

# TEIGNBRIDGE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (TALC)

Secretary: Dudley Swain 01392 833353 email: [dudley@the-swains.co.uk](mailto:dudley@the-swains.co.uk)

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## Minutes

of the meeting held Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2016 at Forde House

### Present:

Bovey Tracey .....	Tony Allen; Steven Leigh	Kenn & Kennford .....	Andy Chislett; Bridgette Williams
Bridford .....	Roger Dowding	Moretonhampstead ...	Jane Willis
Buckfastleigh .....	Fanny Jackson; Janet Jones	Newton Abbot .....	David Howe (Chairman)
Denbury & Torbryan ....	Tony Brownhill		Carol Bunday; Mike Hocking
Dunchideock .....	Dudley Swain	Ogwell .....	Richard Broome
Exminster .....	Tony Brownhill	TDC .....	Gary Powell
Ideford .....	Ashley Lamb		
Ilington .....	Reg Winsor		
Ipplepen .....	Roger Carnell		

### Apologies:

Ashburton (John Nutley); Bishopsteignton (Hazel Stuckey); Christow (Pamela Woods); Chudleigh (John Carlton); Haccombe-with-Combe (Anna Taylor); Ide (Rose Saunders); Shillingford St George (John Parrott); TDC (Douglas Hellier-Laing)

## 1 Council Tax Referendums - Lesley Tucker, Chief Finance Officer, TDC

In the 2017/18 Local Government Finance Settlement - Technical Consultation Paper, the government is in favour of extending council tax referendum principles that apply mainly to districts, unitaries and county councils, to larger local councils. This would include Newton Abbot. There would however be flexibility for them to take on new responsibilities from other tiers of government.

The principle is that band D increases above 2% AND above £5 would trigger a referendum. The government is prepared to extend referendums to all parishes, but welcomes views on proportionality, practicality and cost. The average Teignbridge LCs precept rose by 12.1% this year, generally a small sum in ££ but large percentage. The rules would quite likely have significant impact if extended to include smaller LC's.

Members felt it important that TDC, DALC and LC's respond to the consultation: web survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/583WBQL> or via email [LGFConsultation@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:LGFConsultation@communities.gsi.gov.uk)

See section 3.3 on pages 13 & 14 of the consultation (see link in the surveymonkey page), in particular questions 4, 5, 6 & 7. Deadline for responses is 28 October 2016.

## 2 Devolution Update - Cllr Jeremy Christophers, TDC Leader; Neil Aggett, Democratic Services Manager, TDC

The outline principles of devolution were explained along with the current situation in the Heart of the South West (HOSW). The essence is to bring local decision making to a local level. There may be however a question locally as to whether this "local level" should be achieved at County Council level, LEP or the proposed Devon & Somerset region. Key Challenges ("problems"?) include low productivity, poor enterprise & innovation performance, an aging population and poor infrastructure and connectivity.

The HOSW devolution "Combined Authority" (CA) consists of 23 authorities and organisations including the LEP. Interestingly, the LEP's role is to lead and influence economic growth, job creation and prosperity across the HOSW. A "Prospectus for Productivity" has been prepared for discussion with Government, identifying 6 "golden opportunities" covering marine, nuclear, aerospace & advanced engineering, data analytics, rural productivity and health/social care.

The following points emerged from the discussion period:

- HOSW devolution is vital otherwise the SW will not receive any government finance
- Government wants a HOSW Mayor, for single point accountability. We don't want one.
- Devolution could improve governance and democratic accountability (discussed!)
- Accountability of the CA would be via Overview & Scrutiny and Audit committees
- The CA would be another tier of organisation over county, district, LEP, health, etc.
- Theory is no duplication, complexity nor additional layers of administration. Theory!
- Infrastructure, etc. may improve but there's no "magic bullet" of certainty. This is a particular concern regarding the consequences of substantial additional housing.
- Brexit and changes in Government have led to uncertainty in the devolution process
- Cost of the whole CA and the approach is an unknown
- LCs will frankly have little influence on devolution

It was an interesting and particularly active discussion. It's the main theme of the DALC conference in October. Lots more online, including <http://www.local.gov.uk/devolution>

- 3 Minutes of the meeting 28<sup>th</sup> July 2016** – These were approved
- 4 TDC Use of IT for Planning Applications.** Larger LCs, such as Newton Abbot, will look to the developers of the larger housing proposals to provide paper copies. iPad downloads are being a problem. (Neil Aggett will ask IT to investigate). Gary will check with Tamsin Cook regarding the proposed IT training.
- 5 Future Meetings Schedule.** It was agreed to trial the proposed 5 meeting schedule in 2017, namely January, March, June, September & November.
- 6 Secretary's Report**
  - The bank balance is £155.52
  - Proposed Teignbridge ward boundary changes - Members had no particular concerns
  - Conflicts of interest dealing with planning applications in small councils. Maybe need wider blanket dispensations, but it's a matter of local interpretation of guidance.
- 7 November 24<sup>th</sup> Meeting.** It was agreed to invite Cllr. John Hart, Leader of DCC to talk about finance (possibly touch on devolution also) and Nick Bloomfield, Senior Investigating Officer (Traffic Police), to talk about why it takes so long to clear a road after an accident. Christow Community Land Trust (new houses & processes) will be invited to the January 2017 meeting.
- 8 Matters brought forward by Members.** Concern was expressed over the new microphone/speakers system not working in the chamber and in particular, the absence of the audio loop system. The secretary will investigate.
- 10 Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016** at 7.00pm at Forde House.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm

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**For information:**

- 13 councils/meetings were represented tonight
- 7 councils/meetings presented apologies
- 30 councils/meetings? Of which 20 have not been seen at all this year

If you feel TALC needs changing in any way, please feel free to let the Secretary know.