

**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**  
**OF BUCKLAND BREWER PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON**  
**WEDNESDAY 13<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2019 AT 7:30pm**  
**IN THE PARISH CHURCH SCHOOL ROOM**

**Members Present:** Mrs Barbara Babb, Mr Andrew Hewitt, Mr George Heywood, Mrs Elisa Hurley, Mr Jim Lowe, Mr Trevor Mills and Mrs Rosemary Sanders

**Also in attendance:** None

**Parish Clerk:** Mr P Blosse

<b>KEY: Actions are shown in bold blue type    Decisions are shown in bold red type</b>
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**883.    Apologies for Absence**                      Marie Douglas, David Watson and Cllr Barry Parsons (DCC)

**884.    Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2019:** The minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2019 were agreed and signed.

**885.    Declarations of Interest**                      Barbara Babb re item 899.d, Lower Abbots pre-planning application

**886.    Public Participation**                              None

**887.    Clerk's Report:**

a.    **Correspondence:** There had been 46 items of correspondence since the last meeting. The Clerk highlighted: i) **Torridge Council: Newsletter regarding Elections** in May 2019, including the timetable of actions required during the period before the election on 2<sup>nd</sup> May. The Clerk reminded members that a period of 'purdah' exists from 15<sup>th</sup> March to 2<sup>nd</sup> May, during which time the Parish Council must take care not to publicise controversial issues in such way that identifies individuals or groups of people. The Annual Parish Meeting is due to take place within that period and members were asked to bear this in mind at that meeting. The Clerk also pointed out that it will be necessary to move the May meeting to 15<sup>th</sup> May 2019 in order to comply with the legal requirement to a) hold the first meeting within 14 days of the election, b) allow for a Bank Holiday that falls in that period, and c) issue legal summonses to the new Parish Councillors. This limits the window of opportunity to between Monday 13<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> May. A change of rules now requires prospective candidates to collect and return nomination papers personally to Riverbank House. ii) **Devon Highways: Response re suggestion about ditch clearances:** The Clerk had written to Highways with George Heywood's suggestion about the timing of ditch clearances and received a reply that seemed not to recognize the problem. It has been referred to Cllr Barry Parsons who will take it up with the department personally. iii) **Cllr. Barry Parsons: Holsworthy Rural County Councillor Update (March 2019):** The County Councillor had sent a comprehensive report covering Council Tax, Highways Budgets and Holsworthy Hospital which is attached at Appendix 1. iv) **Holsworthy Area Advisory Group – Agenda, 25th March 2019.** Jim Lowe said that he would attend.

- b. TTVS Annual Membership Renewal: **Members agreed unanimously to renew their annual membership at a cost of £25**
- c. Update re Dog Bins: The Clerk had spoken to the Waste Management Department at Torridge, who had confirmed that some large bags of dog waste were causing a problem at the Amenity Field site. In the first instance, they have offered to put up notices suggesting that large bags should be left under the bins, not in them (to avoid numerous small bags being thrown on the ground) and to continue to monitor the area to see if additional bins are needed. Andrew Hewitt suggested that the parish council should promote a scheme for dog waste to be managed at home. George Heywood questioned whether owners required public liability insurance. **The Clerk will investigate suitable schemes and clarify the legal position, and will report back at the next meeting.**
- d. Connecting Actively to Devon Scheme: A letter had been received from Torridge Council promoting a scheme called 'Connecting Actively to Nature', aimed at providing outdoor activities for over-55s. They are looking for suggestions for suitable activities and also CAN Ambassadors who would be expected to provide 2-3 voluntary hours per week plus some meetings and training. - Noted
- e. The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No.2) Accessibility Regulations 2018: The Clerk informed members about a new piece of legislation that requires all government run or supported websites to comply with regulations aimed at improving accessibility for all members of society. There has been no 'plain English' guideline issued yet, and we do not have to comply until 2020. However, there could be quite a bit of work involved in identifying what needs to be done, making some changes to existing content, and ensuring that any future content complies. The Clerk will undertake most of the work, but it will undoubtedly also impact on the Webmaster at some point. **The Clerk was asked to write to DALC to ask for guidance.**
- f. Annual Meeting Guest Speakers: Two guest speakers have confirmed their availability for the Annual Parish Meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> April; Chris Fuller, Economic Development Officer for Torridge and John Hector, Chair of the Parish Plan Steering Group. John has said that, if he is unable to come, one of the other members will attend in his place.
- g. New Tables: Jim Lowe said that he had received a letter from Margaret Lloyd thanking the Parish Council for supplying the new tables. Elisa Hurley pointed out that the PCC had put up a notice about their use which was not appropriate since the Parish Council ensured that it had bought tables that would be suitable for all to use. Jim Lowe said that he would pursue it.
- h. Village Green Road: Jim Lowe reported that he had discussed maintenance the road with the Cllr Barry Parsons and Devon Highways following the discovery that it was adopted by the Highways Department. It had been agreed that the Parish Council could proceed with the work since it was not a road that the County Council could resurface at any time in the foreseeable future. The department will arrange for a section 171 notice and will liaise directly with the contractor.

#### **888. Fields and Allotments:**

- a. Minutes of the Meeting of the Fields and Allotments Sub-Committee Held on 4th March 2019 and a report by Elisa Hurley (Chair): Elisa Hurley presented the minutes of the last Fields and Allotments Sub-Committee, which were signed as a true record. There were a few items picked up on some of the allotments and recommendations were made to give two tenants three months' notice to tidy their plots or give them up for other people as there are now two people on the waiting list. Recommendations were made to improve the passageway behind the Chapel and to try to get it designated as a public right of way.

It was noted that Trevor had finished installing the new gate to the allotments. The Clerk had been asked to provide a breakdown of Trevor's expenses on the works to the amenity and school fields and to estimate the cost of the school field fencing. The rent review, which needs to be considered during 2019/20 to take effect from March 2021 was discussed and the sub-committee members had recommended an increase in allotment rents to £50 per full plot and £35 per half plot. **The Clerk will arrange a meeting with Hicks & Co. to review field rents later in the year.** See Appendix 2 for full minutes) The Full Council considered the recommendations and agreed the following:

Items 46.a.i-vii: **Agreed unanimously**

Item 46.a.viii: **Tenant to be given 3 months' notice to remove a trampoline, tyres and a treehouse and to tidy their plot**

Item 46.c: **Trevor Mills will contact the Young Farmers about working on the footpath behind the chapel. It was agreed that the Parish Council will pay for a digger. The Clerk was asked to find out what progress is being made on the redirection of a footpath previously agreed by the Footpaths Officer.**

Item 48: The Clerk provided a breakdown of the cost of fences and gates for the school field/village hall. **Members agreed which items constituted the portion to be divided equally between the Parish Council and the Village Hall Trustees and that an invoice for £1,395.15 should be raised.**

Item 49: Members felt that the recommendation to increase allotment rents to £50 were not appropriate. The Clerk had distributed a summary of allotment rents in North Devon and elsewhere in the South West. Members suggested that £25 would be a more appropriate increase but that any decision would be made later in the year as part of an overall rents review that would be published by March 2020 and would take effect in March 2021.

- b. School Field Rental Agreement and Proposed Amendment to Covenant: The County Solicitor had responded on behalf of the school and had asked for changes or clarification on the following points.
- I. **Consider the Term of the Lease: 5 or 10 years:** The school would prefer a 10-year lease rather than 5 (an open-ended lease could not be agreed as this would have had to be a licence rather than a lease) **Approved unanimously**
  - II. **Clarification of 4.1.a re Consultation on Use Outside of School Hours:** **It was agreed that the wording should be changed to reflect that use would not be requested during school opening times and that permission would be sought from the Head Teacher – such permission not to be unreasonably withheld.**
  - III. **Review of 4.1.d re Reserved Rights Over Wayleaves:** **It was agreed that the clause should stand but that it should be made clear that access would be subject to agreement by the school and that suppliers would be required to make full reinstatement.**

IV. **Consider Request to Provide a Minimum of 3-months' Notice at the End of the Term for Removal of Erections and Structures:** Members asked for clarification about the purpose of this request.

V. **Consider Request for the Right to Assign the Lease to the Secretary of State:**  
**Agreed by a vote of 5 to 2 that the right should be assigned to the Secretary of State provided that it was in order for the site to continue to be used for educational purposes.**

889. **Pension Arrangements:** Members noted that the minimum employer contribution increases to 5% with effect from April 2019. Although the present Clerk is not a member of the pension scheme, members were concerned about any additional burden the Council would have to bear in the year that he is replaced by another Clerk, who might want to join the scheme. It was agreed that this would amount to only a few hundred pounds and that this could be met from reserves pending the following year's precept.

890. **Village Hall Update, Marie Douglas:** In Marie's absence, Trevor Mills reported that a grant of £1,000 had been offered by the District Councillor towards a floor polisher/cleaner. The following Sunday there was to be a 'Big Brunch' event. The next Trustees meeting is due to take place in 2 weeks' time. All of the past minutes are now posted on the website.

891. **New Defibrillator:**

- a. CPR & Defibrillator Training has been arranged for the afternoon of the 30<sup>th</sup> March 2019 and will be run by Julia Landolfi again. All are welcome.
- b. Defibrillator Accreditation has been confirmed with South West Ambulance following an inspection on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2019. David Watson has agreed that he will check both defibrillators each week and complete the monthly return to SWA.

892. **3<sup>rd</sup> Age Activities/Luncheon Club:** There will be a Community Lunch on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2019. **It was agreed that the Parish Council will pay for the hall hire.**

893. **Keep Britain Tidy: Spring Clean 2019:** The Clerk had contacted the parishioner who had previously shown an interest in litter campaigns to ask if she would be willing to spearhead a 'tidy up' event in the village. For personal reasons she was not able to at this time. However, Andrew Hewitt reported that the Playing Field Association is organising a tidy up for Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> April and that they are willing to extend the scope to take in the rest of the village.

894. **Reuse Credit Scheme – Consultation:** Noted.

895. **Flashing Speed Signs and Wireless Monitoring Systems:**

- a. Installation Schedule: The order has been submitted but no delivery date has yet been provided as they are awaiting payment. The post has recently been installed by Devon County Council. It will be the Parish Council's responsibility to fit the machine to the pole.

- b. Grant application: The Clerk had submitted a Communities Together Fund application to Torridge Council including a confirmation from the supplier that a 5% discount would be offered if an order for 3 battery operated machines could be issued at the same time. Abbotsham Council was not prepared to make their decision sufficiently quickly, so the Clerk has submitted an order for one machine for Buckland Brewer. The grant application was approved immediately, and the funds have already been received; £760 for Buckland Brewer and £432 for Abbotsham. In total, the Council has secured £1,809 in grant funding towards the scheme, leaving only £469 to be met from Parish Council funds.

**896. Thornhillhead Moor – Approval of Annual Graziers’ Payments:** Graziers’ payments were set at £7.50 per head in 2015/16. There have been no changes of ownership in the past year. **Members agreed unanimously to make no change to the rate of payment and approved payments amounting to £3,692.15.** The Clerk also reported that Hicks and Co. had submitted an invoice for their management fee covering the last 5 years in the sum of £2,500 + VAT. **The Clerk was asked to request annual invoices in future years.**

**897. Snow Warden’s Report:** George Heywood said that he would order a re-supply of salt in the summer months, when it is easier to obtain.

**898. Members’ Reports:**

Barbara Babb said that there is a blocked drain just below Barton Farm. She also referred to an email that John Hector had sent to the Clerk about Parish Plan expenses, but the Clerk had not yet received it.

Andrew Hewitt had attended an Area Group meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> March. Torridge now only get £600,000 in Rate Support Grant. Devon County is also working on a tight budget and is keen to get money transferred from the New Homes Bonus Scheme and Business Council Taxes. Also, he had reported a pothole near Catsborough Cross and asked whether the Parish Council would consider taking over as Playing Field Association’s Trustees. This will be added to the agenda for the May meeting, to be considered by the new Parish Council.

George Heywood reported that the hedges along Back Lane needed trimming. It was agreed that nothing could be done until the Autumn and that it should be discussed again later in the year. He also reported blocked drains in Monkleigh Mill Lane and above Burrough Farm. George also raised the question of parking outside the school gates again. Jim Lowe talked about incidents of notes being left on parked cars. It was believed that much of the problem is teachers’ parking there and that this could be relieved if they could park in the Village Hall car park. The Parish Council was advised by those members who were also Village Hall Trustees that this was not a problem and there had been no request for the school to pay for parking places. **Jim Lowe will discuss it with the Head Teacher.**

Jim Lowe i) Easter buses: Jim reported that there will be a bus on the Thursday before Easter but not on the Tuesday after. ii) Village Green road adopted by DCC: He had discussed with Cllr Barry Parsons and Devon Highways the issue that had arisen this month about discovering that the road has been adopted by Devon County. The Highways Department had given their permission for the work to go ahead and will arrange for a section 171 notice and will coordinate the work with the supplier.

Trevor Mills reported that the field at Kelvinstowe needs a new gate. **It was agreed that the Parish Gate will meet the costs. The Clerk will write to the tenant to ask him to carry out the work.**

**899. Planning:**

- a. Application: 1/0067/2019/FUL, Vielstone Annexe, Variation to Condition 2 of Planning Approval 1/1719/94/14/0003 (to allow use as a holiday let) **Approved unanimously**
- b. Application: 1/0082/2019/FUL, Hembury Castle Annexe, Removal of condition 2 of planning permission 1/1657/1997 (ancillary condition) **Approved unanimously**
- c. Application: 1/0184/2019/FUL, Adipits, Conversion of Stables to Holiday Accommodation **Approved unanimously**
- d. Feedback from Lower Abbots Pre-Planning Application Open Meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2019: A few people had attended the recent open meeting and there had not been many objections to the proposal. Thanks were extended to Paul Knox for organising the event. There are 7 affordable houses in the mix. The Local Plan requires 70% to be rented and 25% to be 'intermediate' sales (i.e. shared ownership, discounted payment schemes etc.). The intermediate option was not popular among members. It was agreed that Aster Homes were the most appropriate housing association to take on these houses as they already manage those at Hillpark. **Jim Lowe will write to Paul Knox to say that the Parish Council would prefer to see 7 rented social houses.**

**900. Accounts**

a. Receipts and Payments

I. Bank balances as at 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019 (£54,752.54):

1. Parish Council Current Account was £9,015.36
2. Thornhillhead Moor Account was £11,527.74
3. Savings Account was £34,209.44

II. Fund balances as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2019 (£54,752.54):

1. General Account - £23,224.80
2. Thornhill Head Account - £31,527.74

III. Payments due (£9,401.72 + VAT)

The following list of payments was approved:

1. Parish Clerk's salary, expenses and associated PAYE (Feb 2018): £631.52, including PAYE - £83.50 and reclaimed expenses for purchasing 4 new tables of £182.80 + VAT
2. J Lowe, printer cartridge - £29.56 + VAT
3. Buckland Brewer Village Hall, hall hire - £10.00
4. Buckland Brewer Methodist Church, hall hire - £24.00
5. TTVS, Membership fee - £25.00
6. Abbotsham Parish Council, Communities Together Fund - £432.00
7. South West Water, water charges - £22.84
8. Stocksigns Ltd, Vehicle Activated Sign - £2,028.00+ VAT
9. E.on, electricity supply - £6.65 + VAT
10. Hicks & Co., Thornhillhead Moor management fee - £2,500 + VAT
11. Various graziers, Graziers' fees - £3,692.15

IV. Receipts

1. Torridge Council, Communities Together Fund Grant - £1,192.00

**There being no further business, the meeting closed at 10:45 pm**

**Dates of Future Meetings:**

Parish Council: Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2019 (7:30pm in the Parish Church School Room)

Annual Parish Meeting, Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2019 (8:00pm in the Village Hall)

**Signed as a true record:**

**Chairman:** ..... **Date:** .....

**Cllr. Barry Parsons: Holsworthy Rural County Councillor Update (March 2019)**

Dear Members and Officers,

I am choosing to write about three items of some importance (Council Tax, Highways funding, and, matters related to the Holsworthy Hospital) and would appreciate you sharing such information with residents for which I am sure there will be some interest. I apologise in advance for the following being a comparatively long update.

Members and officers will be aware that organisations like Devon County Council (DCC) have just approved/in the process of approving Budgets for 2019-20. This is not an easy job. Central Government funding for local authorities has been reducing, very significantly, since 2009. Locally, such cuts have been in the order of £25million to £30million, annually. With 10 years of austerity along these lines it doesn't take much to work out the cumulative losses that councils such as DCC have had to bear.

**Council Tax:**

Funding for DCC and alike authorities is now very closely aligned to the Government's long-term objective that essential funding be dependent upon 2 things – Business Rates and Council Tax. Given the uncertainties still around the former, it is the latter about which I would like to comment.

I want to give you an example – one that is pretty extreme (but true) and, will serve to make my point. The council tax on a seven-bedroom house worth £17 million in Westminster would only accrue a £1,376 annual council tax bill, whilst the occupants of a Band D property in Torrington (say, worth around £400K) would be expected to fork out £1823 each year. There is a real issue for me in terms of how much the amount of tax paid varies from area to area.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's own data for 2018-19 shows us that:

The average Band D council tax set by local authorities in England for 2018-19 will be £1,671 which is an increase of £81 or 5.1% on the 2017-18 figure of £1,591.

In 2018-19, 148 out of 152 adult social care authorities utilised some or all of the 3% adult social care precept flexibility when setting their council tax. This additional flexibility accounts for £30 of the average Band D council tax bill.

The average area Band D council tax will be £1,405 in London (an increase of £55 when compared to 2017-18), £1,658 in metropolitan areas (+£83), £1,729 (+£89) in unitary areas and £1,749 (+£86) in shire areas.

The council tax requirement in 2018-19 is £29.6 billion, of which £538 million (1.8%) will be raised through the adult social care precept, and £518 million (1.8%) will be raised through parish precepts. For those areas where parishes charge a precept, there has been an average Band D parish precept increase of 4.9% in 2018-19.



Last year, I quoted rates of Band D Council Tax for different areas. I'd like to re-iterate:

- Average for England at £1671
- Average for London at £1405
- Average for Metropolitan at £1658
- Average for Shires at £1749
- And, for Torridge .... £1821

With low wages and rural isolation as we have it I am not quite sure how this measure is in any way fair and have raised it again - most recently - at DCC Cabinet's last meeting.

### **HIGHWAYS:**

Councils in England and Wales paid out £45 million last year in pothole-related compensation, including to cyclists, according to Freedom of Information figures obtained by BBC Radio 5 Live Investigates. Cycling UK supports the Local Government Association's long-standing call for the Government to re-invest a portion of existing fuel duty into local road maintenance every year to help generate funding for councils to spend on addressing the £9.3 billion roads repair backlog.

For us locally there is a bit of positive news on the funding for our road network.

There will be 3 mainstream additional funding areas:

1. Pothole Action Fund (PAF)
2. £4.4 million Resilience Fund (RF)
3. Extra £6.5 million for highways, proposed by cabinet and ratified by full council in February 2018

### **PAF:**

<u>Electoral Division</u>	<u>Allocation</u>
Bideford East ED	£26,477.00
Bideford West and Hartland ED	£79,000.00
Hatherleigh and Chagford ED	£60,148.00
Holsworthy Rural ED	£118,375.00
Northam ED	£23,172.00
Okehampton Rural ED	£26,409.00
Tavistock ED	£19,139.00
Torrington Rural ED	£77,601.00
Yelverton Rural	£34,033.00

TOTAL £464 354 (POTHOLE ACTION FUND)

**RF:**

<u>Electoral Division</u>	<u>Allocation</u>
Bideford East ED	£58,859.34
Bideford West and Hartland ED	£175,617.66
Hatherleigh and Chagford	£133,707.94
Holsworthy Rural	£263,148.53
Northam ED	£51,512.24
Okehampton Rural ED	£58,707.85
Tavistock ED	£42,546.12
Torrington Rural ED	£172,507.45
Yelverton Rural ED	£75,660.15

(RESILIENCE FUND – TOTAL £1 032 267)

**CABINET FUNDING** £6.5M to be targeted towards; Highway drainage, Highway patching, and pothole repairs.

**HOSPITAL – related**

The Holsworthy Community Involvement Group continues to work with members of the Clinical Commissioning Group in addressing local concerns related to our hospital. The recent update from the group includes, “Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust is working on a project in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support to improve the quality of life for people with cancer in northern Devon. The Living With and Beyond Cancer Project is focused on ensuring all cancer patients have access to support, feel that their needs are understood and feel enabled to take an active role in their care. To complement the developments that are happening through this project, the counselling team launched their first counselling outreach project in northern Devon at Holsworthy Community Hospital in October 2018.”

And, “Project lead Steven Johnson-Wood said: “Cancer can affect many areas of a person’s life, not just their physical health, and counselling can help people cope better with the difficulties faced during and after cancer diagnosis and treatment. The counselling team at Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust recognise that their services are incredibly valued by patients and we’re really pleased that the cancer care counselling service is now available in Holsworthy, bringing this service closer to home for the Holsworthy community and adding to the variety of clinics, services and groups offered at the hospital.””

Early indications from the Community Survey which show EOL care is a priority, the Holsworthy Community Involvement Group (HCIG) has officially requested the NHS to consider interim bed provision for the town and local area. To this end, the CCG and NDHT are now in discussions with a view to supporting EOL and rehabilitation inpatient beds by working with other local providers.

If approved, this will complement the >50 services, clinics and groups at Holsworthy Community Hospital. This includes new services such as those for chronic kidney disease, depression and anxiety, multiple sclerosis and kidney care. In addition, there are >35 Health and Soc Care Staff providing care in the local community to rehabilitate patients, avoid admissions and promote independence.

With every best wish, Barry