

**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**  
**OF BUCKLAND BREWER PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON**  
**THURSDAY 10<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2021 AT 7:30pm**  
**(MEETING HELD REMOTELY VIA ZOOM)**

**Members Present:** Mrs Barbara Babb, Mr Andrew Hewitt, Mr George Heywood, Mr Richard Hooper, Mr Jim Lowe and Mr Trevor Mills

**Also in attendance:** Cllr. Barry Parsons (DCC), Liza Oxford (Census Engagement Officer) and Andrew Heywood (Robert Hicks & Co.), Lewis Clarke (North Devon Journal) and 2 members of the public

**Parish Clerk:** Mr P Blosse

<b>KEY: Actions are shown in bold blue type</b>	<b>Decisions are shown in bold red type</b>
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**330. Apologies for Absence** David Watson, Frits Takken, Cllr Phil Pennington

**331. Declarations of Interest** George Heywood re item 350.b, Erection of 3 bungalows, land south west of Buckland Brewer

**332. Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2021:** The minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2021 were agreed and will be signed by the Chair in due course.

**333. Public Participation** None

**334. Liza Oxford (Census Engagement Officer)** Liza introduced herself and explained that her role was to explain how people in the Torridge, West Devon, Torbay and Teignbridge areas can get support to complete their census returns. She gave a brief history of the 10-yearly census that has been taken since 1801 and reassured the Council that nobody can be identified from their forms. It is a legal obligation to complete the forms, with the possibility of a fine of up to £1,000 for failing to comply. The data is used to help shape policies that affect almost all government services. The census date is Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021 but returns can be completed before then if residents are sure about who will be in residence at their properties on that date. This year, it is hoped that 75% of the returns will be completed online. 89% of the forms being posted are for online submissions with only 11% (those with digital deprivation of digital exclusion) being sent paper copies for return by post. Due to covid restrictions there will be no door-to-door support as on previous occasions but there will be telephone and online support, and also most libraries will be offering support and guidance. There will be field teams going out to residences that do not complete their forms by the due date but they will not be permitted to enter homes or help to complete forms. The field team members will always have ID badges. The Parish Council was asked to help to support the community. Further help is available online on [www.census.gov.uk](http://www.census.gov.uk). The Clerk said

that regular updates have been published on the Parish Facebook page and on the website. Jim Lowe was concerned that not everyone has access to the internet or wants to use that method to complete their return. He had tried to telephone the support line but had been told they were too busy to respond. Liza said that she would feed this back but explained that spare paper copies cannot be distributed easily as they have to be tailored to each household. Andrew thanked Liza for her contribution.

**335. Andrew Heywood, Hicks & Co. – The Future Management of Thornhillhead Moor**

Andrew explained that the existing agreement ends on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021. The Parish Council had two options: to agree to an annual extension that would guarantee the same annual income of about £8,800, or to apply for a new scheme at a higher tier, that would generate an income of about £8,400 per year. **It was agreed that the council should apply for an annual extension**, which should roll over annually until such time as any new arrangements are developed by Natural England. It was noted that there were sufficient funds to meet the council's obligations for graziers' fees, fencing replacement, management fees and any repairs and maintenance that might be required. George Heywood argued that any unspent monies should be available for the Parish Council to use for other parish projects. The Clerk agreed that there were no restrictions in the original agreement with Natural England or in the internal agreement with the graziers that would prevent this, provided that the Council first made proper provision for all expenses relating to the SSSI. Trevor Mills said that he thought any surplus funds should be ring-fenced for Thornhillhead Moor. **It was agreed that Andrew Heywood would return to the next Parish Council meeting with detailed costings of the management fees, fencing and other works required.**

- a. **Approval of payment of graziers' rights 2020/21** **It was agreed that graziers' rights for the current year would be paid at the previously agreed rate of £7.50 per head.** There were no known changes to the ownership of rights in the last 12 months.

**336. County and District Councillors' Reports**

- a. Councillor Barry Parsons (Devon County Council): Barry explained that this would be his last meeting. Elections are to be held on May 6<sup>th</sup> but purdah will start on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021. Barry summarised the latest Covid news: this region has the highest number of vaccinations in care homes and the lowest reported cases in the country. 70,000 tests were carried in the previous week and 94% of children were back at school. He said that there might be a legal challenge over the insistence to go ahead with the May elections and for face-to-face council meetings to restart. He had raised the issue of poor highways signage at the last HATOC meeting and hoped that this might lead to improvements. He thanked the Parish Council for the work that they do and said that he felt ours was a beacon authority. Barbara Babb said that the Shop Committee had again complained about the water laying outside the shop. The Clerk said that the local Highways Manager had explained that this would be an expensive job and that it would not be possible to do anything until the new financial year. Andrew Hewitt thanked Councillor Parsons for his excellent service in the past 4 years. **It was agreed that the Clerk would write to Barry to express the Council's thanks.**

*George Heywood left the meeting at the point due to the loss of broadband*

- b. Councillor Phil Pennington (Torrige Council): Not present

### 337. Clerk's Report

- a. Correspondence There had been 79 items of correspondence forwarded by email since the last meeting. The Clerk highlighted the following items:
- I. It had been agreed that the Parish Council would fund by way of a grant the purchase of a salt bin for Buckland Brewer Primary School. A letter of thanks had been received. See item 340.
  - II. DALC Newsletter #06 had explained the regulations around remote meetings and the 'sunset clause'. See item 348.
  - III. Kieran Stanbury of Devon Highways had responded to complaints about the road to Parkham and Monkleigh Mill Lane saying that, in the main, there were no actionable defects but that some patching work might find its way into the schedules in the new financial year. In the meantime, he advised continuing to report potholes etc in the usual way.
  - IV. DALC Newsletter #09 included an invitation to sign up to Parish Online with a link to the Ordnance Survey and an opportunity to create personalised interactive maps. The Clerk had signed up for 30-day free trial and developed a map that he had linked to the community website. **Members agreed the map could be developed in future to pinpoint grit bins, roadworks, parish land and other points of interest and it was agreed to continue to use the service at a cost of £70 per year. It was also agreed that the Clerk, Richard Hooper and Jane Webb should attend the free training that was available.**
  - V. An invitation had been received to attend a webinar hosted by Power for People at 7:00pm on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2021. **It was agreed that the Clerk would attend.**
- b. Purple Buildings for Census 2021 LAs part of the awareness campaign for the Census, the ONS is encouraging public bodies to light up public buildings with purple lights from 21:21 on 19<sup>th</sup> March until Census Day on 21<sup>st</sup> March. It was decided that this would not be appropriate for Buckland Brewer.
- c. Co-option of New Councillor The Elections Officer had confirmed that there had been no demand for a bi-election and that the Parish Council could co-opt a new councillor if they so wished. One expression of interest had already been received from someone who had been a parish councillor in Buckland Brewer before. **It was agreed that Rosie Beer should be co-opted and her appointment was confirmed with immediate effect.**
- d. Receipt of DCC Prompt Action Grant The Clerk had applied for a grant from Devon County for help with providing services during the latest lockdown. A grant of £300 had already been received which will be used to fund the provision of transport services by Torrige Volunteer Cars. **The Clerk's action was approved unanimously,** proposed by Andrew Hewitt and seconded by Barbara Babb.

- 338. Further complaints regarding dog fouling and dogs not kept under control** In the past few weeks the Clerk had received a number of complaints about dogs fouling the streets and open-plan gardens, and running uncontrolled on farmland. He had written articles for the community website and Village Scene but the problems appear to be getting worse rather than better. Richard Hooper said that he had recently cleaned up the Playing Field and that he felt that the problem was overstated. It was felt that the Parish Council had already done as much as could be expected and no further action was recommended.
- 339. Road Closures – any lessons learned from the South West Water works in January** Cllr Barry Parsons had reportage the poor signage to HATOC. Further closures are planned for much of April for laying water mains and fibre optic cabling. **These will be widely advertised in Village Scene, on notice boards, on the website and Facebook** and it was felt that the Council could do no more.
- 340. Buckland Brewer School: Request for grant for a salt bin** The school had asked for assistance with purchasing a grit bin for the playground during the severe weather at the end of January. As this was felt to be an urgent issue it had been agreed by the Chair and Vice-Chair and salt had been provided. No invoice has yet been received but the cost is expected to be in the region of £200. **The Chair and Vice-Chair's action was approved unanimously.**
- 341. Community Orchard Grant Scheme** The application for a grant to fund the purchase of apple trees had been successful and a sum of £300 had been received. This should be sufficient to purchase between 10 and 15 saplings with suitable supports. It was agreed that Trevor Mills would order a mixture of early, mid and late blossoming varieties to be planted along the south boundary of the amenity field.
- 342. Goalposts/football on the amenity field** The Clerk had been offered a set of goalposts from Torridge Council at no cost. These will be collected by Bob Wilson who has offered to erect them, provide nets (which he already possesses) and also mark out a football pitch. **Andrew Hewitt and the Clerk will talk to Bob to coordinate this work with the prospective orchard and planned fitness suite.**
- 343. Installation of electric charging points** The Clerk had investigated the issue. The 'free installation' scheme that had been on offer last year was no longer available and probably could not have been used by the parish council anyway. There are very few parish councils offering this service and none that are generating much income. Although there are powers that might permit the Parish Council to provide charging points as part of a car parking scheme, there are no powers to charge for the service. It is the opinion of DALC that charging point schemes should be left to larger district authorities. It was agreed not to pursue the issue any further at this time.
- 344. Webmaster's Report** Jane Lowe had submitted her regular report. It showed that 'hits' on the website appear to have plateaued at about 1,600 to 1,700 per month. With little else happening except covid related news at the moment this is understandable. Jane still struggles to get news and event information from contributors and would welcome any help on that aspect of her work. Members noted the report.

**345. South Church Park**

- a. Footpath redirection                      Nothing to report
- b. Gateway and drainage works                      Trevor Mills had supplied a breakdown of costs for this work, splitting it between two contractors. The total cost would be approximately £1,800 + VAT. **It was agreed to start the drainage works first and for the fencing works to be done later in the year at times to be agreed with the leaseholder and George Heywood.**

**346. School Field Rental Agreement and Proposed Licence to Gain Access**                      Nothing to report. Trevor Mills will chase up the Village Hall Committee.

**347. Snow Warden's Report:**                      Nothing to report

**348. Future meetings and the impact of the 'sunset clause'**                      The latest information indicates that the legislation that permits authorities to hold meetings remotely that expires on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 is not going to be extended. Therefore, all meetings after that date must be 'in person'. The Parish Council already has a risk assessment agreed for such meetings and the chapel has been provisionally booked for all of this year's meetings. As there could still be restrictions in place about the number of people permitted at each meeting, the clerk suggested that, at least for the time being, Zoom links should be made available for anybody unable or unwilling to attend meetings in person. **It was agreed that the Annual Parish Meeting would be held via Zoom on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2021 starting at 7:00pm, immediately prior to the scheduled Parish Council meeting.**

**349. Members Reports:**

Andrew Hewitt said that the ash trees along the boundary of the playing field were suffering from ash dieback and would be lopped in the near future. Also, the bank between the playing field and the allotments needs steeping. It was possible that the Playing Field Association could get the work completed at no cost by trainees on a work experience scheme.

Richard Hooper had received complaints about the Post Office van failing to turn up due to various breakdowns, staff absences etc. Woolsery Post Office has changed hands and we no longer get notified when there will be no van. **The Clerk will contact them and endeavour to get a new system in place.**

Trevor Mills said that parking round the village green was causing a problem. There is room for three cars along the hedge between the parish notice board and Northwood Lane if only one parks lengthways. It was agreed that parking spaces should be marked out. **The Clerk will ask Devon Highways if they would be able to do it. Trevor also said that he would be reporting the state of Craneham Hill.**

### 350. Planning

- a. Coach and Horses, Change of Use: Feedback re Plans Committee This application was withdrawn before the Plans meeting. Jim Lowe said that he had been told that the application would be resubmitted once the Plans Committee can meet in person.
- b. Application: 1/0074/2021/FUL, Land South West of Buckland Brewer, Erection of no.3 Bungalows (Variation of condition 1 of planning permission 1/0286/2020/FUL) - Plot 2 only – **supported**
- c. Application: 1/0096/2021/FUL, East Hele, Proposed roof over existing silage stores – supported by 4 councillors but not enough to submit a response – consultation expired 21/2/21
- d. Application: 1/0636/2020/FUL, Coach and Horses, Change of use from public house, to residential unit with annex and associated works – withdrawn
- e. Application: 1/0160/2021/FUL, 12 Hillpark, Retrospective approval for the erection of a conservatory to the rear of a dwelling. It was decided to make no response about this particular application but that some guidance should be put on the community website about when planning permission might be required, with a link to the Planning Portal.
- f. Decision: 1/0950/2020/FUL, Oak Farm, Conversion of agricultural buildings to form a one-bed annex for a dependent relative (affecting a Public Right of Way) – Granted permission
- g. LATE ITEM dealt with as an emergency issue. Planning consultation from Cellnex re proposed additional equipment to Thornhillhead mast. Cellnex's plans were noted. Members had no concerns about the work required as it all seemed to be within the boundary of the existing site. The Clerk will respond appropriately and remind them that adding more equipment will entail a renegotiation of the lease.

### 351. Accounts:

- a. Receipts and Payments to date 2020/21
  - i) Bank balances as at 26<sup>th</sup> February 2021 (£69,646.93):
    - (1) Parish Council Current Account was £10,656.89
    - (2) Thornhillhead Moor Account was £11,684.70
    - (3) Savings Account was £47,305.34
  - ii) Fund balances as at 26<sup>th</sup> February 2021 (£69,646.93):
    - (1) General Account - £29,962.23
    - (2) Thornhill Head Account - £39,684.70
  - iii) Payments due (£921.98 + VAT)
    - (1) P G Blossie, January salary - £676.42 (including £110.40 PAYE and £89.99 for virus software renewal)
    - (2) E.on, Electricity - £7.81 + VAT
    - (3) R Hoyle, allotment shed removal - £120.00
    - (4) Passion First Aid, defibrillator pads - £85.95 + VAT
    - (5) Torridge Volunteer Cars, Covid Travel Scheme - £21.90
    - (6) South West Water, water charges - £9.89

The payment schedule was proposed by Jim Lowe, seconded by Barbara Babb and approved unanimously.

iv) Receipts (£3,950.00)

- (1) DCC, Prompt Action grant - £300.00
- (2) North Devon Biosphere, Orchard Grant - £300
- (3) Cllr Phil Pennington, Grant re Telephone Box - £350.00
- (4) Cellnex, Thornhillhead Mast rent - £3,000.00

- b. The Clerk explained that he will be requesting changes to the bank mandate to amend his postal address and to include all new councillors. He also suggested that the Council should consider online banking. It was agreed to consider this at the next meeting when there would be more time available.

**There being no further business, the meeting closed at 10:15 pm**

**Dates of Future Meetings:**

Annual Parish Meeting, Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2021 (7:00pm. Remotely via Zoom)

Parish Council, Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2021 (immediately following the Annual Parish Meeting)

**Signed as a true record:**

**Chairman:** ..... **Date:** .....