

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
OF BUCKLAND BREWER PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 11th MARCH 2020 AT 7:30pm
IN THE PARISH CHURCH SCHOOL ROOM

Members Present: Mrs Barbara Babb, Mr Andrew Hewitt, Mr George Heywood, Mr Jim Lowe,
Mr Trevor Mills

Also in attendance: 4 members of the public and Richard Hooper (co-opted at this meeting)

Parish Clerk: Mr P Blossie

| |
|---|
| KEY: Actions are shown in bold blue type Decisions are shown in bold red type |
|---|

181. Apologies for Absence David Watson, Cllr Barry Parsons and Cllr Phil Pennington

182. Minutes of the Meetings of the Parish Council held on 12th and 27th February 2020: The minutes of the meetings held on 12th and 27th February 2020 were agreed and signed.

183. Declarations of Interest None

184. Public Participation Stephen Leigh-Browne talked about damage to verges and the blockage of a drain in North Lane caused by large farm vehicles. A letter had been submitted, signed by 7 parishioners and supported by photographs of the damage. One complainant had talked to the farmer, Mr Peter Bromell, but he had not offered to repair the damage. Mr Browne asked the Parish Council to write to Mr Bromell. Andrew Hewitt pointed out that he probably doesn't have smaller vehicles and that he would be reliant on contractors using their own vehicles. He said that the Parish Council does not own North Lane and that, therefore, any dispute with neighbours needs to be dealt with as a private matter. This view was supported by the Clerk and two other councillors. One councillor said that very large vehicles had been seen using the lane without causing any damage and that it should be possible to avoid it if more care was taken. Jim Lowe pointed out that the lane is used as a public right of way by parishioners using the playing field and children's playground. **It was agreed that the Clerk would write to Mr Bromell highlighting the impact on the wider community.**

185. County and District Councillors' Reports

- a. Councillor Barry Parsons (Devon County Council): Cllr Parsons was not present but had sent a written report which is shown at appendix 1. Jim Lowe highlighted Cllr Parsons comment that there had been a 72% reduction in central government grant funding from 2010 to 2020 and that this ought to be widely publicized. He will write a short article for the website and Village Scene.
- b. Councillor Phil Pennington (Torridge Council): Not present.

186. Clerk's Report The Clerk reported that he had written to the Bridge Trust requesting a grant towards fitness equipment but had not yet had a reply. He reminded members that Register of Interest forms needed to be completed and returned to him as soon as possible. Only 3 had been received so far. Also, a letter signed by 7 parishioners had been received complaining about damage to North Lane by large farm vehicles. (see item 184: Public Participation). He pointed out that a sponsored 10k race in aid of The Hospice is being held shortly and wondered whether the Parish Council would like to support it with a small grant. It was agreed that the organisers should be asked to submit a written application.

a. Correspondence: There had been 46 items of correspondence since February's main meeting. The Clerk highlighted:

- i) Torridge Council: Parish Council Climate Emergency Workshop Invite, 21st March 2020: Now postponed due to Covid-19
- ii) Cllr Barry Parsons: Highways Visit: Cllr Parsons had met with Kieran Stanbury, the Head of Highways, who will visit Buckland Brewer in the near future to discuss road maintenance issues but was not prepared to discuss the issue of speeding traffic as it had been referred to SCARF. Members had been asked at the last meeting to make a list of highways problems and to mark them on a map. These were collated by Andrew Hewitt at the close of the meeting.
- iii) Calor's Rural Community Fund is ready to support local projects: The Clerk asked whether members wished to apply for a grant from this fund towards the adult fitness equipment scheme. In view of Torrington 100 turning down an application, it was agreed to take no further action until a more comprehensive project plan was approved.
- iv) Meeting Monday, 30th March 2020, 7.00 pm, Holsworthy Area Advisory Group Andrew Hewitt to attend.
- v) Torridge Planning Enforcement: Complaint E/18/0006/UND The Old Village Store
Notification had been received that this complaint had now been closed as the works had been approved. **It was agreed that the Clerk would write to the Enforcement Officer pointing out that the complaint about water from the roof draining over the wall and onto the public footpath (Vicar's' Path) had not been resolved.**
- vi) vi) Keep Britain Tidy: Fed up of Dog Fouling in BIDEFORD The Clerk asked if members were interested in pursuing a campaign about dog fouling. It was not pursued at this time but George Heywood was keen to get the message out that all dogs should be wormed properly.
- vii) vii) DALC Newsletter #10 2020: Cemetery capacity An urgent request had been received for information about cemetery capacity in light of the potential Covid-19 epidemic. The Clerk had asked Cllr David Watson to collate the information.

- b. Email addresses for Parish Council Business: The Clerk had asked all members to start using [name]@bucklandbrewer.org.uk email addresses in future to comply with the law regarding digital storage of government data. Some councillors had not yet migrated to the new system and were asked to comply as soon as they could.
- c. Membership of Devon Communities Together: The Clerk advised that, although the Council subscribes to DCTs online newsletters, it has not registered as a member. He felt that, since the Council benefited from its support (for example with the Parish Plan) it should support the organisation by paying an annual membership (currently £50). It was proposed by Jim Lowe, seconded by Barbara Babb and **agreed unanimously that Buckland Brewer should become members.**
- d. Torrington 100 Grant Application: The Clerk advised that the Council's application for a £500 grant towards adult fitness equipment had been turned down because it was part of a large scheme for which we did not yet have approval for any other grants. They were still keen to support the parish though, and had asked if we could submit another application for a smaller scheme, preferably one centred on supporting isolated and/or disadvantaged members of the community. **The item will be discussed at the next meeting. The Clerk will put an item on the website and in Village Scene.**
- e. Webmaster Update: Jane Lowe had submitted a letter firstly thanking members for their offer of an honorarium and secondly, that, in view of all the work needed to meet accessibility standards, she was happy to continue as Webmaster for the foreseeable future.

187. Dispensations for Cllr Jim Lowe Jim Lowe signed dispensations giving him the right to debate and vote on any issues concerning budgets, the setting of precepts and the village hall.

188. Parish Plan: Response for Annual Parish Meeting Parish councillors had met with the Parish Plan Steering Group on 17th February when the Parish Plan had been discussed in some depth. It was agreed that members of the Steering Group would make a short presentation about the Plan at the Annual Parish Meeting on 22nd April and that the Chair of the Parish Council would give a response about how it would be used to shape future decision making. The Plan is now available for download from the community website and printed copies have been available from the Community Shop since the last week of February. **It was agreed that the Parish Council would discuss this more fully at the meeting on 8th April 2020 and that the agenda would keep as brief as possible to allow more time for debate.**

189. Coronavirus update This issue has dominated the news in recent weeks and advice has been published by the NHS, Devon County Council and many other agencies. The Clerk asked whether the Parish Council should consider what measures it could put in place to assist parishioners, particularly those who might need to isolate themselves. **It was agreed to follow whatever government guidance was issued.**

190. Grant Application: The Plough Arts Centre, Torrington The Plough has submitted a grant application to Town and Parish Councils in the vicinity asking for financial help to meet immediate and future needs. **It was agreed that, as emergency measure, a grant of £200 should be awarded and that the organisation should be asked to submit an application and audited accounts in the normal way if they wished to be considered for future grant aid.**

191. Keep Britain Tidy: Playing Field Tidy-Up Event Since agreeing to organise a village tidy-up session on 18th April, it had come to light that the Playing Field Association was already organising its own event on 29th March. It was agreed that it would not necessarily be appropriate for these to happen at the same time but that the village tidy-up should be left until there is dryer weather. **A provisional date of Saturday 2nd May was agreed, starting at 10:00am at the village green and ending at 12:00pm with refreshments in the village hall.**

192. Thornhillhead Moor: Annual Graziers' Payments **Members agreed to pay the annual graziers payments for Thornhillhead Moor at the previously agreed rate of £7.50 per head.**

193. Northern Devon Right to Travel Meeting, 29th February 2020 Nobody had attended the meeting so there was nothing to report.

194. V.E. Day Remembrance Events The Clerk had not yet ordered the bunting etc but will do so in due course. It was noted that the bellringing will now take place at 7:15pm on Friday 8th May 2020.

195. School Field Rental Agreement and Proposed Amendment to Covenant: **The lease and accompanying map were signed and witnessed.** Confirmation that the covenantors had agreed to the change in the covenant had not yet been received and the lease cannot be issued until that is agreed.

196. Members' Reports

Barbara Babb said that the 'no parking' sign agreed for the shop had not yet been done. Andrew Hewitt will organize this. Also, the patch of tarmac by the shop still needs filling in. Andrew will do this when the weather permits.

Andrew Hewitt said that a new agricultural bill could affect the Council's field tenancy agreements, especially in relation to Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS).

197. Planning:

- a. Wildlife Surveys by Devon Biodiversity Records Centre: Report back by Jim Lowe Jim had not had an opportunity to look at this yet.

198. Co-option of New Councillors Mr Richard Hooper had asked to attend today's meeting as an observer before committing himself to nominating himself as a candidate for co-option. He gave a brief presentation of his background and reasons for wanting to join the Parish Council. **His nomination was proposed by Trevor Mills, seconded by Andrew Hewitt and approved unanimously.** Mr Hooper signed the Declaration of Acceptance and took his place as a councillor.

199. Accounts

- a. Receipts and Payments
 - i) Bank balances as at 28th February 2020 (£58,939.00):
 - (1) Parish Council Current Account was £4,722.29
 - (2) Thornhillhead Moor Account was £6,938.85
 - (3) Savings Account was £47,277.86

- ii) Fund balances as at 28th February 2020 (£58,939.00):
 - (1) General Account - £24,000.15
 - (2) Thornhill Head Account - £34,938.85
- iii) Payments due (£5,277.11 + VAT) The following list of payments was approved:
 - (1) Parish Clerk's salary, expenses and associated PAYE (February 2020): £536.79 + VAT, including PAYE of £98.10
 - (2) E.on, electricity - £7.12 + VAT
 - (3) Webmaster's Honorarium - £500.00
 - (4) Clysnet Ltd – Website Fees £270.00 + VAT
 - (5) Alan Sutton, Parish Plan expenses - £71.05
 - (6) Roger Walter, Allotment Deposit Refund - £100.00
 - (7) Various, Graziers Rights - £3,692.15
 - (8) The Plough Arts Centre, grant - £200.00
- iv) Receipts (£110.00)
 - (1) Allotment rent and deposits - £110.00

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 10:00 pm

Dates of Future Meetings:

~~Parish Council, Wednesday 8th April 2020 (7:30pm in the Parish Church Schoolroom)~~
~~Annual Parish Meeting, Wednesday 22nd April 2020 (8:00pm in the Village Hall)~~

Face-to-face meetings were cancelled w.e.f. 23rd March 2020 when the country went into 'lockdown' due to a coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. Legislation was passed cancelling the requirement to hold annual parish council or Annual Parish Meetings before May 2021.

Parish Council, Thursday 23rd July 2020 (7:30pm, remotely via Zoom)

Signed as a true record:

Chairman: **Date:**

Holsworthy Rural – County Councillor Update

01 March 2020

Members/Officers,

Whilst, and especially with a new government this may be a good period in terms of hopes and aspirations for many there holds the challenges of everyday living for the most of us especially in rural areas like ours. Our local bus services hold further challenge with the Stagecoach Consultation reviewing use of the 6/6A Service and the issues around caring for SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) children and those youngsters in care are significant. Every day we are faced with the challenges of looking after individuals, too, in Adult Care and of those needing medical support of different types. And, these are just a few of the issues facing us. So I hope, at least, that the recent spate of enduring bad weather has not inconvenienced you as it has others across some parts of this country.

In and around Holsworthy we have a tremendous community spirit and try and do whatever we can to alleviate some of these challenges, but we cannot do this alone.

A few days ago the Holsworthy Community Involvement Group (HCIG) – a group of local people representing our area along with members of the Holsworthy Hospital, councillors, and, the Clinical Commissioning Group – have sat down and met every fortnight over the past 18 months to try and establish how to best support our local community following the ‘temporary closure’ of hospital beds some three years ago held a public meeting to discuss progress and share recommendations.

There were two meetings on 18 February; one in the early afternoon and the other in the evening. In both meetings members of the public listened to what had been done in recent months, especially, and how in the absence of hospital beds facility has been arranged to accommodate those in need locally at two venues; Stratton Hospital (some 7 miles from Holsworthy) and at Deer Park Residential Home. In total, there are 4 beds at Stratton and 3 beds at Deer Park. The discussion around such usage was particularly encouraging and there was huge support for the significant reduction in people travelling to the major hospitals of Plymouth, Barnstaple and Exeter and for seeing the numbers of patients using Holsworthy

Hospital quadruple (500 to 2000 patients seen per month) over the last 12 months. This community effort has not been seen anywhere else in the country and I pay my fullest respect and thanks to those giving up so much of their time and energy to tackle this, the most serious of all challenges we face currently.

There is much work now going on between ourselves at Holsworthy and the community in North Cornwall. Relationships between a variety of bodies are looking towards 'geographical' solutions as opposed to those 'politically defined' and restrained. I am especially encouraged by such an outcome and can see such partnership working as beneficial in all sorts of ways, none the least being transport. There has, for example, been much support from Bude area in terms of representation regarding the 6/6A Bus Route consultation for which I have, of course, made strong representation to Stagecoach, our MP, other councillors and senior officers at the County Council.

On the medical front, too, I attended a 'My Care Expo Invitation' last week at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital to view for myself the progress being made by the NHS in moving forward the digitalisation of patient records which will ultimately address the issue of holding all information about individuals and their care on a single electronic record instead of the paper records we are all used to and watch staff at our hospitals repeatedly run around to find and transport in order to use. The My Care programme will be up-and-running mid-year and will enable each and every one of us to view details of, for example, our upcoming and past appointments; view results of tests and investigations; access trusted health information such as NHS Choices; and, send messages to your care team or receive alerts about re-scheduled appointments.

There is, indeed, a lot of change on the horizon. We have to address the short-comings of the present over-loaded systems and this is one of the ways in which we can address the very significant (and, likely rather long-term) shortage of staff across the NHS system.

On the matter of budgets Devon County Council Full Council Meeting was held on 20 February and in line with decisions made by my Cabinet colleagues and I the Council has approved the **investment of over £43 million of additional funding into front line public services in Devon in 2020/21**. Devon's non-schools budget will rise to £541 million for 2020/2021, an increase of 8.7 per cent on the current year. The Budget includes additional investment in social care and health, children's services, roads and drainage.

This Budget means an extra £23.7 million for adult care and health, £11.5 million more for children's services and £2.7 million for highways including £1 million to help deal with drainage issues on the County's 8,000-mile road network. In total the County Council's spending will rise by £43.1 million from £498 million in the current 2019/20 financial year. The budget proposals are a response to increasing demand on front-line services driven by a range of external factors including demographic and climate change impacts.

Context

The Government's reaffirmed commitment to a fair funding review of local government is welcome. The continuing wide disparity in funding between counties and metropolitan areas requires tackling. I think we all have very strong feelings about this. It is not acceptable to continue with the current Government funding per head of population that includes £258 for Devon compared to an average £421 for metropolitan councils and £556 for inner London boroughs.

There has been **a 72% real terms reduction in Government funding for Devon between 2010 and 2019/20**. During that period of austerity, the County Council has reduced its spending by nearly £300 million and staff numbers by nearly 3,000.

Through a combination of efficiencies, innovation and collaboration with other councils, Devon has managed to protect many important public services during this time. All of Devon's 50 libraries remain open, some with longer opening hours. The County has maintained a universal youth service and provided targeted support for the most vulnerable youngsters, and working ever more closely with health partners, the County has maintained services for the elderly and vulnerable adults.

However, the demand-led pressures on all Devon's front-line services continue to rise exacerbated by demographic and climate change.

With every best wish,

Barry