



## MEETING MINUTES

**Buckland Brewer Parish Council Meeting**  
**Held on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023**  
**Buckland Brewer Methodist Chapel**

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

**Also in attendance:** 14 members of the public and Steven Sherry (presentation)

**Parish Clerk:** Jo Miles

**Meeting Chair:** Cllr Richard Hooper

**KEY: Actions are shown in bold blue type    Decisions are shown in bold red type**

### **Business transacted at the meeting:**

59) Apologies for Absence: Councillor Phil Pennington (TDC)

60) Declarations of Interest: None

61) Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2023 Signed

62) Industrial Units: Project Update from Steven Sherry

- a) Ecological survey and water percolation. Mr Sherry confirmed the survey is time critical as there is a seasonal constraint when checking for the presence of protected species.
- b) Services and footpath – Cllr Hooper asked who would retain ownership of the footpath that crosses the land. By way of an example he mentioned that BBPC may want to create more allotments adjacent to the plot to meet more demand (subject to future agreement). Mr Sherry confirmed this would be up to BBPC when deciding how the land is disposed of, e.g. a landowner may retain a pathway or “ransom strip” so it would probably be prudent for BBPC to retain the footpath to ensure ongoing access.
- c) A plan was drawn up to obtain approval for site access from Highways. Mr Sherry showed the plan to councillors and parishioners present but he stressed it is a draft and there will be other steps to go through before the actual layout of the site, including number of units, is agreed.
- d) Budget quoted to Mr Sherry by the previous parish council was £10k. (£2.5k in costs incurred to date.)
- e) TDC and North Devon have announced they will be reviewing the joint local plan but have a different view regarding the extent of the review. TDC wants to have a full review while ND only wants to conduct a partial review so this will need to be resolved in the coming weeks.
- f) Cllrs Cann and Staveley-Brown questioned whether there should be a public consultation to ensure parishioners have a say. Cllr Hooper confirmed this would be up to BBPC but that the council would have to listen to public views whether via an open meeting or other means.



- g) Cllr Mills stated he had just been approached by a parishioner wanting access to an industrial unit and Cllr Heywood concurred that there was a need. Cllr Cann advised that there are numerous empty units available close to Buckland Brewer.
- h) Cllr Hooper questioned how robust a restrictive covenant would be if BBPC wished to prevent the land being used for another purpose, e.g. more housing. Mr Sherry stated he believed that a covenant would remain enforceable for 25 years.
- i) Cllrs Staveley-Brown and Ainsworth questioned whether more money should be spent on the project pending a full assessment. Both stated a preference that a discussion should be held and this should be agreed before incurring any more costs. **Topic to be added to the next agenda.**

### 63) Public Participation

#### Industrial Units:

- a) A concern was raised that having industrial units is a done deal. Cllr Hooper advised that this was not the case and acknowledged that the issue is contentious and that parishioners must be given the opportunity to have their say, whether that is via a referendum, public meeting or other means. This will need to be discussed and agreed by BBPC.
- b) Concerns raised about the infrastructure and that any public surveys from years ago are being relied upon to make decisions now.
- c) A parishioner queried who wanted the industrial units. This was not answered. Another parishioner stated that specific details of how units would be used and by whom should be provided when the public is consulted so that they have the benefit of tangible information proving they are needed.
- d) What would happen if something rare was found in an ecological survey? Would it stop the project. SS confirmed that the project would not have to stop and gave an example of identifying the presence of dormice on a site (considered rare but are quite prevalent). The normal practice would be to relocate the dormice with assistance from approved specialists.
- e) Several comments were made that a survey from ten years ago is irrelevant as the population of the parish has moved on drastically in the last few years let alone a decade ago. The current populace must be asked what they want before any decision is taken and the BBPC must represent the wishes of current parishioners.
- f) The community should know what the sale proceeds would be used for as part of the consultation and before any consideration is given to selling a parish asset.

#### Wind Turbine:

- a) It was stated former that a previous parish council had attempted to get a wind turbine project off the ground without success. Instead BBPC supported a landowner to build a turbine within BB and significant donations have been made to the parish by the landowner.

#### Highways:

- a) A parishioner highlighted that some reported potholes have recently been filled and he thanked the council for reminding people to self-report. It does work.

#### 64) Clerk's Report:

##### a) Correspondence:

- i) Cellnex: The company has engaged a third party to clear the vegetation from within the compound. Access approval has already been sought and given.
- ii) R Hicks & Co. Endeavouring to find contractors to take on urgent clearance and maintenance of THHM but four have been approached and have turned the work down.
- iii) Pearce Construction – letter issued to residents not to flush nappies etc down toilets. A blockage had to be cleared.
- iv) Allison Homes – date of next meeting TBC
- v) Methodist Chapel – queried whether the equipment charge can be reduced as it is quite costly (£30/meeting for room hire and equipment).

##### b) Updates:

- i) Rural Prosperity Fund has just opened, but only for a couple of grant categories.
- ii) Defibrillator cabinet – still chasing for a replacement and for a fault to be resolved. BBPC purchased both from a charity. The charity is not responding and there is no escalation or complaints process beyond the one contact point that handles all calls and emails.
- iii) Fields & Allotments – lots of work done already and more to do
- iv) Highways – Informal meeting with Highways set up on 18 September to resolve queries regarding the process.

#### 65) Council Roles and Responsibilities:

- a) Decision regarding the number of sub-committees to be created.
- b) Decision regarding individual councillor roles and responsibilities.
  - i) Personnel: Agreed 5 people. For: RH, GH, SC, JL and TM Against: PA, HS-B, KC, DW
  - (1) Hen Staveley-Brown, Kath Cann, Dave Watson, Richard Hooper, Jane Lowe
    - Cllr Staveley-Brown highlighted that the Clerk had already stated that she was not comfortable with all councillors being on the personnel committee. Cllr Hooper acknowledged this but stated that it carried no weight. Cllr Lowe stated that all elected councillors could attend.

- ii) Fields: Agreed that TBC – this was left in abeyance for a future meeting.
- iii) Allotments: Agreed 3 people.
  - (1) Sally Cole, Hen Staveley-Brown, Jane Lowe plus co-opted allotment holder. (Clerk confirmed Chris Kaminski is happy to continue as the co-opted allotment holder.)
- iv) THHM: Cllr Ainsworth proposed that a separate committee should be set up to identify requirements and opportunities and felt that a working party headed by Cllrs Heywood and Mills would be helpful to bring ideas and suggestions back to the wider council. Cllr Heywood concurred that this needs to be driven and requirements presented to R Hicks & Co. Cllr Mills agreed that R Hicks & Co. is employed by BBPC but needs to be pushed along to get benefits for the parish. This will be an informal working party and all suggestions will come back to the whole council for agreement.

66) Decision regarding hedge cutting/maintenance relating to parish-owned fields (GH). Cllr Heywood confirmed that hedge cutting is permitted now. He proposed that the hedges should be cut around parish fields unless tenants are responsible. **Tenants to be reminded that they must maintain road hedges.**

67) Proposal and decision regarding the introduction of a regular public surgery (HSB)  
Cllr Staveley-Brown advised she had done some informal market research by chatting to parishioners to find out whether they would favour having an informal surgery. One or two Parish Councillors to attend community events, coffee mornings etc to encourage parishioners to raise concerns if they didn't want to speak at a public meeting. Concerns would be brought to a BBPC meeting for decisions to be made. **Unanimously agreed.**

68) Proposal and decision regarding the introduction of a sub-committee for young people to engage with the PC and community. After various comments posted to FB regarding the lack of amenities for children and they didn't have things to do, HSB thought that it would be beneficial for young people to get involved in local government. Suggestion that BBPC should engage with BB School but Cllr Staveley-Brown said that this would be more suited to older children rather than under 11's. **Unanimously agreed.**

69) "Hymys Plot" (c 0.5 acres): Currently unleased. Decision whether to seek a tenant via formal tender. A previous tenant cut down all the trees and left soon after. It has taken several years to rewild. An existing field tenant in the parish that would potentially be interested. Cllr Heywood suggested inviting him to a council meeting to present his case. The Clerk stated that BBPC would have to go to formal tender. Cllr Heywood dismissed this and stated the council could hear from the parishioner and then decide what they wanted to do.

- 70) Amenity Field – update regarding recent property damage and decision re remedial action and potential fencing. Furore caused on FB after posting about damage. Bench needs to be sanded to repair. **Parish Council to see whether repairs can be completed.**
- 71) Suggestion received to pursue the installation of a community wind turbine. Decision whether BBPC wishes to lead such a project. Cllr Lowe itemised a number of significant challenges around taking on this project, specifically the current issues relating to land based wind turbines, but there was value in seeing what other bigger councils are doing and asked the Parish Council to accept that this was the future. Cllr Staveley-Brown advised that the parishioner that proposed this was unable to attend this meeting but would be happy to attend a future meeting with a third party to present information to BBPC. **Agreed to listen to a presentation on the subject. Clerk to invite proposer and presenter to attend a future meeting.**
- 72) Governance Review: BBPC Grant Awarding Policy 2018 reviewed and updated. Decision whether to adopt the revised policy. Cllr Hooper stated that several people had contacted him this could not be heard at a public meeting and he proposed that this was moved to a Part II (closed meeting). This was seconded by Cllr Heywood. Cllr Hooper stated that he was aware that several people knew absolutely nothing about this but he could not disclose any information publicly except that it related to the wording of the policy and the covering email and that several people had contacted him. He asked that the other councillors trust him and vote in favour but that he couldn't enforce it. Cllr Staveley-Brown and Ainsworth both questioned the validity of the vote as they stated that they could not vote on something they knew nothing about. **6 agreed (Cllrs Cole, Watson, Lowe, Heywood, Mills, Hooper) 3 abstained (Clls Cann, Staveley-Brown, Ainsworth).**
- 73) Update regarding Webmaster Role and the website. Webmaster has resigned as her full-time job has become much more challenging since taking the role on. Cllr Lowe stated that BBPC should thank Wendy Ainscough for everything she has done as the webmaster. It may be possible for the Clerk to absorb the work but this will need to be assessed. The Clerk advised another platform had been identified for the website but this will need to be explored further. **To be added to a future agenda to consider next steps.**
- 74) Jubilee Beacon – return of beacon has been outstanding for months – held by a former councillor. Cllr Mills confirmed that the grass hasn't been cut and that there is some welding that needs to be done. Cllr Hooper reiterated that the council has been seeking the beacon's return for 7 months already and the PFA wanted to make a feature of it during the summer. **Cllr Mills will chase.**
- 75) Northwood Lane – Decision regarding the installation of DCC sign. This land is not managed or owned by the Parish Council. Cllr Heywood provided some background information. Cllr Hooper contacted the DCC footpath committee. DCC confirmed that no-one knows who owns it and

pedestrians can't be stopped from using the lane. (Ownership of the lane is being researched.) Cllr Hooper has obtained a "no unauthorised vehicles" sign from DCC free of charge on behalf of the householders - BBPC would not be responsible for installing the sign. He also suggested that the footpath signage to the playing field could be improved to make that route clearer and will investigate this.

76) Amenity Field – Installation of waste bins. Need to find someone to empty them fortnightly before they are installed. BBPC will provide the bags.

## 77) Members' Reports

### **Phil Ainsworth**

- Nothing to report.

### **Trevor Mills**

- Concern raised regarding children using electric scooters as they don't check for traffic before pulling out of turnings. Cllr Staveley-Brown advised that other parishioners have commented and that there have already been comments on FB. Suggested contacting community police officer.

**Road safety reminder to be issued.**

### **George Heywood**

- Tenants asking for bills.

### **Sally Cole**

- Nothing to report.

### **Richard Hooper**

- Village Scene – Earlier in the meeting Cllr Hooper stated that there was no BBPC update in the VS. The Clerk refuted that and confirmed that she had submitted an article. Discussed ensued regarding draft minutes and VS content. The Clerk confirmed she adds topical items to the VS in the same way that the previous clerk did – not a summary of the minutes. **This is to be added to the next agenda.**

### **Kathryn Cann**

- Cllr Cann raised that there is confusion regarding BBPC accounts and how information is presented. It appears that the parish has lots of money but THHM funds are separate from general funds. Clerk confirmed that Q2 ends 30/9/23 so a summary will be provided.

### **David Watson**

- Approached by a parishioner to suggest an electric charging point. **To be added to a future agenda.**

### Hen Staveley-Brown

- 11/9/23 two males were seen acting suspiciously at the community shop. Break-ins happened on the same night in other local parishes. Suggested that a movement-activated light would be beneficial. There is a PC-owned light in the bus shelter but that causes a disturbance to nearby residences. Cllr Hooper advised the shop committee is discussing the matter.

### Jane Lowe

- Ongoing issue which has been escalated to the DCC councillor is still outstanding months later. Raised with the local MP when he recently visited BB.
- Posted an article suggesting parishioners get a shingles jab. There are mixed messages from healthcare providers and people are being refused.
- Benches – Has tools and paint to refurbish benches. Help requested.
- Remembrance Wreath – proposed that BBPC should order a wreath. The Clerk confirmed that this is in hand.
- A parishioner has requested a Christmas Tree. To be added to a future agenda.
- Councillor contact details – would like all details to be added to the website. (Details to be checked with all councillors as not everyone may want personal details added.)
- Attending Finance training.
- Requested to attend DALC Conference on 27<sup>th</sup> September.

### 78) Planning Application(s):

- a) 1/0807/2023/FUL 6 Gorwood Road. **Unanimously agreed.**
- b) 1/0829/2023/FUL Great Eckworthy. **Unanimously agreed.**
- c) 1/0875/2023/FUL Timer Lodges. **Unanimously agreed.**

79) Accounts:

	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	£8,849.98	£30.00	£57.04	£8,937.02
Payments to date	£8,431.52	£913.54	£0.00	£9,345.06
Closing cash book balance	£18,893.75	£14,141.66	£27,414.52	£60,449.93
Closing Bank Balances	£21,212.06	£15,055.20	£27,414.52	£63,681.78
As at 31/08/2023	31/08/2023	31/08/2023	31/08/2023	
Unreconciled (net)	-£2,318.31	-£913.54	£0.00	-£3,231.85
Net THM Savings			£11,000.00	
Fund Balances	£37,626.58	£26,055.20		£63,681.78

i) Payments for August/Sept 2023 (Since last meeting: £1801.59 (inc VAT))

(1) DALC (Cllr Training)	£336.54
(2) Payroll August inc HMRC & expenses	£888.97
(3) Defib Pads	£163.14
(4) Footpath-related expenses	£13.99
(5) Room and equipment hire (Apr-Aug)	£270
(6) Village Green grass cutting	£95
(7) Data Protection Fee	£35

ii) Receipts for August/Sept 2023 (£414.98)

(1) Allotment fees	£258
(2) Wayleaves	£156.98

There being no further business, the meeting was formally closed at 9:15pm.

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