

# **Buckland Brewer Parish Council**

## **Rural Settlement Plan 2013**

### **Submission to Torridge District Council - Overview**

Buckland Brewer is described in the draft North Devon & Torridge Local Plan as a local centre. This means that it is a community with a range of facilities such as a number of shops, a pub, a church, a chapel, a primary school, public transport etc., which could be made more sustainable by an increase of population by development. The draft plan suggests an increase of 19 houses over the next 20 years but the Parish Council believes that if this were accepted a number of the existing amenities could be lost. The village Post Office and shop failed because there were not enough people living in the village to support them. The school loses some potential intake of children because parents cannot find suitable housing that they can afford in the village.

There is a strong feeling within the Parish Council that, by encouraging some development, the age profile of the village could be lowered and couples with young families would be drawn in to use the existing facilities and perhaps to prompt new ones.

There are a number of sites suitable for development within the village, and this is important. The village could suffer if development was allowed to spread haphazardly into the surrounding countryside.

This Rural Settlement Plan will enable villagers to influence future development to their advantage by keeping tighter control on the types of development, encouraging the provision of low cost homes, and providing some houses that would allow working from home, thus reducing traffic. The Settlement Plan also identifies a plot for some light industrial units to promote business start-ups inside the village and ensures that the proposed settlement boundary recognizes within it the village's green open spaces.

Importantly, residents will be better able to influence how the village develops over the next 20 years, and in the way that they want it rather than

**by what is imposed by the District Council. The previous structure plan did not include local input and the village suffered as a result. The Parish owns some land within the proposed settlement boundary and parts of this could be allocated for low cost, affordable and rented housing to assist in the process.**

# Rural Settlement Plan for inclusion in Draft Local Plan

## Buckland Brewer Parish Council Submission

To support the North Devon & Torridge Local Plan for 2013 – 2031, the Parish Council was asked to carry out the following :-

- To review its services and facilities and to consider the plans proposed classification as a Local Centre
- To consider the scale of development required and identify proposed sites for development, including housing, employment and rural services and facilities.
- To identify suitable sites for green open spaces
- To draw, if appropriate, a revised settlement boundary, especially where sites that are currently outside the draft settlement boundary are identified. The Council should seek to propose potential development sites within the revised boundary.
- To consider its position in relation to a suggested target of 10% growth in housing development by 2031, amounting to 19 additional houses within the settlement boundary.
- To provide evidence of any community involvement in the development of the settlement plan

Buckland Brewer village is classified in the draft local plan as a local centre. This has been welcomed by the Parish Council both in terms of recognising the role of the village within the wider community, and the acknowledgement of its current facilities, including a primary school, a well known and treasured public house and restaurant, a community shop, a butchers, a sweet shop, a church, a chapel, a daily travelling post office van and a weekday bus service. Planning permission has also been granted for a new community hall.

The Parish Council recognizes that many communities in Torridge would be envious of what the village has been able to sustain. Nonetheless this is not the whole picture. Buckland Brewer lost its commercial shop and post office a number of years ago due to lack of numbers. The primary school reached a high of nearly 100 pupils in the 1990s but this has now fallen to 38. The school recently merged with Parkham Primary School, to form the 'Flying Start Federation', in order to remain viable. Six pupils are due to leave in July and only three will be starting in September. Although the School has a planned admission number of 7 for each year group, and has the capacity to accommodate that number of children, only four pupils are currently scheduled to join the school in September 2014. The Governors are considering how to alter and expand the school accommodation to ensure that there is adequate provision for a raised PAN resulting from more affordable houses being built in the village.

Its position and facilities mean that Buckland Brewer is an expensive village in which to purchase property. This mitigates against young families moving into and staying in the village, especially with the present financial constraints in the lending markets. As a result, and aided by the relatively large number of bungalows built over the last 25 years, there has been a tendency for older and retired people to move into the village, dramatically affecting the age profile. The latest statistics tells us that the number of children in the village is down in 2011 compared to 2001, whilst the 45-64 age group has increased and the 65-74 age group has nearly doubled. There has also been a significant drop in the 25-44 age group.

The Parish Council is unanimous in its view that, with the right amount and mix of development, including social and low cost single dwellings, and two and three bedroom houses, young families could be encouraged into the village, and those who might have to move out due to economic pressures would be able to stay. It believes that some provision should be made for single occupied dwellings and members also agree that no bungalows should be included in any future developments. The Council believes that keeping or losing the village's facilities, as listed above, is very much on a knife's edge. By encouraging appropriate development the Council feels it has a good chance of

not only retaining the facilities that the parishioners hold dear, and sometimes take for granted, but could also prompt the provision of new ones.

## **Housing**

There are two housing developments already in the pipeline (and which will not count towards the village's development target). The first, reference SHA/BBR/3 at Gorwood Road, will yield 24 houses, and secondly reference SHA/BBR/4, that would have yielded a new community hall 9 social houses and 24 open market houses, which has been superseded by a development (reference 1/0716/2012/FULM) that produces a new community hall, 8 social houses and 32 open market houses. This development is currently subject to a 106 agreement.

Torrige District Council has advised that 10% growth up to and including 2031 would require another 19 houses to be built. The Parish Council is unanimous that this is not a sufficient number either to encourage younger families into the village or to maintain the village's current facilities and services.

With the assistance of local landowners, the Parish Council has identified seven plots that can be developed for open market and social housing and one for light industrial units, and has proposed a revised settlement boundary to include all of these plots. The Council's wish is that there should be up to 50 new houses built, which could be accommodated on these plots. This is in addition to the 64 properties for which planning permission is already in the pipeline.

Plot 1: The first issue the Parish Council addressed was affordability and the need for social housing, not only for Buckland Brewer but also for the wider area. Members were unanimous in identifying a piece of land known as the Cock Pheasant (Field number 1747, 0.92 hectares) as suitable for a social housing development. It is sandwiched between the Torrington exit and Thornehillhead exit from the village and is owned by the Parish Council. This plot could accommodate up to 20 houses although final numbers would be driven by legislation, finance and the necessary support and management from a housing association. It is anticipated that these properties would not be available to the open market.

Plot 2 is land adjacent to Gorwood Road (Part of field 8854, 37 x 36 m) owned by Mr Alex Dziurzynski, 5 Rickards Row, Buckland Brewer, EX39 5LT, who wishes to build one house on this plot.

Plot 3 is inside the current village boundary, on land owned by Peter Seward, adjacent to Ross House, Ashtons Row, Buckland Brewer, EX39 5LW. (28 x 55m) Mr Seward wishes to build three houses on this plot.

Plot 4 is a piece of land adjacent to the southern side of the land designated for the building of 24 houses in Gorwood Road. This land (ref. SS 4220 NG 0558, 0.815 acres) is owned by William Heywood, c/o George Heywood, Bowden Farm, Bowden Cross, EX39 5EL.

Plot 5 is a piece of land known as Lower Abbots lying to the east of the village, next to the new 40 house development, behind the school. The land is owned by Fred Babb, 'Batsons', Buckland Brewer, EX39 5LN. (Ref. SS 42202675, 0.75 acres)

Plot 6: This land is adjacent to Orleigh Close whereby entrance and exit would be achieved. The Parish council wishes the access road to be improved as part of the development. This will require the displacement of a number of parking spaces which would have to be accommodated within the new development. This piece of land (Field 1382 and 1880, 1.1 hectares) could accommodate up to 30 dwellings. The land is owned by Brian Chappell, Meadow Park, Orleigh Close, Buckland Brewer, EX39 5NY.

Plot 7: This piece of land, which lies behind cottages and houses at the top of Tower Hill entrance, could be gained from Tower Hill by upgrading the existing roadway. The land (ref: Is SS4120 NG 7192, 1.2869 acres) is owned by William Heywood, c/o George Heywood, Bowden Farm, Bowden Cross, EX39 5EL.

### **Open Spaces**

With reference to green open spaces, the Parish Council has agreed to include the existing playing field, the allotments (Field No.8911) and Buckland Brewer's AFC football pitch (Field No 8315/9216) within the revised settlement boundary.

## **Employment**

Plot 8: The Parish Council wants to establish a small number of light industrial, start-up workshops (classification B1). It is propose that these should be built on the eastern end of Field 8315/9216, which is owned by Buckland Brewer Parish Council. A plot of 37 x 64m has been identified as being suitable for this development and could accommodate about six small units. This development is sited to cause the least inconvenience to villagers from traffic noise and pollution.

## **Access**

Finally, we believe access and egress could be improved to the village. While we recognise this is a Devon County Council decision, there is one stretch of road that falls just outside the parish boundary but nonetheless provides the quickest route to the North Devon Link Road avoiding Bideford. The road between Hoopers Water and Moorhead Cross is not only used as a bus route but also by a high level of commercial vehicles. This single carriage way road needs to be improved and it would help if the number of passing places was increased.

Jim Lowe

Patrick Blossse

Chair

Parish Clerk

23<sup>rd</sup> May 2013

# Buckland Brewer Parish Council

## Settlement Plan Submission, May 2013

### Summary of Public Consultation

The request for the Parish Council's contribution to the Draft Local Plan was first brought to members' attention at their meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2013. Following a general discussion and some initial thoughts by members at its meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2013 and a presentation by Ian Rowland, Torridge Council's Senior Planning Policy Officer, it was agreed to hold a Special Meeting in the Village Hall on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2013. This was widely advertised on the parish website, notice board and in the village magazine 'Village Scene'. Nineteen parishioners attended the special meeting. Following a wide ranging debate on the village's current facilities and future development expectations and the desires of the members and parishioners, it was unanimously agreed to:

- Promote Cock Pheasant field for a development of 20+ social housing properties, and
- Include the present playing field, football pitch and allotments within a revised settlement boundary

It was also agreed at that meeting that, in order to complete the task thoroughly, and to give both members and parishioners more time to consider their responses, the May Parish Council meeting would be dedicated almost entirely to finalising the council's submission. That meeting took place on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2013 and was attended by 5 members of the public. The sites, numbers and types of housing and industrial properties included in the submission were agreed in detail at that meeting and it was agreed that the Chairman and Clerk would compile a draft submission to be distributed to members prior to the final submission date of 1<sup>st</sup> June 2013.

The draft submission and an accompanying revised settlement map were presented to parishioners at the Parish Annual General Meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2013. At this meeting Kate Little, Joint Head of Strategic Planning for North Devon and Torridge Councils, addressed the members and nine parishioners in attendance and examined the draft in some detail, providing useful guidance, encouraging feedback and further background to the planning process and the District Councils' future development expectations.