



## MEETING MINUTES

### **Buckland Brewer Parish Council Meeting Held on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2023 Buckland Brewer Methodist Chapel**

**Councillors Present:** Barbara Babb, George Heywood, Richard Hooper, Jim Lowe, Trevor Mills, Frits Takken and David Watson

**Also in attendance:** Steven Sherry; Councillor Pennington; 12 members of the public

**Parish Clerk:** Jo Miles

<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:**

- 848. Apologies for Absence: Rosie Beer, Devon County Councillor James Morrish
- 849. Declarations of Interest: None
- 850. Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2023
  - a. Cllr Mills questioned the minutes of in relation to bids for a field lease (842). It was clarified that whilst the bids were initially presented anonymously, the identity of all bidders was disclosed before the decision was formally ratified and agreed unanimously. It had also been confirmed that all bidders met the local residency requirement and all wished to use the land for agricultural purposes.
- 851. Project update from Steven Sherry regarding the potential creation of industrial units:
  - a. Mr Sherry was engaged in 2018 to undertake this project. (This was the first invitation to attend the BBPC and provided an update.)
  - b. A speed survey was undertaken in Summer 2022.
  - c. Site access has been formally agreed with DCC after a few attempts and discussions. The hedge line will need to be realigned (this is quite common) and DCC will require the existing footpaths to be linked.
  - d. Next Steps:
    - i. Environmental Surveys (e.g. presence of dormice) – Cannot be undertaken until May.
    - ii. Percolation Survey to check drainage.
    - iii. Decision re number of units to be proposed for planning application purposes (current site drawing shows 3).
    - iv. Decision whether to apply for full or outline planning permission. (Approximate timescale to apply c 2-3 months after surveys completed.)



- e. Cllr Lowe confirmed BBPC approved this project in 2015 and that it would entail selling land to a developer and letting the developer build the industrial units. He stated that there are people within the parish interested in this type of unit to run businesses.
- f. Cllr Hooper queried whether this sets a precedent to use BBPC-owned land for a purpose outside agricultural use and expressed concerns that the parish would lose control of it use once it is sold. Cllr Lowe did not consider that to be the case.
- g. Cllr Lowe stated that the income would pay for various projects. This was queried by members of the public and Cllr Lowe said personally he would contribute to the proposed hall extension but it would be up to the incoming Parish Council. Other Councillors confirmed community views would need to be sought.
- h. Land supply was questioned and whether a developer could simply apply for change of use to build houses. Steven Sherry advised that land availability is an issue and that all councils are targeted to increase housing stock annually – TDC’s target is 1200 houses per annum - but many have not been able to secure sufficient land. He advised it is possible to place a restriction at the point of sale to stipulate its use.
- i. Steven Sherry was thanked for attending and left the meeting.

852. Public Participation:

- a. A question was raised whether Highways can be urged to deploy dragon patchers to repair roads in the parish as soon as possible. (There is an extensive programme of works in already progress throughout Devon lasting until at least autumn 2023.)
- b. It was queried why item 855 (retention of meeting footage) was being considered. (This was resolved when the item was discussed during the meeting.)
- c. The location of the new stock-gate was queried. The location was reiterated and Cllr Hooper confirmed that it was simply a replacement for an existing gate.
- d. Appreciation was expressed for everything that the current BBPC has done and that a lot of experience would be lost when long-standing councillors stepped down.
- e. Queried why the VAS (speed sign) was still not working – Confirmed a battery has finally been delivered so will be charged and installed hopefully w/c 17 April. (Must be installed in fine weather to avoid damage.)
- f. Some trees have died on the playing field. It was confirmed that the playing field is not owned or managed by BBPC. However, Cllr Hooper confirmed the Playing Field Association is aware and have already ordered replacement trees.
- g. A parishioner asked that volunteers do not throw mud onto private property if clearing it off roads.

853. Clerk's Report:

- a. Correspondence list provided to Councillors prior to the meeting. Items highlighted:
  - i. Update from Devon County Councillor James Morrish:
    - Devon County Council, together with the UK government, is spending £60m on road and pothole repairs in the next 12 months. Teams will be in the Buckland and Bideford area in the next few weeks,
    - The leader of council John Heart has been re-elected for another 12 months and Cllr Morrish remains chairman of Pensions and investment.
    - In the last 30 days Cllr Morrish has had 9 communications from Buckland Brewer parishioners on issues such as Hospital services, County council farms and roads.
    - 2023-24 budget: £8k to spend in the Holsworthy rural patch.
  - ii. Invitation received from ND Records Office to attend a supporters' event Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> April.
- b. Updates
  - i. A padlock has been installed on the emergency lighting switch on the amenity field to prevent anyone tampering with the lights. The Air Ambulance Landing Team were consulted beforehand and the combination has been shared. The local contact list has also been updated.

854. **Members' Reports**

**Barbara Babb**

As Cllr Babb is stepping down in May after serving as a councillor for many years, she shared a few thoughts and advice for the incoming council:

- She would have liked to have implemented a VAS (speed sign) at the bottom of the village due to the proximity of the school and risk to pedestrians, particularly children. She felt that it was a very urgent requirement so made a plea to the new Council to please consider.
- Communication – Plea to not put all communications out electronically. It is a rural community and many people rely on other means of communication. (Brenda Mills confirmed that around 230 households receive a copy of the Village Scene each month.)
- Meetings – Although Cllr Babb has embraced sitting in a straight line due to being filmed, she would recommend that the new council sits in a horseshoe. She stated that it is very difficult to hear and engage with fellow councillors when you cannot see them.
- Cllr Babb wished all incoming Councillors (new and returning) the best for the future.
- A bespoke oak shop sign has been produced by P Slocombe to signpost the community shop. (The BBPC had previously agreed to fund this.)

### **George Heywood**

- Cllr Heywood queried with Cllr Pennington why TDC enforcement officers do not routinely inspect developer sites to ensure that planning regulations are being complied with. He felt that a lot of the current issues could have been resolved if enforcement officers were proactive and ensured planning stipulations were being adhered to. Parking on site and wheel cleaning is mandatory for all construction sites. Cllr Heywood stated he does not blame the hauliers and felt that the site was being very poorly managed and this should be addressed urgently.
- Salt –The new council will need to make a prompt decision whether to order 25kg bags of salt for winter 2023/4. A suitable storage location will also need to be identified. There are large bags in storage currently for road gritting via a haulier.
- School – School employee vehicles are consistently being parking across zigzag lines outside the school. HGVs and tractors cannot pass as there is a narrow corner. **Action: Cllr Watson will raise at the next governors' meeting.**

### **Richard Hooper**

- A gate was left open recently causing sheep to escape onto the road. DCC have agreed to fund and install a new self-closing stock-gate. (Last footpath at the top of the village.)
- Cllr Mills was asked to contact Andrew Hewitt to recover the beacon. It was previously agreed the Playing Field Association could make a feature of it on the playing field but the Clerk had been unable to contact Mr Hewitt despite several attempts.

### **Jim Lowe**

- Cllr Lowe received a complaint regarding an inaccurate Facebook post which was critical of BBPC. The post has since been deleted.
- The BBPC Standing Orders were raised as anomalies had been found. (The Clerk is already aware and they will be updated after May.)
- The Webmaster had shared a report of the parish website usage for the last 6 months in advance of the meeting. Cllr Lowe thought the report was excellent and highlighted a that the number of hits to the website was over 19k during the period, average 3k per month.

### **Trevor Mills**

- Cllr Mills highlighted that a bridge has been damaged again due to the construction traffic.

### **Frits Takken**

- A parishioner had asked Cllr Takken to thank BBPC for installing a defibrillator and the new noticeboard at Thornhillhead and also for the notice board on THHM

### David Watson

- No DALC meetings have been held recently but DALC has assembled smaller groups to discuss specific topics. Cllr Watson went to one a few months ago regarding bus services but is awaiting further updates.

### District Councillor Phil Pennington

- In response to Cllr Heywood's queries, Cllr Pennington concurred that hauliers were not to blame for the local construction site issues being seen, as this is down to poor site management. However, he stressed that hauliers do have legal obligations to ensure that vehicles are driven/parked in accordance with the law and this includes ensuring they do not cause hazards for other users, such as leaving mud on the road. He also highlighted that organisations outside of TDC Planning also have responsibility for ensuring the roads are safe, including the Police. Therefore, other parties can and should be engaged if safety is being compromised.
- Following a discussion around the concerns being raised in relation to the Cross Park construction site (Allison Homes) and the disruption being caused, Cllr Pennington stated that he would contact TDC Planning the following morning to prompt urgent engagement and a formal inspection from the Enforcement Officer. The Company has recently obtained approval for a new development in Winkleigh and Cllr Pennington acknowledged that the same issues must not be repeated there.

855. A decision was taken to leave the online meeting footage retention unchanged. **Agreed.** (Cllr Lowe restated that he didn't agree with meetings being streamlined at all, as there is no legal obligation for the Parish Council to do so. Plus, as they are public meetings, people are encouraged to attend in person as all the parishioners in attendance had taken the time to do.) It was highlighted that the labelling isn't always very clear on YouTube if trying to find an historic meeting. **Action: Cllr Watson will check whether it is possible to label meetings more clearly.**

856. A decision was taken to purchase a new parish website. The old one will remain in place until the new one is ready to go live. **Agreed unanimously.** It is hoped that Cllr Morrish will provide funding. **Action: Cllr Lowe will contact him.**

857. Delegated powers pending the election conclusion were discussed. The Clerk could potentially sign cheques in an emergency but this would still require one existing signatory to countersign cheques (only one existing signatory is standing for re-election.) This will be fully addressed when the outcome of the election is known.

858. Coronation of King Charles III – A community event is planned on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May and is a collaborative effort between many local organisations and individual volunteers. BBPC has sponsored mugs for children and has been asked to present them at the event.

859. Planning:

a. Applications: None

b. Decisions:

- i. 1/1217/2022/FUL East Hele, Buckland Brewer, Bideford, Devon  
Roof over existing livestock yard. **Granted 14 March**
- 1/1174/2022/LBC: Change In Time, Buckland Brewer, Bideford, Devon  
Regularisation of alterations to internal layout and installation of external soil pipe **Decision outstanding**
- ii. 1/0122/2023/FUL East Hele, Buckland Brewer, Bideford, Devon  
Roof over existing livestock yard. **Decision outstanding**
- iii. 1/0206/2023/AGMB Barn At Great Gorwood, Buckland Brewer, Bideford,  
Prior notification for the change of use of agricultural building to 1no.  
dwellinghouse and associated building operations under Class Q - Barn A  
**Decision outstanding**
- iv. 1/0207/2023/AGMB Barn At Great Gorwood, Buckland Brewer, Devon  
Prior notification for the change of use of agricultural building to 1no.  
dwellinghouse and associated building operations under Class Q - Barn B  
**Decision outstanding**
- v. 1/0208/2023/AGMB Great Gorwood, Buckland Brewer, Bideford, Devon  
Prior notification for the change of use of agricultural building to 1no.  
dwellinghouse and associated building operations under Class Q - Barn C  
**Decision outstanding**
- vi. 1/0513/2022/REMM - Street Naming Reference: N2022/87 Proposal requested  
from BBPC for new street name adjacent to Cross Park (Allison Homes) – Name  
proposed by BBPC “Lower Greenings”. **Awaiting confirmation**

Accounts:

- i) Bank balances as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 (£64,682.40):
  - (1) Parish Council Current Account was £22,334.34.
  - (2) Thornhillhead Moor Account was £15,025.20.
  - (3) Savings Account was £27,322.86.
  
- ii) Fund balances as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 (£,60,527.55):
  - (1) General Account - £45,498.77
  - (2) Thornhill Head Account - £15,025.20
  
- iii) Payments for March/April 2023 (Since last meeting: £3,162.30 + VAT)
  - (1) Payroll £1,464.32 (inc PAYE, 2022 Back pay & Expenses)
  - (2) British Gas – electricity - £25.06 Feb-Apr (No payment due as account is in credit)
  - (3) Water charges - £11.04
  - (4) Parish Online subscription - £70
  - (5) VAS Battery - £210
  - (6) Coronation Mugs - £574.50
  - (7) DALC subscription - £210.99
  - (8) Defib Battery – 369.95
  - (9) Shop sign - £41.50
  
- iv) Receipts for January/February 2023 (£275)
  - (1) British Gas - £150 Govt credit received – BG electricity account £137.91 Credit.
  - (2) Field Rents - £275

**There being no further business, the public meeting was formally closed at 8:55pm.**

**Part II (Closed Meeting) commenced at 9pm and finished at 9:35pm**

860. Part II Meeting (Closed) – Personnel-Related

The Personnel Sub-Committee met on 21<sup>st</sup> March. The Webmaster and Parish Clerk have both completed their probationary periods. It was agreed to permanently appoint both.

- a. Identified underpayment as a new salary scale was introduced from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022. Back pay due to WA, JM and PB
- b. Webmaster:
  - i. The Webmaster was formally appointed permanently. No changes were proposed to current working hours.
  - ii. Some suggestions had been made regarding the website and Cllr Lowe stated he was very pleased with what had been implemented.
- c. Parish Clerk:
  - i. Buckland Brewer is a very active Parish Council and as a result there is a lot of associated administration. (A summary of actual hours worked had been requested and shared ahead of the personnel meeting.)
  - ii. The Sub-Committee proposed increasing the Clerk's hours from 40 to 45 per month with immediate effect.
  - iii. The Sub-Committee proposed a review of working hours again in 3 months' time.
  - iv. The Sub-Committee proposed that a potential performance-related increment would be considered in 6 months' time.

**The Personnel Sub-Committee's proposals were unanimously agreed.**

**Dates of Future Meetings – all 7pm at the Methodist Chapel unless stated:**

Meeting with Allison Homes (Closed)	Thursday 20 <sup>th</sup> April (2pm, Methodist Chapel)
New Parish Council Introduction (Closed)	Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> May
Annual Meeting (Public)	Thursday 25 <sup>th</sup> May
Parish Council Meeting (Public)	Wednesday 14 <sup>th</sup> June

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