



## **MEETING MINUTES**

### **Buckland Brewer Parish Council Meeting Held on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023 Buckland Brewer Methodist Chapel**

**Councillors Present:** Kathryn Cann, Sally Cole, George Heywood, Jane Lowe, Trevor Mills  
Hen Staveley-Brown, David Watson

**Also in attendance:** 7 members of the public, Cllr Phil Pennington (TDC)

**Parish Clerk:** Jo Miles

**Meeting Chair:** George Heywood

<b>KEY: Actions are shown in bold blue type    Decisions are shown in bold red type</b>
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#### **Business transacted at the meeting:**

117. Apologies for Absence: Cllrs Richard Hooper and Phil Ainsworth – their absence was agreed. Apologies were also received from Cllr James Morrish (DCC) and PCSO Liz Renwick.
118. Declarations of Interest: Cllr Heywood confirmed he is a member of Stevenstone Hunt but does not ride in the hunt – agenda item 127. The clerk confirmed this did not prevent him from participating in the discussion or vote.
119. Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2023 were agreed.
120. Public Participation
- a. Mr C Stone stated he thought the opportunity to chat informally with the parish councillors is an excellent idea and he hoped this initiative would continue if issues raised at the previous meeting regarding the location can be overcome. Cllr Staveley-Brown confirmed that more are planned in the chapel as the first was very successful and an evening session is also planned to attract people unable to attend during the day. Cllr Cann will join her at the next one.
  - b. Industrial units – Mr Stone also enquired whether anything had happened regarding the public consultation since the last meeting. Support had been offered by Cllr Pennington to see whether resources could be provided.
121. Clerk's Report:
- a. Correspondence:
    - i. Update from District Councillor James Morrish
    - ii. Woolsery PO re inconsiderate parking and congestion. The PO van hasn't been able to park on occasion so alternative location requested. Clerk has spoken to a resident regarding the parking problems and impact. Conversation amicable so hopefully this will resolve matters. Relocation is in abeyance for now.
    - iii. National rough sleepers count being undertaken this month.
    - iv. TDC Strategic Plan circulated (on agenda)
    - v. Highways: Clerk has had various conversation with DCC:
      1. Ongoing issues with speeding on the approach to the school. Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) has been broached - DCC must approve even though costs are not met by Highways. Agreement is subject to a SCARF review (joint forum between

Highways and Devon & Cornwall Police). Clerk has asked Highways to schedule. No timescale given but resources are limited.

2. School signage: Painted road signage requested to warn that a school is coming up as visibility of the roadside signage is often obscured by hedges.
- vi. Three letters were received relating to the gifting of a PC laptop to the former clerk and all raised serious concerns regarding the original action and those since. Cllr Heywood stated that the PC didn't know about it but that it had been gifted by a former Chair as the previous clerk had done outstanding work. Cllr Watson didn't recall a discussion either. The (current) clerk stated that the proper protocols had not been followed as it hadn't been correctly raised at a PC meeting for all councillors to agree to the proposal, it hadn't been documented anywhere and council data was still on the laptop. She has documented the action taken. Cllr Mills stated that the PC had discussed the matter but there may have been some confusion as the gifted laptop was only purchased in 2021 and had replace one bought in 2016. **Clerk to investigate.**
- vii. Letter received from Sir Geoffrey Cox day of meeting enclosing petitions for additional funding for road repairs, Levelling Up (preferred priority) and a request for feedback regarding broadband availability and postal delivery issues. Tight deadlines associated. **Clerk to circulate copy of letter to all Cllrs.**

b. Updates

1. Footpaths Partnership Grant for 2024-25 has already been submitted following a conversation between Chair and DCC.
2. Clerks' Pay Award has just been published and back-pay will be due to Clerk and Webmaster.
3. Still researching website options. Very high quote received from one company and another one has been discounted as servers are not UK-based (mandatory requirement). Another meeting scheduled this week.
4. Remembrance Sunday reminder and Cllr Heywood will lay the wreath on behalf of the PC.

122. Sound Quality in Meetings – Decision whether to purchase a standalone voice amplifier (or similar) to assess the benefits.

- Feedback from parishioners following use of a standalone head microphone at the previous meeting was that the microphone was audible within the room but it wasn't an improvement on screen. Other options will continue to be explored.
- Cllr Heywood commented that only a very low % of parish councils live stream their meetings and none to his knowledge in Torridge. Cllr Staveley-Brown said that others will have to follow and that it is vital to reach parishioners.

123. Decision regarding a request for a funding contribution to the North Devon Records Office. (BBPC archived documents held there.)

Due diligence was undertaken as accounts are held publicly. BBPC cannot guarantee that a grant will be given to NDRO as it is part of a much larger commercial and charitable group, The SW

Heritage Trust with significant funding and assets. Following a discussion, Cllr Mills proposed that a grant of £200 is paid this year and BBPC will ask NDRO to attend a meeting to explain what they do and the benefit to the PC/BB. Seconded by Cllr Watson. Agreed – unanimous.

124. Discussion regarding public transport and agreement of any associated actions to be taken regarding current and future bus services.

- Cllr Lowe reiterated that a suggestion had been made to have an additional bus pick-up at Hillpark. Feasibility study will be undertaken by DCC imminently and the PC will be notified of the decision.
- Cllr Watson suggested that a minibus is needed between the parish and Bideford as people can pick up all services from there. Cllr Lowe pointed out that the PC had funded a minibus to Bideford but no-one had used it. Suggested that this topic is included in the public consultation to canvas opinion. **Unanimously agreed to include in the consultation.**

125. Review of Torridge District Council Draft Strategic Plan 2023-28. Agreement of feedback/proposals to be included. (Public consultation is open until 14<sup>th</sup> November). This is a very high-level summary of TDC's strategy, including all of its statutory obligations. **All councillors were asked to consider any additional topics that they would like to be included.** (A commitment to social housing provision and policy was subsequently submitted.)

126. Parish Council Facebook Group: Agreement of responsibilities and how the Group will be managed.

Currently the FB page is locked so that posts cannot automatically be added without admin approval. Cllr Staveley-Brown suggested that parishioners should be able to ask questions and the PC should be able to seek feedback. Proposed that administrators should have some flexibility to open posts up for comments at their discretion. **Agreed: 6 councillors voted in favour and 1 against (Mills)**

127. Hunts/Hunt meets have been taking place on Thornhillhead Moor without formal approval:

- a. Decision whether to permit trail-hunting to take place on parish-owned land.  
Cllr Heywood provided some background information and had spoken to the hunt organisers:
  - Stevenstone Hunt has offered its apologies for any distress caused.
  - Insurance cover – all riders must have their own public liability insurance, rather than having a blanket policy for members.
  - The Hunt proposed putting up a notice on the moor the day of the hunt but the Clerk advised that this doesn't fulfil the stipulations made by BBPC's insurer to ensure its public liability cover is robust in case of incident.
- b. If hunting is approved, decision whether to insist that the hunt seeks permission before every meet so that parishioners can be notified. Minimum advance notice period is also to be agreed.
- c. If hunting is approved, decision whether any specific restrictions/conditions will be imposed to use THHM for hunting.

The Clerk confirmed that a decision could be deferred until the New Year regarding ongoing permission but that notice would still need to be given in the meantime pending that discussion. It was proposed by Cllr Heywood (Seconded Cllr Staveley-Brown) that a decision

regarding future use of THHM by the hunt should be deferred. In the meantime the Hunt will be notified that they may not use THHM pending a decision. **Unanimously agreed.**

128. Decision regarding the funding and installation of a new shelter (subject to the requisite external approvals), for use by bus passengers and while queueing for the Post Office van.

- Will have to seek permission from TDC Planning and the landowner.
- Existing shelter cost £2k and was grant-funded.

It was agreed that more research is required and it will be tabled again at a later date.

129. 2024/25 Budget Planning and Precept Preparation. Decision whether to schedule a dedicated budget meeting ahead of the tax-base notification. **Agreed to hold a working group meeting 30 November.**

130. Members' Reports

Cllr Mills

- Post box hasn't been reinstated yet. Clerk confirmed it is in hand but a date hasn't been provided. She will chase for an update.
- Glen Bridge drain has been cleared (reported by clerk).

Cllr Lowe

- Benches to be repainted. Proposing to work in the bus shelter.
- Buses – Bus representative Stagecoach buses
- Post delivery issues – Contacted Sir G Cox regarding poor standards.

Cllr Cole

- Gorwood Cross – Damaged sign (unsuitable for HGVs). The sign is lying on the ground.

Cllr Heywood

- Salt bins have been checked and
- New bin to be installed at Cherry Vale, subject to Highways approval/action.
- 5 tonnes of salt ordered. The gritting route was described to keep all main roads accessible.

Cllr Cann

- Brendon Cross – Twitchen Hill – Salt Bins requested.
- Dog bin requested on Gorwood Road. Bins are also overflowing. TDC to be consulted. **TDC Waste Recycling Team. Richard Haste Ops Manager.**

Cllr Staveley-Brown

- Request for a litter bin to be installed on Barton Road. **Agenda 13/12.**
- PC informal chat was very successful. Next meeting will be 6/12.

Cllr Watson

- North Devon Records Office – spent the afternoon looking at the PCs records and minutes. Found that topics discussed in 1890's are still being discussed. He summarised some of the documents he had viewed.

131. District Councillor's Report – Cllr Phil Pennington

- Dogs – Have had more complaints about dogs than anything else since becoming a councillor. Will certainly ask whether the

- Waste Recycling Services – Recent storm stopped the collection but this was addressed
- £100 litter fine imposed at Northam Burrows when someone discarded lunch wrapper. 22 or 23 prosecutions to date. TDC is very keen to stop littering as clear up costs are considerable so the Council is being very proactive in investigating and prosecuting wherever possible.
- Victoria Park, Bideford - £280k being spent on a new play area but this is mainly grant funded.
- Taddipport Creamery – Administrator has agreed to level the site. Companies have previously been reluctant to take this on due to site contamination, e.g. asbestos.

Questions:

- TDC is spending £3m renovating a library. Cllr Heywood questioned why so much is being spent on one building.
- A parishioner enquired who monitors £100 fines imposed for mud on road? The Clerk clarified that the £100 fines are imposed by Allison Homes on their own contractors and not anything administered by TDC Planning.
- Cllr Pennington confirmed that planning applications cannot be withdrawn once passed. If there is evidence of planning breaches then they should be reported directly to Planning for a site visit to be undertaken. There is a simple online process within the reporting portal on the TDC website.

132. New Planning Application(s):

- 1/1047/2023/FUL: Change of use and conversion of redundant agricultural barn into 2no. dwellings, including access and associated works. Building At Grid Reference 242118 117078, Buckland Brewer, Devon.  
Cllr Watson expressed concerns that building would be expanded to the surrounding area if approved and these concerns have also been voiced to him by parishioners living nearby. Cllrs Lowe and Mills concurred. Following a vote the application was not supported by BBPC  
For: Heywood, Cole. Against: Mills, Lowe, Staveley-Brown, Watson, Cann.

133. Accounts:

a. Receipts and Payments for October/November 2023

	General Account	Thornhillhead Moor Account	Savings Account	Consolidated
<b><u>Summary</u></b>				
Opening Balance	£18,475.29	£15,025.20	£27,357.48	£60,857.97
Receipts to date	£19,295.98	£30.00	£130.50	£19,456.48
Payments to date	£11,223.05	£913.54	£0.00	£12,136.59
Closing cash book balance	£26,548.22	£14,141.66	£27,487.98	£68,177.86
Closing Bank Balances	£29,504.71	£14,141.66	£27,487.98	£71,134.35
As at	31/10/2023	31/10/2023	31/10/2023	
Unreconciled (net)	-£2,956.49	£0.00	£0.00	-£2,956.49
Net THM Savings			£11,000.00	
Fund Balances	£45,992.69	£25,141.66		£71,134.35

i) Payments for Oct/Nov 2023 (Since last meeting: £2191 (inc VAT))

(1) Payroll (inc expenses)	£1141
(2) Remembrance Wreath	£ 50
(3) Grass cutting (playing field)	£1050

ii) Receipts for Sept/Oct 2023 (Since last meeting: £127)

(1) Allotment rent & deposit	£ 127
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There being no further business, the meeting was formally closed at 9:20pm.

Signed as a true record: ..... Date: .....