

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
OF BUCKLAND BREWER PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 9th SEPTEMBER 2020 AT 7:30pm
(MEETING HELD REMOTELY VIA ZOOM)

Members Present: Mrs Barbara Babb, Mr Richard Hooper, Mr Jim Lowe, Mr Trevor Mills, Mr David Watson and Mr Bob Wilson

Also in attendance: Lyn Layton (Community Shop)

Parish Clerk: Mr P Blossie

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| KEY: Actions are shown in bold | blue type | Decisions are shown in bold red type |
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234. Apologies for Absence Andrew Hewitt, Cllr Barry Parsons, PCSO Liz Rendle

235. Declarations of Interest Jim Lowe re item 250 in Part II of the agenda

236. Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 12th August 2020: The minutes of the meeting held on 12th August 2020 were agreed and will be signed by the Chair in due course.

237. Public Participation Lyn Layton gave a brief overview of the work of the Buckland Brewer Emergency Response Team during the Covid-19 lockdown and how the shop had fared during that time. Thanks to a grant from Torridge Council and an increase in sales during the early part of the lockdown, finances are now quite healthy, and the shop is in a position to replace some of its aging equipment, like storage bins. There had been some issues with the supply chain, but volunteers had helped to keep the shop stocked up with supplies from local supermarkets. Although footfall has fallen more recently it is still higher than it was before the lockdown. It had not been easy to keep the team of volunteers together as some were vulnerable and needed to self-isolate. However, others had come forward to take their place and it had been possible to offer an emergency service to isolated and vulnerable members of the community. Trevor thanked Lyn and all of the volunteers who had put in so much effort during a difficult period.

238. County and District Councillors' Reports

- a. Councillor Barry Parsons (Devon County Council): Not present – no report
- b. Councillor Phil Pennington (Torridge Council): Not present – no report

239. Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported that he had started work on ensuring that the community website meets accessibility standards and that members might notice some changes. In particular, the change in the primary background colour from pale green to red. This was because the site had failed to meet the guidelines on contrast for visually impaired users. He is currently checking for redundant links, missing alt text on images and .pdf file links and attempting to correct any other issues that he can find by using a web accessibility evaluation tool provided by a company called Wave. An Accessibility Statement was added to the site some months ago and he will update this, if necessary, by the target date of 23rd September. By that time he will also be able to provide the Webmaster with a brief procedure document to apply to new content. As agreed previously, he will be adding an additional 15 hours to his time for September.

- a. Correspondence There had been 40 items of correspondence since the last meeting. The Clerk highlighted:
 - i) Devon Home Choice Training Online training for councils interested in developing affordable housing schemes is being promoted by Devon Communities Together. David Watson would like to attend and suggested that the Council should start thinking about the Settlement Plan proposal to develop affordable housing on Higher Turnaway. **It was agreed that the parish council would register its interest in the training and approach Torridge Council for advice on the Higher Turnaway proposal.**
- b. Approval of Covid-19 Risk Assessment The Clerk had distributed a draft risk assessment for the council's use of public halls. **The policy was approved with the amendment that masks must be worn at all times by all attendees.** It was noted that government guidance has changed w.e.f. 14th September 2020 banning group meetings indoors or outdoors of more than 6 people. This will prevent the council from organising any face to face meetings for the foreseeable future. The Education Support Fund Committee's AGM scheduled for 14th September has been cancelled and the meeting arranged for 5th October will now take place via Zoom.
- c. Pothole/flooding outside community shop Keiran Stanbury has inspected this issue and confirmed that the gang that did the work originally was only asked to fill the safety defects and were not tasked with sorting any levels etc. The edge of the footpath itself along the road edge is lower than the road, so water naturally ponds there. To undertake any haunching works would require an adjustment to the footpath and iron works in the carriageway to ensure that water flows away. However even though there is sunk gulley's showing on the system is not something he could see on the ground so he is awaiting the highways asset team to confirm there are Devon County Council maintained pipes which could be connected into – (not able to connect to private assets). Any footpath alterations will also need approval due to the cobbles requiring more specialist works. Effectively repairs to this section will not be a quick turnaround due to permissions required and the pre-existing conditions of the carriageway here, unfortunately even though the ponding is not ideal, it does not count as a safety defect. He will feedback when I he has confirmation of asset ownership and any permissions which may be required to alter the footpath.

- d. DALC AGM, 7th October 2020, Proxy Voting Form **It was agreed that David Watson would attend this meeting and that he would vote on Buckland Brewer Parish Council's behalf as he saw fit.**
- e. Approval of Grievance Procedure Policy Document The Clerk had drafted a Grievance Procedure setting out the steps that should be followed in the event of any grievances or complaints by members of staff. **The policy was approved unanimously.**
- f. National Pay Award 2020/21 It was reported that a national agreement had been reached on local government salary awards for 2020/21. The Clerk's pay would increase from £11.67 to £12.00 per hour wef 1st April 2020. The increase including an amount for the backdated award is reflected in the current month's salary payment.

240. Community Orchards Grant Scheme The North Devon Biosphere in partnership with Orchards Live and supported by the Devon County Council locality grants scheme and the National Lottery Heritage Fund (as part of the Pledge for Nature project) are offering small grants towards the creation and management of community orchards. The orchards may be established in locations across the North Devon Biosphere in community spaces such as allotments, parks, around a village hall or churchyard and schools as well as private land if there is an agreement for community use. Applicants to the Challenge Fund will need to provide information on location of the orchard, who the orchards will be used by, the number and variety of trees and planned future management. The maximum grant available is £300 at a cost of about £25 - £35 per tree. David Watson suggested that it might be possible to get the school involved in the scheme. Jim Lowe proposed positioning a row of trees alongside the edge amenity field near the fence that runs by the path from the village to the back of the school. **It was agreed that the Clerk would submit an application for a grant of £300.**

241. Consultation Request – Torridge Council Strategic Plan 2020-2023 Torridge Council is asking the public for their views on the Council's Strategic Plan 2020-2023 which describes the Council's priorities and direction for the next 3 years. Members noted the item.

242. Consultation: Planning White Paper It was noted that councillors at Torridge Council had not yet been briefed about the White Paper. Jim Lowe suggested that the District Council representatives should be asked to present their views on it at a future meeting and to share the Torridge Council briefing paper. A response is requested by 29th October 2020. **The Clerk will contact the District Councillors.**

243. Amenity Field Maintenance The Clerk reported that spending on maintenance of the amenity is over-budget. This is partly due to the parish council continuing to cut the school field, but the cost of maintaining the amenity field alone is £980 so far this year. The budget is only £800. **Bob Wilson has offered to cut the amenity field at no charge. It was agreed that the present contractor will be asked to stop cutting the field and Bob Wilson will take on this responsibility in future.**

244. South Church Park

- a. Footpath redirection Andrew Hewitt clarified the route of the proposed unofficial diversion of the footpath. For the benefit of the newer members it was explained that the unofficial diversion was to encourage walkers (especially dog owners) not to cross the open field so that crops and/or livestock could be protected from faeces or interference. It was noted that the moratorium on footpath diversions means that the existing footpath must continue to be kept accessible. George Heywood pointed out that there was no legal obligation on the tenant or landowner to cut the grass along the route of the footpath.
- b. Gateway and drainage works **Trevor had obtained quotations from 2 suppliers and was seeking a 3rd quote.** The total cost of the works, including fencing and gates for the footpath and some additional work on the gate at Higher Turnaway was expected to amount to no more than £2,000.

245. School Field Rental Agreement and Proposed Licence to Gain Access The Parish Council's solicitor has now received the draft licence and returned it to the County Council together with some slight amendments to the Lease to take out reference to the accessway and VAT. She will let us know when she hears back from the County Solicitor as to whether the documents are now approved. Trevor Mills confirmed that the Village Hall Trustees had been consulted on its contents and had no objections.

246. Members Reports:

George Heywood said that hedge-trimming season had started again and asked whether the landowners along Back Lane could be asked to cut back their hedges or contribute towards the Parish Council employing a contractor to do the work. **Bob Wilson offered to distribute a letter to the landowners. The Clerk will draft a suitable letter.**

Jim Lowe noted that the benches round the village green were still in need of repainting. **It was agreed that Jim Lowe and Richard Hooper would carry out the work.**

David Watson suggested that the village was in need of another 'clean-up day'. It was felt that these had never been very successful in the past, but **it was agreed that some rubbish collection equipment (litter pickers, bags etc.) would be provided in or near the telephone box. The Clerk was asked to make the necessary arrangements.**

Bob Wilson said that the potholes near Catsborough Cross had not yet been repaired. Also, potholes in the road to Cherryvale and Monkleigh Mill Lane need to be reported.

247. Planning

- a. Application - 1/0626/2020/FUL, The Beeches, Variation of condition 3 (relating to fencing and planting) of planning permission 1/0293/2020/FUL – **Supported without public consultation**

- b. Decision: 1/0328/2020/FULM, Land at Bulkworthy, Solar park and ancillary development (Variation of condition 2 of planning permission 1/1177/2015/FULM - Alteration to layout and module row spacing, change in location of access track and reduction in number of transformers) – Granted Permission - Noted
- c. Decision: 1/0503/2020/FUL, Bearah, Proposed extension (Variation of condition 2 of planning permission 1/0326/2017/FUL) – Granted permission - Noted
- d. Applications: 1/504/2020/FUL and 1/0505/2020/FUL, 5 new dwellings, Land to the West of Tower Hill Two re-consultations had arrived since the agenda was published. They concerned minor amendments to the plans for 5 new dwellings to the west of Tower Hill. Since these applications had been unanimously supported at earlier meetings and had not attracted any public interest **it was agreed to support the revised plans without the need to call an additional council meeting.**

248. Accounts and Audit:

- a. Receipts and Payments to date 2020/21
 - i) Bank balances as at 28th August 2020 (£62,283.40):
 - (1) Parish Council Current Account was £11,766.34
 - (2) Thornhillhead Moor Account was £3,239.20
 - (3) Savings Account was £47,277.86
 - ii) Fund balances as at 28th August 2020 (£62,283.40):
 - (1) General Account - £31,044.20
 - (2) Thornhill Head Account - £31,239.20
 - iii) Payments due (£6,151.90 + VAT)
 - (1) Slee Blackwell, Disbursements re Variation of Covenant - £3.00
 - (2) Sarah Jenkins, Internal Audit Fee - £175.00
 - (3) P G Blosse, July salary - £469.00
 - (4) HMRC, July PAYE - £93.40
 - (5) Robert H Hicks & Co., Fee re Higher Turnaway lease - £150.00
 - (6) South West Water Business, Water charges (May - July 2020) - £10.03
 - (7) E.on, Electricity - £6.16
 - (8) M Fry, Grass cutting - £352.00
 - (9) Buckland Brewer Village Hall, Grant re electrical installation of chiller - £291.13
 - (10) Buckland Brewer Playing Field Association, Grant - £300.00
 - (11) Buckland Brewer PCC – Churchyard, Grant - £300.00
 - (12) Barnstaple Town Council, North Devon Record Office Grant - £200.00
 - (13) Buckland Brewer Community Shop, Grant - £1,000.00
 - (14) Families in Grief, Grant - £50.00
 - (15) Torridge Volunteer Cars, Grant - £200.00
 - (16) Buckland Brewer Education Support Fund, Grant - £1,500.00
 - (17) P G Blosse, August salary - £443.12
 - (18) HMRC, August PAYE - £106.60
 - (19) Northern Devon Foodbank, Grant - £502.46

iv) Receipts (£872.32)

- (1) Jane Lowe, Repayment of Webmaster Honorarium - £500.00
- (2) Western Power Distribution, Wayleaves - £159.82
- (3) Field Rent, Higher Turnaway - £137.50
- (4) Allotment Deposit - £75.00

- b. Budget Monitoring Report, April – June 2020 The Clerk had distributed the budget monitoring report for the first quarter of 2020/21 (see appendix 1), which was noted and approved unanimously.

By virtue of paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public were excluded from the remainder of the meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9:30 pm

Dates of Future Meetings:

Parish Council, Wednesday 14th October 2020 (7:30pm, remotely via Zoom))

Signed as a true record:

Chairman: **Date:**