

**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**  
**OF BUCKLAND BREWER PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON**  
**THURSDAY 23<sup>rd</sup> JULY 2020 AT 7:30pm**  
**(MEETING HELD REMOTELY VIA ZOOM)**

**Members Present:** Mrs Barbara Babb, Mr Andrew Hewitt, Mr Richard Hooper, Mr George Heywood, Mr Jim Lowe, Mr Trevor Mills and Mr David Watson

**Also in attendance:** 1 member of the public, Cllr Phil Pennington (Torridge Council) and Cllr Barry Parsons (Devon County Council)

**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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*This was the first public meeting of the Parish Council since the introduction of new legislation in April 2020 preventing councils from meeting face-to-face due to the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. Before the meeting started the Chair and the Clerk explained how the meeting would be conducted with most participants muted for most of the time, and how councillors should indicate that they wished to speak.*

**200. Apologies for Absence** Bob Wilson

**201. Declarations of Interest** George Heywood re items 214.a.ii & iii (planning applications) and Trevor Mills re item 214.a.i (planning application)

**202. Review of Dates and Arrangements for Future Meetings** It was agreed that regular meetings would resume on 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month with effect from 12<sup>th</sup> August 2020. These will be held remotely using Zoom until such time as social distancing regulations are lifted or a venue becomes available at which any such guidelines can be accommodated.

**203. Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020:** The minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020 were agreed and will be signed by the Chair in due course. Jim Lowe commented that the Parish Council's contribution to The Plough had been acknowledged in the local paper.

**204. Public Participation** None

**205. County and District Councillors' Reports**

- a. **Councillor Barry Parsons (Devon County Council):** Barry had kindly offered a grant of £500 towards the legal fees regarding the licence needed to accompany the lease of the school field. The Clerk reported that our solicitor has been asked to draft the licence and he will distribute as soon as he can. The grant had already been received. It had been agreed that the process by which parish and town councils can fund and install VAS will be included as part of the County's Traffic Speed Project Group. He gave his personal perspective on current events. He is not physically attending meetings but is happy to attend remote

meetings like this and believes that it will remain like this for some time. The first meeting had taken place of a joint outbreak engagement board called First Team Devon, bringing together the County Council DALC, the police, health organisations, district councils and the voluntary sector to manage the pandemic locally. Devon has been recognised as a beacon county due to its excellent collaboration. There had been only 11 new cases of Covid-19 reported in Devon last week and the county is 149<sup>th</sup> out of 150 districts in terms of case numbers. With the tourist season upon us there might be some challenges to come. Barry is on the Health and Wellbeing Board. Torridge has more category 1 issues to deal with than any other. Andrew Hewitt reported that the minor injury unit in Bideford is closed.

- b. Councillor Phil Pennington (Torridge Council): Phil that the biggest issue to deal with at the moment is the funding of support and services during the coronavirus pandemic. He reported that work was underway on the slipway at Westward Ho! He noted that Torridge household income is the lowest in the County and this reflects on house maintenance. He reported that there are two grant schemes available for which applications must be made by 29<sup>th</sup> July: the Retail and Hospitality Grant Scheme and the Small Business Grant Fund. There was a discussion about the GVA (gross value added<sup>1</sup>) and noted that in Torridge it is £16,000, half of the figure for Exeter and even less than the average for the country. Phil said that 7,700 people in Torridge had been enrolled into the furlough scheme. He suspected that mortgage and rent payments will be under pressure and repossessions could rise. There could be a generational divide. Many older people are on fixed incomes but the younger, working population are under more pressure. He noted that Cornwall had benefited from more European subsidies in the past. George Heyward reported that some of the agricultural industry (depending on the client base) had suffered as badly as the tourism industry. Phil report that food waste in April had increased by 26 tons despite there being no tourists, reflecting perhaps the over-buying/hoarding that had occurred at the beginning of the lockdown. It was noted that Hinkley Point is pulling some of the skilled labour to Somerset. Andrew Hewitt said that North Devon needed more industry if it was to compete. Barry Parsons said that the link road was being updated which was encouraging news.

## 206. Clerk's Report

- a. Correspondence There had been 329 items of correspondence since the last meeting in March 2020.
- b. Email referred to Action Fraud A message had been received via the community website's 'contact us' page that implied that our 'database' had been hacked and that it's contents would be made public unless we paid the equivalent of £3,000 in bitcoins. Although it was clear that was an idle threat the Clerk felt that, since a demand for money had been made with threats, he should report it to the Action Fraud website. It is highly unlikely that there will be any further developments. The community website is accessible to the public worldwide so there is no way to stop similar threats happening in the future. However, there

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<sup>1</sup> **Gross Value Added (GVA) measures** the contribution to the economy of each individual producer, industry or sector. Simplistically it is the value of the amount of goods and services that have been produced, less the cost of all inputs and raw materials that are directly attributable to that production.

is no 'database' linked to the website and no risk that anyone could access anything that is not, in any case, public information.

## **207. Coronavirus Update**

Changes to legislation mean that it is not necessary to hold either an Annual Parish Council Meeting or Annual Parish Meeting before May 2021, and it is acceptable for the Chair to continue in office until that time, unless the Parish Council chooses to elect another person. The deadline for submitting annual returns to the external auditor has been extended to the end of September 2020 and for publication until November 2020. The Clerk reported that he will be submitting the year end accounts and all the necessary annual paperwork to the Internal Auditor on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> July and that he hopes that the annual returns and accounts can be approved at the next Parish Council meeting. **It was agreed that the Clerk will write to Geoffrey Cox, MP in support of the Local Electricity Bill.**

- a. Buckland Brewer Emergency Response Arrangements At the outset of the lockdown Cllr Jim Lowe called an emergency public meeting, with the Parish Council's consent, to establish a plan for meeting parishioner's emergency needs. It was agreed that the existing pool of community shop volunteers, enhanced with additional helpers, should form a network of emergency responders. The team was supported by a 24-hour hotline operated by some of the volunteers and the services offered included shopping, collecting prescriptions, delivery of meals and pastoral care. The work was ably co-ordinated by Lyn Layton who will attend a later meeting of the Parish Council to explain in more detail how the operation worked. The formal network is to be disbanded on 1<sup>st</sup> August, but Lyn will still be able to call on a small group of volunteers if needed. David Watson said that the foodbank collections had been very generous. He noted that some of the items in emergency supplies had not been usable by the recipients and some of this had found its way to the foodbank.
- b. Purchase of PPE Cllr Trevor Mills suggested that the Parish Council should carry a supply of PPE for use by ourselves, for example, when checking the defibrillators etc. This was agreed and Andrew Hewitt will provide a small supply of gloves.
- c. Establishing an Emergency Planning Group Andrew Hewitt need to update our plans for all emergency situations – key holder, phone numbers etc. Jim Lowe suggested getting other people involved but this would need a public meeting. It was agreed that this would be undertaken at a later date.

## **208. Torrington 100**

- a. Grant Application: Celebratory Lunch/Thank you to Volunteers The Clerk had been contacted by Cathy Richards of Torrington 100 who was keen to ensure that the parish benefited from grant funding that was available. A claim was submitted to fund a post-coronavirus parish event that would bring people together again, when social distancing guidance permits. It would also provide an opportunity to thank the many volunteers and 'good neighbours' who have helped to ensure that the more vulnerable and isolated members of the community were looked after. A memorial book will also be provided to record parishioners lockdown stories and photographs.
- b. 'Coping With Covid' Film Project Torrington 100 is also promoting a local film project to provide a permanent record of how we coped during the coronavirus pandemic. The Clerk had passed the details on to the Buckland Brewer History Group.

**209. Community Assets: Coach and Horses Pub** Bob Wilson had asked for this item to be discussed to determine what, if anything, the Parish Council could do to ensure that the parish could retain its pub if the present owners decide to sell. There is a process for registering a building as a community asset. The Clerk advised that this was a relatively simple process but that the Council ought to have a clear plan of how any future scheme would be financed and managed before pursuing that route. Jim Lowe paraphrased some of the guidance that the Clerk had previously distributed and it was noted that the community could be involved in many ways without the Parish Council having to bear all the costs. **It was agreed that Andrew Hewitt would seek more advice from Councillor Hicks before any further decisions were taken and would report back at the next meeting.**

**210. Lease of Field at Higher Turnaway** Two tenders had been received for the lease of this field. Both potential tenants want to graze sheep and take hay for winter feed. The Clerk had distributed an anonymised summary of the two bids prior to the meeting. It was decided to deal with the item under part II rules.

**211. Education Support Fund** Jim Lowe gave a summary of last year's activity on the fund and reported that Lorna Hicks had resigned from the committee. It was hoped that an AGM would be held in early September and that grants would be awarded in October. The Clerk had distributed a copy of the Fund Accounts for 2019/20 prior to the meeting.

**212. Fencing Works in Orleigh Close** It was reported some weeks ago that a fence was being erected in Orleigh Close that appeared to be encroaching on land owned by Devon County Council. The matter was reported to Devon Highways who issued an order for the fence line to be rectified and they will re-inspect in early August.

**213. Use of fields by metal detectorists** Richard Hooper had been approached by a parishioner asking if any of the parish owned fields could be used by metal detectorists. The parishioner had also contacted the Clerk directly. The Council decided not to give permission, but it was reported that the parishioner had now found a privately owned field where he could dig.

**214. Planning**

a. Applications

- i) Application: 1/0503/2020/FUL, Bearah, Proposed extension (Variation of condition 2 of planning permission 1/0326/2017/FUL) – **supported unanimously**
- ii) Application: 1/0504/2020/FUL, Land to the west of Tower Hill, Reserved matters application for 5 dwellings, pursuant to outline application 1/0784/2016/OUT (Variation of condition 1 of planning permission 1/0634/2018/REM) – **supported unanimously**
- iii) Application: 1/0505/2020/FUL, Land to the west of Tower Hill, Outline application for 5 dwellings, including access and parking for 1 & 2 Bell Cottages and 1 & 2 Tower Hill (Variation of condition 3 of planning permission 1/0784/2016/OUT – **supported unanimously**
- iv) Application: 1/0513/2020/FUL, Thornebere, Thorne Farm, Proposed change of use of annexe to holiday let accommodation – **supported unanimously**

- b. 1/1134/2018/FULM - Land at Southwood Meadow – contribution to accessible green infrastructure. The Clerk reported that the majority decision of the councillors when

consulted during the lockdown had been that any funds should be allocated towards a purpose-built adult fitness scheme in the amenity field. The Clerk had responded to Torridge Planning accordingly.

c. Decisions

- i) Decision: 1/1157/2019/FUL, East Hele, Agricultural building – granted permission
- ii) Decision: 1/0082/2020/FUL, Old Village Hall, Variation of Condition 2 of 1/0868/2017/FUL (Demolition of extensions and change of use of village hall to dwelling, alterations to existing access and on-site parking provision) – granted permission
- iii) Decision: 1/0286/2020/FUL; Land South West Of Buckland Brewer, Erection of 3 bungalows – Granted Permission
- iv) Decision: 1/0293/2020/FUL, The Beeches, Change of use of part of domestic annexe building to create one unit of tourist accommodation – granted permission
- v) Decision: 1/0345/2020/FUL, Timber Lodge, Proposed calf rearing building – granted permission
- vi) Decision: 1/0267/2020/FULM, Land at Bulkworthy, Variation of condition 6 (l) and (n) of planning permission 1/1177/2015/FULM (5 megawatt solar park and ancillary development (on 14.6 hectares of land)) to amend HGV access route and frequency of road survey – granted permission
- vii) Decision: 1/0788/2019/FULM, Land North of East Hillpark, Proposed Development of 35 New Houses and associated works – Granted permission

**215. Members Reports**

- a. Andrew Hewitt said that there were online training courses available, including one for new councillors. Andrew also reported that some work was needed on the field at South Church Park. The gateway needs improvement and a new drain needs laying. This will be added to the next agenda.
- b. George Heywood said that an application for a new scheme for managing the SSSI should be lodged as soon as possible if we are to be successful in the next round of bids for a higher scheme. Andrew Hewitt will discuss this with Bob Hicks when he meets him on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2020.
- c. Jim Lowe reported that another set of data had been taken from the speed light. The Clerk explained that he had decided to distribute the results and add it to the August agenda as this month's meeting already had enough on it for the members to deal with. He would also be reporting on the previous year's accounts and the annual returns at the next meeting.
- d. David Watson asked who was responsible for cutting the hedge between Greenings Road and Orleigh Close. Andrew Hewitt believed that it is the owners' responsibility.

***At this point the public was excluded from the meeting to discuss an item under Part II regulations.***

**There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9:25 pm**

**Dates of Future Meetings:**

Parish Council, Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> August 2020 (7:30pm, remotely via Zoom))

*Face-to-face meetings were cancelled w.e.f. 23<sup>rd</sup> 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.*

**Signed as a true record:**

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