

Council Meeting – 29th July 2025

Questions from members of the public

Members of the public may ask questions subject to procedural rules. Members of the Public who have submitted a question and are present at the meeting may also ask one supplementary question arising from the original question or response. A maximum period of 15 minutes will be allowed for public questions with a maximum period of three minutes per questioner.

Question from Sarah Prince

The Equality Impact Assessments that were produced for the public consultation the Council Report on the proposed closure of public toilets acknowledges throughout, the significant impact that any closures would have on public health and protected groups. The only mitigation offered throughout the assessments being to 'offload' the public toilets to town and parish councils as an 'opportunity'. How has impact assessment been taken into account by the council in coming to their proposal to close so many public toilets in areas where there are no alternatives? And how is this an 'opportunity'.

Response from the Leader

Dear Sarah Prince, thank you for your question, we are looking at all options, the report to Council has yet to be debated and no decision has been made yet.

Question from Cllr Sue Clarke (Buckfastleigh Town Council)

I attended TDC last year to ask about addressing the massive disparity in budget spend between the bigger towns and the small rural towns and parishes. Having not been given an acceptable answer then, I am here again to ask you to explain why TDC think it is acceptable to strip those very same rural towns and parishes of their public toilets, expecting local taxpayers to pick up the bill during a cost-of-living crisis whilst they also subsidise public toilets in the bigger towns?

Response from the Leader

Dear Councillor Sue Clarke, thank you for your question, we are looking at all options and Councillors have not made any decision on the toilet provision.

Question from Cllr Danielle Westlake (Shaldon Parish Council)

Would the councillors continue to keep the toilets open and support them financially, given the massive support of the people, evidenced by the large petition numbers and with the necessity of "Designated Bathing Waters", which both Ness Beach and Shaldon beach are, requiring public toilets for this classification supported by the Environment Agency. The decision should not be made on the TDC survey alone.

Response from the Leader

Dear Councillor Danielle Westlake, thank you for your question, Teignbridge District Council has had reduced funding from the Government for over the last 15 years. Any decision will not be made solely on the survey alone and all options are to be discussed; no vote has been taken.

Question from Jenny Dingsdale

The notes of the private, informal scrutiny meeting from February state 'Advised that the Council was at risk of further action if staff asked those using male/female facilities to prove their sex' and that '91 Officers will ensure training and guidance is in place before we reopen the site.'

Do you still believe this to be true? Will staff uphold the law, and prevent men using the female space or not? What did the promised 'training and guidance' say when Broadmeadow reopened on Thursday? This empty threat of 'further action' for protecting women's spaces is the same sinister misinformation we see from NHS Fife.

Response from the Leader

Dear Jenny Dingsdale, thank you for your question, Teignbridge District Council and Councillors have acted at all times within the law. It is a priority of this administration as I have said in the past to protect both women and girls in all our facilities. If you have any information to the contrary, please report it to the police.

Question from Cathy Mudge

"Has Teignbridge District Council conducted a comprehensive survey of all its assets to ensure adequate single-sex provisions are in place, beyond The Broadmeadow Leisure Centre?"

Response from the Leader

Dear Cathy Mudge, thank you for your question. Teignbridge District Council extensively consulted residents and users on the provision of leisure centres and will continue to do so, single sex provisions are provided.

Question from Suzanna Hughes (Clerk, Widecombe Parish Council)

How did you come to those scores? We carried out our own recent survey in Widecombe and counted the following:

- On Friday 18 July, we counted 68 loo users over a period of four hours.
- On Saturday 19 July, we counted 183 people using the loos between 9am and 4pm.
- On a wet Monday, on 21 July (when the Cafe on the Green is closed), we counted 151 people using the Widecombe loos.

Response from the Leader

Dear Suzanna Hughes, thank you for your question, thank you also for your own survey. We are looking at all options, the report to Council has yet to be debated and no decision has been made yet.

Question from Suzanna Hughes (Clerk, Widecombe Parish Council)

Most of the above users would have been tourists as they were also observed paying to use the car park. This is a user group that wasn't (and couldn't have been) consulted and yet it's the majority of users. Another (uncounted) user group is the people in campervans overnight in the area. Where are they supposed to go in their hour of need, if they can't access the cafe or pub (not always open and they wouldn't be welcome)? How will the inevitable and resultant problem of Environmental Health be managed? Could you earmark the revenue from the car park, or increase the fee slightly to pay for the loos? How about charging motorbike riders to use the car park?

Response from the Leader

Dear Suzanna Hughes, thank you for your question, thank you also for your information on your local car park and the confirmation you would like an increase in charges to cover the provision of toilets. We are looking at all options, the report to Council has yet to be debated and no decision has been made yet.

Question from Suzanna Hughes (Clerk, Widecombe Parish Council)

At Newbridge, how do you suggest people use an alternative to the public loo?

Response from the Leader

Dear Suzanna Hughes, thank you for your question, all options are available to Councillors, and no decision has been made.