 13th September 2021 at 7pm

The crime data for Barnstaple Sector for the rolling month until 12th September 2021 is as follows:

Offence	Recorded Crime Current Period	Recorded Crime Previous Period (2020)	Recorded Crime 2019 Period	Recorded Crime % Change 2020-2021	Recorded Crime % Change 2019-2021
Shoplifting	15	10	21	50.0%	-28.57%
Burglary Non-Dwelling	3	2	4	50.0%	-25.00%
Non-Notifiable	0	0	0	%	%
Public Order Offences	23	29	23	-20.7%	0.00%
Violence without Injury	55	44	38	25.0%	44.74%
Trafficking of Drugs	5	7	3	-28.6%	66.67%
Criminal Damage	44	27	28	63.0%	57.14%
Violence with Injury	30	34	34	-11.8%	-11.76%
Possession of Weapons	1	3	2	-66.7%	-50.00%
Possession of Drugs	8	11	15	-27.3%	-46.67%
Other Offences	4	5	7	-20.0%	-42.86%
All Other Theft Offences	14	20	32	-30.0%	-56.25%
Stalking and Harassment	27	35	25	-22.9%	8.00%
Burglary Dwelling	3	2	5	50.0%	-40.00%
Other Sexual Offences	2	5	7	-60.0%	-71.43%
Vehicle Offences	7	4	10	75.0%	-30.00%
Robbery	0	1	5	-100.0%	-100.00%
Rape	7	5	5	40.0%	40.00%
Arson	1	0	0	%	%
Theft from the Person	1	2	4	-50.0%	-75.00%
Bicycle Theft	5	2	9	150.0%	-44.44%
	255	248	277	2.8%	-7.94%

The 2020 period was heavily influenced by movement and gathering restrictions imposed during the pandemic. In most offending categories we saw decreases in reported crime during the 2020 period, perhaps with the exception of those of a domestic nature within households. For this reason I consider the best means of comparison is by reference to the 2019 period. It can be seen we have experienced an overall fall in crime, albeit with notable increases in Criminal damage and Violence without injury. In general terms these increases are not linked by themes or perpetrators relative to any other period. The overall reduction in crime feels pleasing to give, particularly during a period of unprecedented demand and visitor numbers for the region. The volumes of calls for service in July and August have been high, as indicated by the total monthly 999 call volumes received:

Month	Volume 2019	Volume 2020	Volume 2021	% Change 2020-2021	% Change 2019-2021
August	25729	28520	30661	+7.51%	+19.17%
July	25450	26555	31325	+17.96%	+23.08%

I would also like to provide a brief 'outcomes' performance insight. Whilst low levels of reported crime are indicative of good policing, and probably won't happen without it, a further measure relates to what we do with that crime in terms of investigation. In the rolling 12-month period from September 2020 - August 2021, in Barnstaple sector we achieved a brought to justice offender outcome against 21.4% of reported crime. This makes us the second-best performing Sector Force wide, only improved upon by Plymouth South (23.8%). The Force average is 13.8%.

Whilst we do not manage our teams by percentages, the results of their work speak for themselves particularly whilst our teams have been responding to such high demand.

Victimisation rates

I am unable to filter our data to provide a sector level breakdown, but further to the above, its pleasing to see that in a force which has one of the lowest levels of reported crime in the country, our Local Policing area, led by Supt Toby Davies, has the lowest level of reported crime in the Force. I can say this this makes us one of the safest places in the country to live, work and play. When it can be so easy to be self-critical, and critical of others, we should not forget this. Please rest assured our staff of local residents are determined to keep it that way.

All Crime per 1000 population (2011 Census data) – Rolling 12 months to 31/08/2021

Local Policing Area (LPA)	Crimes Per 1000 Pop
N&W Devon	44.40
E Cornwall	49.74
E, E&M Devon	52.16
W Cornwall	53.34
South Devon	58.08
Plymouth	82.57

Sincerely,

Inspector Andy Wills

Appendix Two

Report of Cllr Caroline Leaver, Barnstaple South

September 2021

1. DCC Children's Services Scrutiny update - The Standing Overview Group of the Children's Scrutiny committee met 29 July 2021 and discussed the Ofsted Focused Visit – as noted in my previous report to this council. It is acknowledged that the current workload of social workers has increased to around 30 cases each, and that this is unsustainable.

The key actions and responses recommended for approval focus on trying to recruit more social workers (currently 30 vacancies) using a number of measures. These include matching and exceeding the Cornwall Council offer to employees and using IT systems to reduce the administrative burden on social workers (if additional funds are allocated to this in the 2022/23 budget).

Another key area of concern raised following the Ofsted Focused Visit was around the effectiveness of the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) and decision making. DCC is being supported by Leeds City Council on this, and officers are working on improving processes to match Leeds' approach as well as developing a MASH Action Plan.

Other areas of concern are the consistency of practice, Children's Services culture and staff training, and the effectiveness of the council's scrutiny and challenge function. The council is looking at these issues.

2. Covid update – Key messages
 - From 11 November all staff entering a care home need to be vaccinated unless exempt. This means they need to have their first COVID-19 vaccine by 16 September - as eight weeks is required between the two doses.
 - Devon, Plymouth and Torbay remain Enhanced Response Areas due to high covid rates
 - More than 1.77m doses of the Covid-19 vaccine have been given in Devon
 - 4 in 5 18-24 year olds have had their first vaccination dose and over half have had their second.
 - Between 8 December and 5 September 926,555 first doses have been given while 843,930 second doses have been given; a total of 1,770,485 doses.
 - Of the 385 initial assessments in the south west for Long Covid in adults (5/7/21 – 1/8/21) 90% were men. There were 96 follow up appointments.
 - Up to one in seven children and young people who had COVID-19 may have symptoms linked to the virus 15 weeks later, suggest preliminary findings from the world's largest study on long COVID in children and young people. Researchers surveyed 3,065 11 to 17 year-olds in England

who tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 in a PCR test between January and March. They were paired with a matched control group of 3,739 11 to 17 year-olds who tested negative over the same period.

- The researchers found that, when surveyed at an average of 15 weeks after their test, 14% (one in seven) more young people in the test positive group had three or more symptoms of ill health, including unusual tiredness and headaches, than those in the test negative group, while 7% (one in 14) more had five or more symptoms.

3. NDPTU (North Devon Public Transport Users) met on September 13th for the first time in person for a long time. Following my contacting the Group to seek their views on the Bus Back Better consultation earlier this summer, I was invited to attend their first in person meeting for a long time. The Group commented that there is a need to ensure the infrastructure for buses and other non-private car use are included at the outset in major developments
4. Team Devon seeking more devolved powers for the county - Council leaders across Devon have agreed to develop a bid to Government for devolved powers, and Officers have been asked to start preparing proposals that we can discuss with Ministers and Whitehall over the summer. The idea is that better coordination and trust developed during the pandemic would continue.
5. Iron Bridge from Rock Park to Seven Brethren – I have met with the Chief Engineer (Bridges & Structures) from Devon CC who updated me on the prospects for re-opening the bridge. The latest timetable we had been given suggested that pedestrians and cyclists would be able to use the bridge again by the end of the summer. Clearly this has not happened. The contractors that had been taking the project went into administration in July, with no notice. All preparatory work stopped. An alternative contractor has now been appointed and a revised timetable will be available in due course. The idea is that a barge will be positioned below the central pillars, four temporary pillars will be pile driven into the river bed to take the weight of the bridge and allowing for repairs to be made. The latest estimate I heard for when this work would be complete was the end of the autumn half term. As yet there is no evidence of work having started. My expectation is that the timetable will slip.
6. North Devon Biosphere - The North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Partnership has launched a major initiative to support nature's recovery across northern Devon, as part of their contribution to tackling the global ecological emergency.

Aligning with the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan and the Prime Minister's pledge for 30% of the UK land to be protected by 2030, the Biosphere's initiatives include:

- **A Declaration for Nature's recovery.** As well as being adopted by individuals, schools, businesses, and community organisations across the Biosphere it is hoped that many council members will sign this Declaration and also encourage their local residents to sign it. Even if council areas are outside the [Biosphere area](#), organisational and individuals' signature

on the Declaration are welcomed as this helps to illustrate your commitment to nature's recovery. Please share your signing on social media and tag the Biosphere on Twitter @NDevonBiosphere and Facebook @NorthDevonBiosphere. Posters can also be requested from the Biosphere.

- **A Nature Recovery Plan** – this sets out the priorities for Nature's Recovery and the actions that the partners of the North Devon UNESCO Biosphere will be pursuing with the community.
 - **Pledge for Nature grants** - available @PledgeforNature with more information available at biosphere.org.uk/pledgefornature. The grants are called Community Nature Recovery Plan Challenge Fund – up to £250 will be awarded to community groups and spaces (parks, school grounds, villages, community woodlands etc) that have shown a commitment to making space for nature.
7. DCC grants for community groups – all county councillors are allocated £10,000 per annum Locality Grants to be awarded locally. In addition, the county council has created new Reconnect, Rebuild, Recover grants of up to £3,000. Contact your local county councillor with potential projects.
 8. Police and Crime Commissioner consultation - The Police and Crime Commissioner, Alison Hernandez, has now launched a survey as regards her second Police and Crime Plan. Organisations and individuals are encouraged to complete the survey, and encourage others to do the same. Full details including a link to the survey can be found here – [Safe, resilient and connected communities – Alison Hernandez launches survey into Police and Crime Plan · Devon & Cornwall Police & Crime Commissioner \(devonandcornwall-pcc.gov.uk\)](https://www.devonandcornwall-pcc.gov.uk/survey)

Cllr Caroline Leaver

13 September 2021

Appendix Three

Cllr Ricky Knight

Notes relevant to Barnstaple Town Council from Bridge Trust Meeting – 11th August.

Peter Leaver in attendance.

Maiden Street 'Bin Store': the area needed for this to progress was formerly the Brewer Harding and Rowe archives depot. Frances Bell was/is particularly keen for Maiden Arches to be cleared of these bins and indeed for the whole alley to be prettified and rendered a bit of a charming attraction. Hannah Harrington to be contacted.

Lockdown has taken its toll of some properties. Lilicos and SOL in particular had not been able to generate any income for many many months and were obviously struggling to keep up with their rents. Ongoing solutions being sought.

113 Boutport Street (formerly the Tile Shop): change of use to flats/residential – progressing but slowly.

The design for a Job Vacancy ad to fill the role of Bridge Trust Chamberlain being finalised and would be placed widely. Much discussion regarding the realities of the role, in that it is now necessary to consider two positions, one for Buildings and another for Finance et al. Mr Lawrie made it clear that one person cannot possibly do all the necessary work by themselves any longer.

An advert would also be going out to attract more Trustees.