

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
OF BUCKLAND BREWER PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 12th JULY 2017 AT 7:30 AT
BUCKLAND BREWER SCHOOL

Members Present: Mrs Barbara Babb, Mrs Marie Douglas, Mr George Heywood, Mrs Elisa Hurley, Mr Jim Lowe, Mr Trevor Mills, Mrs Rosemary Sanders, and Mr David Watson.

Also in attendance 3 members of the public and Cllr. Barry Parsons (DCC)

Parish Clerk: Patrick Blossie

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

494. **Apologies for Absence:** Andrew Hewitt and Cllr. Alison Boyle

495. **Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 14th June 2017:** The minutes of the meeting held on 14th June 2017 were agreed and signed.

496. **Declarations of Interest** None

497. **Public Participation:** Chris Layton supplied the Clerk with a set of accounts for the Playing Field Association and a letter supporting their application for a grant. Lyn Layton and Gill Willett were representing the Community Shop and had supplied a set of accounts for the year ending 31st December 2016 earlier in the day. The Chair approved that they should be permitted to contribute as their items occurred on the agenda.

498. **Clerk's Report:**

- a. **Correspondence:** The Clerk had distributed 32 items of correspondence since the last meeting. He highlighted i) briefing papers on the first stage of the Acute Services Review. ii) notice from TDC of the cancellation of Area Advisory Group meetings. **It was agreed that the Clerk should write to Cllr Bob Hicks to register the Council's disappointment that this opportunity to meet had been lost.** iii) A request from DALC to submit an article for their annual report. **Jim Lowe will provide a short piece on the new landing site.** iv) An update about County Council activity from Councillor Barry Parsons, v) a grant application from the Playing Field Association. The Chair thanked Chris Layton for supplying some additional information and accounts. It was agreed that the application would be considered with others at the October meeting. **An invitation for organisations to submit applications will be included in the next Village Scene.** vi) a request for an extension to the footpath by the school's back gate and a gate into the new school field. **The Clerk was asked to provide a sketch map of what is required for consideration at the next meeting.** vii) Jim Lowe pointed out the invitation to the Rural Futures Conference at Westpoint on 28th September 2017.
- b. **Footpath: Gorwood Road to Ashtons Cottages** A parishioner had contacted the Clerk via the Council's Facebook page to say that the stretch of verge between Gorwood Road and Ashtons Cottages was very overgrown. Devon County had said that it was privately owned but the Clerk had not been able to discover who by. In the meantime, the verge has been cut.

499. Fields and Allotments

- a. Works to Sports & Amenity and School Fields: Trevor Mills had obtained a quote for a stone burier and a seeder, which he advised should be hired for a week. The cost would be £1,240 + VAT. **The requirement for further quotations was waived because of the specialist nature of the machinery and approval was given for Trevor to hire the machines and carry out the work as soon as the weather permitted.** (Proposed by Dave Watson, seconded by Barbara Babb). Trevor will also be using a stone picker on the surfaces first.
- b. School Field Rental Agreement: Nothing further to report.
- c. Lease for South Church Park: Nothing further to report. The Chair will chase up.
- d. Allotments: New Gate: This had not progressed and there was some confusion about who should be ordering the new gate. **It was agreed the gate ought to be positioned in the car park and not in the playing field as agreed at the last meeting.**
- e. Thornhillhead Moor: The Chair was asked to invite a representative from Hicks & Co. to give an update on the Thornhillhead Moor SSSI.

500. **North Devon Link Road: Public Consultation:** Barbara Babb noted that the plans did not include a timetable of when the work would be done or how long it would take. Members felt that the plans were not ambitious enough as the link road provides the main communication link from North Devon to the rest of the country. **It was agreed that the Council's should recommend making the entire route dual carriageway as far as Barnstaple.**

501. **Buckland Brewer Shop:** Lyn Layton, Secretary of the Community Shop had provided a set of accounts for the year ending 31st December 2016 and attended the meeting with Gill Willett, the Chair. They explained how the shop had got into some debt in the period before they got involved with it and, as evidenced by the accounts, had made good progress in reducing the deficit. There was still some way to go to break-even and to clear the outstanding debts. Lyn said that there was now a very supportive and hard-working committee, and a pool of volunteers. They are also being supported by the Plunkett Foundation, who will be coming in to advise them. Members were sympathetic to the problem, recognising the benefit to the entire community of maintaining a local shop. There was some debate about whether any financial support should be to help the shop meet regular outgoing expenses or to help clear historical debts, or both. **Lyn and Gill were asked to submit a formal grant application for consideration with other claims at the October meeting.**

502. **Transform Ageing Resource Day:** Elisa Hurley had attended a number of workshops run by the Transform Ageing organisation and gave many good examples of what could be done to help elderly and infirm residents. She disagreed with Cllr Parsons view that technology could be used to help, especially for the oldest members of the community. She suggested that the Parish Council should organise an open day when parishioners could learn about the facilities and services that are already available, and to give their own views about what other services they would like. Ideas such as starting up a luncheon club were discussed. **It was agreed that Elisa would organise an open day, inviting representatives from various local organisations, and that parishioners from Parkham would also be invited. Elisa and Trevor Mills will agree on a suitable date when the village hall is available, probably in the latter half of August. It was agreed that the Parish Council will pay for the hire of the hall.**

- 503. NALC Consultation re 2018/19 Pay Claim:** The Clerk explained that public sector unions were proposing to seek a pay increase for all NJC staff of 5% with additional protections for the lowest paid workers, and NALC was seeking opinions from employers. **Members were unanimously in favour of the proposal.**
- 504. TDC Consultation: Northern Devon Playing Pitch Strategy:** The Clerk said that it was advisable to ensure that the new sports and amenities pitch is included in the survey, which is currently being carried out jointly by North Devon and Torrridge Councils. **He will ensure that it is included.**
- 505. Education Support Fund:** Jim Lowe suggested that the Parish Council should allocate some of its additional annual income streams, such as the Thornhillhead Mast rent and the turbine contributions, to an Education Support Fund. This could be used to issue grants to parishioners for educational purposes. The idea was well-received. The actual amount to be allocated and the details of how the scheme could work will be considered at a later meeting. **Jim and the Clerk will develop a set of terms and conditions.**

506. Members' Reports

Cllr. Barry Parsons: had supplied a written report which will be attached at Appendix 1. He asked the Clerk to send him an email about the specific road condition problems at Thornhillhead and Monkleigh Mill Lane. He said that the County was now establishing new working arrangements with Skanska, for example, improving the way potholes are prioritised. A new Head of Highways has been appointed, Meg Booth. As a lead councillor on digital technology, he asked for feedback on broadband issues. Barry pointed out that Health and Adult Social Care were significant issues and they are looking at the way they operate alongside the NHS. He is also talking to Adam Paynter, the Leader of Cornwall Council, with whom they are starting to create close links. He talked about the effects of rural isolation and how best to help people in their own homes. He was keen to reduce transport costs and to make better use of technology to help the older generation to keep in touch. Marie Douglas asked about potholes and the problem of sweepers sweeping debris into gulleys that then get blocked. Barry said that the County was investing another £500,000 into these issues. Elisa Hurley pointed out that technology is not necessarily a suitable solution for older people. She also asked how the people needing help would be identified. George Heywood talked about the poor mobile telephone strengths in the area and asked Barry to persuade central government to invest more in this area. Jim Lowe asked whether there was any news of next year's settlement figure and whether there would be more service cuts. Barry said they will have to deal with whatever comes. Jim Lowe also asked about Devolution plans. Barry said that they were now developing more local partnerships, such as their discussions with Cornwall County. David Watson asked about employment issues at Devon County with fewer staff being put under more pressure, more reliance on agency staff, constant changes and instability. Barry said that agency staffing was a recognised problem and they were trying to develop introduce in-house monitoring schemes.

Barbara Babb (i) Asked whether the tall trees in Hillpark behind the social houses would be taken down. Trevor said that this would be done in the Autumn and that he would like to build up the hedge properly. (ii) She also said that the Post Office van is still parking outside her door and that the disabled lift has not worked for 4 months. **Jim Lowe will contact Woolsery Post Office.**

Jim Lowe (i) suggested that the speeding problems in the village might be eased by installing flashing speed signs. **The Clerk will price up some alternatives.** (ii) The head of Buckland Brewer School had notified him that the pre-school would be transferring to the ownership of the school with the staff being transferred under TUPE regulations. Gina Finch will attend the September meeting of the Parish Council to provide an update. (iii) The School Forum that Jim was a member of had not yet met formally but is due to meet in the Autumn. (iv) Jim also reported that he had spoken to someone about the possible diversion of the footpath across South Church Park and had been told that there might be a technical problem if the diversion was to take it onto another existing footpath. He will continue to explore the issue.

507. Planning:

- a. **Progress Report re Draft Local Plan:** Jim reported that more amendments were coming out to consultation in August. A developer had shown some interest in a potential development for Buckland Brewer but the promised 'transition period' between the old and new plans has not materialized so they will now wait until the new plan is activated. Jim explained that although there are large building companies willing to develop large estates of hundreds of house and some smaller local builders who will do small developments of up to about half a dozen houses, finding a company willing to develop small estates of a couple of dozen houses will be more difficult, especially if the percentage of social housing required is quite high. Trevor Mills said that some social housing was essential.

- b. **Decision:** 1/0326/2017/FUL and 1/0342/2017/LBC Bearah, Proposed extension – Granted permission - Noted

508. Accounts

i. **Receipts and Payments**

- a. **Bank balances as at 30th June 2017 (£37,408.20):**
 - i. Parish Council Current Account was £6,215.50
 - ii. Thornhillhead Moor Account was £3,097.04
 - iii. Savings Account was £28,095.66
- b. **Fund balances as at 30th June 2017 (£37,408.20):**
 - i. General Account - £20,311.16
 - ii. Thornhill Head Account - £17,097.04
- c. **Payments due (£374.75 + VAT)**

The following list of payments was approved:

 - i. Parish Clerk's salary, expenses and associated PAYE (June 2017): £356.80, including PAYE - £64.70
 - ii. Buckland Brewer Village Hall, Booking – Annual Meeting - £8.50
 - iii. E.on – Electricity (direct debit) - £9.45 + VAT
- d. **Receipts**
 - i. None

- ii. **Quarterly Budget Monitoring Report:** The Clerk presented the first quarter's budget monitoring report for the period April – June 2017.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9:50 pm

Date of Next Meeting:

Parish Council: Wednesday 9th August 2017 (Buckland Brewer School, 7:30pm)

Signed as a true record:

Chairman: **Date:**

Holsworthy Rural Parish & Town Notes: July 2017

My thanks to so many of you who are engaged at this time of the year in providing such wonderful and wide-ranging community activity in our town of Holsworthy and its Parishes. It's wonderful to see and be involved. There are times when people have asked me how I measure success in what I do? It's a simple response ... I measure success in the happiness that individuals hold, not by how much they might possess. Walking around St Peter's Fair in Holsworthy this week is a clear example to me of so many individuals enjoying our life-style, our traditions, our community, and, I take my hat off to those who have enabled such events to occur because it's not everywhere that holds such treasures.

As many of you are aware the County Council now has a new administration following the elections of May 2017. Holsworthy Rural now has 30 parishes, is the largest of all wards both in terms of geography and number of parishes as well as holding the most people. Getting around to see everyone never has been easy and this is especially so now and I thank everyone for their patience and understanding of me trying to do so.

I continue to hold one of the 8 Cabinet posts on Council. My portfolio is now "Organisational Development and Digital Transformation". In recent times, Devon County Council has been very successful at meeting its budget through a combination of reducing staff, outsourcing/commissioning, raising costs/eligibility; indeed, stopping provision. With the world around us changing fast there are demands for working very differently which include closer integration (between, for example, the National Health Service and Upper Tier Local Authorities), the challenge of maintaining - indeed, enhancing services - becoming more citizen focused, and, about how we adapt to the digital world's challenges and opportunities. We cannot continue to operate in the way that we've always done given budget envelopes now held. I will take the political lead in such change in Devon and my emphasis will be on "What Matters" for our citizens. A focal point has to be on initial assessment of situations, really listening and understanding what needs to be done and designing services from the bottom up, not from the top down.

As these pathways unfold I am ever conscious of the effect on rural areas such as our own. The view often held is that national government has a focus on city developments which are often at the detriment of needs of those living in the countryside. The emphasis of development in and around London is a prime example. HS2, the super-fast railway is another, as indeed is the Paddington Station development and Crossrail. The new Strategic Plan being developed by Devon County Council has a real focus already on lobbying Central Government to ensure that rural Devon, too, has a voice. Our road network has to be one of our real priorities here.

With the above in mind I am meeting at the end of this month with the new Leader of Cornwall Council, Adam Paynter, to see if there are opportunities in a number of areas for both Devon and Cornwall. One part of our discussion I would certainly hope to include adult services and our full and appropriate use of local hospitals. In addressing matters digital I would hope that the two councils can progress a common agenda with associated infrastructure facilitating partnership-working. My view is that there is a massive opportunity here. I would also like to see us working together to improve recreational connectivity that might include increased emphasis on development, for example, along the Ruby Way.

You will be pleased to know that despite some of the issues that we have on our roads (Holsworthy Bridge/Sutcombe to Bradworthy/Caute to Rowden are but a few) I have already met with both the new Interim Head of Highways, Meg Booth, as well as Skanska (the new 'Devon Highways contractor) this past month. The copy of the latest works programme from Skanska now shows most of the work is for patching prior to next year's surface dressing. There are a number of our ward's long and problem road issues being attended to with around £278k being spent on Holsworthy Rural which is a significant investment in the current financial climate. Rest assured, I will continue to press our case.

With the summer holidays fast approaching I take this opportunity of wishing our young folk a well-earned rest and good luck to those who have just been sitting examinations!