

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
OF BUCKLAND BREWER PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 10th NOVEMBER 2021 AT 7:00pm
AT BUCKLAND BREWER METHODIST CHAPEL

Members Present: Mrs Barbara Babb, Miss Rosie Beer, Mr Andrew Hewitt, Mr Jim Lowe, Mr Trevor Mills, Mr Frits Takken and Mr David Watson

Also in attendance: 2 members of the public and Cllr Phil Pennington (Torridge Council)

Parish Clerk: Mr P Blosse

KEY: Actions are shown in bold blue type Decisions are shown in bold red type
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516. Apologies for Absence George Heywood and Richard Hooper

517. Declarations of Interest None

518. Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 13th October 2021: The minutes of the meeting held on 13th October 2021 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

519. Public Participation None

520. District and County Representatives' Reports:

- a. Cllr James Morrish, Devon County Council – not present
- b. Cllr Phil Pennington, Torridge Council Cllr Pennington said that Torridge Council had been considering its housing provision and had been looking into the feasibility of becoming a direct housing provider. The district has 68,000 people and 33,000 houses, of which only 11% are affordables. Torridge is a low wage, high house price area making it very difficult for young local people to find homes. Jim Lowe said that the Torridge report does not mention rural areas and he was worried that no affordable houses would be provided from the two developments planned at Orleigh Close and Southwood Meadows. David Watson asked how many people are on the housing waiting list. He said that the homeless hostels are full up. There are currently 1267 applications for social housing in Torridge and 734 households in housing need. Cllr Pennington felt that these figures could be understated. It was noted that the Planning White Paper had lots of potential rural development falling into protected areas. Cllr Pennington also reported that the substantial development at the creamery in Taddipport would have no affordable houses due to the costs involved in developing a brownfield site.

There had recently been two meetings about the Emergency Climate Change Bill. It had been supported by a very narrow margin (5 to 4). Planning approval had been given for a 167-acre solar farm.

Lastly, plans had been proposed for a new roundabout to improve access to the crematorium, but the developers are trying to avoid it.

521. Clerk's Report

- a. Correspondence: There had been 113 items of correspondence forwarded by email since the September meeting. He highlighted:
- I. Devon Communities Together: Nominate your Devon Diamond! To honour its 60th anniversary, DCT IS aiming to identify 60 Devon Diamonds this year. They could be ex (or current) DCT employees or trustees, people who have achieved amazing things in their own communities, representatives from partner organisations we've worked with over the years, village hall committee members, Councillors, and more. **The Clerk will advertise.**
 - II. Airband: Buckland Brewer Parish Council Meeting - Wednesday 13th October The Clerk had agreed with Paul Nethercott prior to the meeting on 13th October that, as Airband only had plans to connect 3 properties in Buckland Brewer, it was not necessary for him to make a presentation at that meeting, especially as there were two other guest speakers on the agenda. No further action necessary.
 - III. Devon Communities Together AGM 2021 Members had been invited to the DCT AGM on 18th November. **It was agreed that the Clerk would submit a proxy voting form on behalf of the Parish Council.**
 - IV. Torridge Council: Gambling Act 2005 – consultation on Statement of Principles 2022 The Parish Council had been included in this consultation exercise. **It was agreed to make no submission.**
 - V. Devon Highways Parish & Town Council Conferences 2021 This conference is being held online on 24th and 25th November 2021. **It was agreed that Andrew Hewitt would attend on both days.**
 - VI. Torridge Planning Enforcement: 1 Castle Cottages Confirmation had been received that this referral was being investigated and that Planning Enforcement must initially take a restorative rather than punitive stance.
 - VII. Devon Communities Together: Invitation for Devon's second Local Councillor Climate Emergency Support Network - 30th November 2021 The Clerk will be attending this meeting and has been asked to make a brief presentation about the Buckland Brewer Climate Change Awareness Day.
 - VIII. DALC Newsletter #68 2021 The latest DALC had included an article about Buckland Brewer's Climate Change Awareness Day.
- b. Reconnect, Rebuild, Recover Fund: £1,000 Grant Awarded: As agreed at the meeting on 8th September, the Clerk had applied for a grant to help with getting activities restarted following the Covid lockdowns. £1,000 was awarded and has already been received. **It was agreed that the Clerk would advertise that the funds were available and invite local groups to draw on them.**

- c. Speed Checks: The Clerk had contacted PCSO Liz Rendle to report the concerns about speeding at the Hillpark end of the village. She had responded to say that she would be revisiting the village during the first half of October. No further feedback has been received.
- d. Marking of car parking spaces on the village green – progress report: This work had been carried during the last month. Councillor Babb and the Clerk had met with the contractor and the owner of Church Gate Cottage and had agreed to mark an additional line to clarify the 'no parking' area so that there was sufficient room for a tractor and trailer to access Northwood Lane. Members were agreed that they were satisfied with the work that had been done.
- e. Telephone box: The Clerk asked for confirmation that members were happy with the colour proposed for the telephone box. Trevor Mills said that he understood that BT were disappointed that so many old boxes were being repainted in a variety of colours and would prefer that they stay red as they are such as icons. **It was agreed to ask for the colour to remain as the original red.**

522. Affordable Housing Project: Is a Community Land Trust the way forward?

Members were not in favour of a Community Land Trust agreement. It seemed an unnecessary step as the Parish Council is the landowner and also, there were doubts about whether there would be enough enthusiastic residents willing to take part in the Trust. It was agreed to explore other possibilities, such as working directly with Torridge Council. **Cllr Pennington asked the Clerk to let him know how many properties were included in the development proposals for Southwood Meadows and Orleigh Close.**

523. Parish Paths Partnership: To decide whether to enter into an agreement

Members were unanimous in agreeing that the scheme offered had no obvious negative points and could help a great deal in keeping the parish's footpaths open and well-maintained. **It was agreed to enter into the agreement as proposed by DCC and to advertise for volunteers to help with inspections.**

524. 372 Bus Service: Report from Jim Lowe Jim Lowe said that there had been a road closure on a Monday recently which resulted in the village losing one of its only two scheduled bus services that week. **It was agreed that the Clerk would write to Devon Transport and Devon Highways asking for there to be more collaboration in future to avoid a similar circumstance. The Clerk was asked to arrange a survey to gauge the demand for a better bus service.**

525. Amenity Field:

- a. Adult Fitness Equipment: To consider tenders The Clerk had distributed a report prior to the meeting detailing 6 options from 4 different suppliers. Following a detailed comparison of the equipment, surfacing and other factors, **it was agreed to accept the tender for individual pieces on wetpour offered by Fresh Air Fitness at a total cost of £14,995 plus VAT, subject to successfully obtaining a s106 grant from Torridge Council.** It was suggested that the mix of equipment ought to include a bicycle and also members would prefer to see an arrangement where the entire site of the fitness suite was covered in wetpour. **The Clerk will request a revised quotation and, if appropriate, submit a grant claim as soon as possible. If successful, he will arrange for the installation work to be carried out.**
- b. Platinum Jubilee Event, 2nd June 2022 **It was agreed that this event will take place in the amenity field. The Clerk was asked to book Buckland Brewer Hall for the occasion. Andrew Hewitt will build the beacon. Jim Lowe will make enquiries about a possible piper or other musicians.**

526. Tree Planting

- a. Orchard Scheme and Planting an Oak Tree for the Platinum Jubilee **It was agreed that an oak tree would be planted on Jubilee Day (2nd June 2022), in the bottom left corner of the amenity field. Trevor would try to obtain a sapling about 6' in height.**
- b. Devon Wildlife Treeschemes Scheme/Creating a Parish Woodland **It was agreed that one of the parish fields would be used to plant a small wood. Andrew Hewitt will discuss with the current tenant.**
- c. Offer from Phil Slocombe regarding tree planting in field 6552 Phil Slocombe has suggested planting a copse of water-loving trees such as willow and alder in a boggy area of one of the fields that he rents from the Parish Council. **The idea was approved unanimously. The Clerk will discuss with Phil Slocombe and try to obtain suitable trees through the Devon Wildlife Trust or one of the other tree schemes currently available.**

527. Fields and Allotments:

- a. Report of the Inspection carried out on 11th October 2021
 - i) Plots 10 and 7a appeared untended – see item b.
 - ii) Hedges need trimming. Clerk to contact all allotment holders. Geoff Beer will be asked to trim the playing field side and the tops.
 - iii) DEFRA has issued guidance about bird flu precautions. The Clerk will ensure that the tenant of plot 15 is aware and follows the rules.
- b. Terminations of tenancies of allotment plots 7a and 10 The Clerk has received two terminations in the past few weeks. Plot 7a has already been offered to the only person currently on the waiting list. Plot 10 has not been cultivated and will need work done on it and a shed removed before it can be re-let. The tenant has agreed to forego the deposits. **It was agreed that arrangements would be made to have**

the plot rotovated and for black plastic to be laid down. The Clerk will also arrange for the shed to be dismantled and removed. The plot will be advertised when the work has been completed.

- c. Water supply installation – progress report **The Clerk was asked to arrange a contractor to carry out the work.**
- d. To consider delegating the management of Thornhillhead Moor SSSI to the Fields and Allotments Sub-Committee The Clerk suggested that, if the overseeing of Thornhillhead Moor were delegated to the Fields and Allotments sub-committee, they could more closely monitor its care and promotion. **The idea was not approved. The Clerk was asked to invite Andrew Heywood from Hicks and Co. to attend a meeting in the near future.**

528. Thornhillhead Moor: Information Board **The Clerk was asked to contact Devon Wildlife Trust to ask if they could make any suggestions or, perhaps, take on the project.**

529. Proposed defibrillators for Thornhillhead and the top of the village David Watson said that it had been suggested that a defibrillator should be supplied at Thornhillhead Chapel. The idea was approved unanimously, and it was noted that there was about £1,500 in the Defibrillator Reserve that could be used to help with the cost. Jim Lowe suggested that another defibrillator should be provided at the top of the village, but this idea was rejected.

530. Citizens Science Investigations: Report by Trevor Mills As a result of the Climate Change Awareness Day, two more volunteers have offered their time to the project and Trevor himself is in the process of being vetted.

531. Climate Change Open Day: Progress Report The Clerk reported that the day had gone well and thanked everyone who stepped in at the last minute to finalise the arrangements for the day due to his bout of Covid. There had been about 20 to 30 visitors and although there had only been 6 exhibitors and three speakers due to last minute dropouts, this seemed to fill the time and space available. There has been some excellent publicity following the event (albeit that the North Devon Journal relocated us to West Buckland). The day encouraged two more people to volunteer to take part in the Westcountry Rivers Trust water sampling scheme, provided some useful extra recycling containers and information about what can and can't be recycled and, through Devon Wildlife Trust, some useful leads about tree planting. Also, Phil Slocombe has suggested planting some water-loving trees in a boggy area of the field that he leases. Blight's Motors ran a competition that raised £51 for the Buckland Brewer Education Support Fund. **The Clerk was asked to invite Frank Benbow to a future meeting of the Parish Council.**

532. Ongoing Support for the North Devon Records Office Barnstaple Town Council has asked all local town and parish councils to build a contribution towards the North Devon Register Officer into their annual budgets. This council already does that. **It was agreed to write the Barnstaple Town Council confirming our continued support and to review the amount of the annual grant when it discusses next year's budget.**

533. New Wayleave: EE Kiosk Located at Stibb Cross Documents have been received to enter into a new wayleave for laying cabling to a new communications kiosk at Thornhillhead. **Approval was given and the agreement was signed by the Chair.**

534. Post-Covid Event: Report by Jim Lowe Jim Lowe suggested that a fireworks event should be held in the amenity field on 5th November 2022 and that we should invite a 'Hog-Roast' company to provide food. **The Clerk was asked to book the village hall for the occasion.**

535. Proposed meeting with Buckland Brewer Hall Trustees Jim Lowe said that the Parish Council should discuss with the Village Hall Trustees the future development of the hall and the use of s106 funds. He pointed out that the council is developing the amenity field as both a sports and recreation field, but the adjacent hall has no changing rooms. The village hall's AGM is to be held on 24th November 2021, but it was felt that this was not the best occasion for a meeting with the Trustees. **Andrew Hewitt will discuss with Roger Walter about inviting the Chair and Clerk to a future village hall meeting.**

536. School Field Rental Agreement and Proposed Licence to Gain Access No further developments.

537. Feedback from DALC AGM – David Watson No recent meetings.

538. Zoom: should the Council continue to offer this alternative service for meetings?
Following a discussion about the technical difficulties of providing hybrid meetings that combined both Zoom and live streaming via YouTube, **it was agreed that the Zoom option would be removed for future meetings. Live streaming would continue but anyone wishing to contribute to meetings, either as a guest speaker or to take part in public participation, would need to attend in person.**

539. Members Reports:

Barbara Babb said that the Craft Group had been knitting Christmas decorations for the tree and preparing a nativity scene for the village green. This needs a new Perspex front costing about £50.00. **It was agreed that Andrew Hewitt would order or provide what was needed and that the Parish Council would meet the cost.**

Andrew Hewitt said that he **would report bridge damage at Tythecott and Yeo Vale.**

Jim Lowe i) asked about progress with the Industrial Units. The Clerk explained that he had been advised that the next step required would be to draw up detailed plans for a planning application which could cost £2,000 to £3,000. **Approval was given to seek quotations from a number of architects.** ii) Jim also expressed concern about Orleigh Hill in the light of further housing development possibly being imminent at Southwood Meadows and Orleigh Close. **He will discuss the possibility of widening Orleigh Hill with Devon Highways.**

David Watson talked about a recent Torrington 100 event in Torrington Town Hall that had promoted various local organisations. He suggested that the Parish Council should consider having its own stall if another similar event is organised.

540. Accounts:

a. Receipts and Payments for September/October 2021

i) Bank balances as at 29th October 2021 (£64,314.11):

- (1) Parish Council Current Account was £13,683.32
- (2) Thornhillhead Moor Account was £3,325.45
- (3) Savings Account was £47,305.34

ii) Fund balances as at 29th October 2021 (£64,314.11):

- (1) General Account - £32,988.66
- (2) Thornhill Head Account - £31,325.45

iii) Payments for August/October 2021 (£8,009.62 + VAT)

- (1) P G Blosse, September salary - £670.43 (including £125.20 PAYE and £12.73 + VAT for USB extension leads)
- (2) Buckland Brewer Hall, Grant re Broadband - £150.00
- (3) 2018 Youth Project, Grant - £300.00
- (4) Buckland Brewer Playing Field Ass., Grant re Insurance - £795.44
- (5) Church of St. Mary and St. Benedict, Grant (Graveyard Maintenance) - £1,000.00
- (6) Barnstaple Town Council, North Devon Records Office Grant - £200.00
- (7) Buckland Brewer Community Shop, Grant - £1,000.00
- (8) Torridge Volunteer Cars, Grant - £400.00
- (9) Buckland Brewer History Group, Grant - £200.00
- (10) PKF Littlejohn LLP, External Audit Fee - £200.00 + VAT
- (11) Royal British Legion, Memorial Wreath - £50.00
- (12) Pip and Stone Ltd, 20 Apple Trees etc. - £392.20 + VAT
- (13) JD Commercial Property Ltd, Advice re Industrial Units - £300.00 + VAT
- (14) Bridgmans, Drains - £227.01 + VAT
- (15) P G Blosse, October salary - £619.40 (including £119.20 PAYE)
- (16) Parish Gardener - £84.00
- (17) Westcountry Rivers Trust, Grant - £100.00
- (18) M Fry, Grass cutting - £250.00
- (19) M Baker, Playing Field grass cutting - £900.00
- (20) Eon, electricity - £16.02 + VAT
- (21) DALC, AGM (D Watson) - £40.00
- (22) Fancy Something Sweet, Climate Change Day - £22.00

- (23) Jane Lowe, Climate Change Day - £50.67 + VAT
(24) Buckland Brewer Hall, Hall hire, Climate Change Day - £45.00

The payment schedule was proposed by Jim Lowe, seconded by Rosie Beer and approved unanimously.

iv) Receipts for August/October 2021 (£10,561.50)

- (1) Cellnex, Additional Mast Rent - £2,000
(2) Keith Berry, Donation re Goalposts - £340.00
(3) DCC, Reconnect, Rebuild, Recover Grant - £1,000.00
(4) Torridge Council, 2nd instalment of precept - £6,750.00
(5) Field Rents - £471.50

- b. Budgetary Control Statement as at 30th September 2021 The Clerk had distributed a statement of the council's receipts and payments for the first half of the financial year prior to the meeting (see appendix 1). Members noted that unbudgeted income of £3,340.00 had been received recently in additional mast rent, grants and donations. Also, the 2nd instalment of precept was received in September, in all, boosting income by over £10,000. Some items of expenditure will be financed from reserves, including the Orchard Scheme, Telephone Box refurbishment and Fitness Equipment. Unbudgeted expenditure is committed for the use of the Reconnect, Rebuild, Recover Grant and the Council has also committed to a grant towards Village Hall insurance of about £1,000, which will result in the grants budgets for the year being overspent by about £1,000.00. To date this year, activity has resulted in a surplus of nearly £3,000.00.
- c. 2020/21 External Audit Members noted that the external audit for 2020/21 had been completed and that the auditor had made no recommendations. The statutory notice has been posted and all the documents required by the Transparency Code are available on the website.

There being no further business, the meeting closed 9:55 pm

Dates of Future Meetings:

Parish Council, Wednesday 8th December 2021 (Buckland Brewer Methodist Church, 7:00pm)

Signed as a true record:

Chairman: **Date:**