

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
OF BUCKLAND BREWER PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 14th OCTOBER 2020 AT 7:30pm
(MEETING HELD REMOTELY VIA ZOOM)

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

Also in attendance: 1 member of the public, Cllr. Barry Parsons (DCC), Cllr. Bob Hicks (TDC), Cllr. Phil Pennington (TDC) and Frits Takken (Nominated as co-optee and elected at this meeting)

Parish Clerk: Mr P Blossie

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

255. Apologies for Absence George Heywood and Bob Wilson. Both Councillors Pennington and Parsons had other meetings to attend and joined the meeting part way through.

256. Declarations of Interest None

257. Minutes of the Meetings of the Parish Council held on 9th September and 7th October 2020: The minutes of the meeting held on 9th September and 7th October 2020 were agreed and will be signed by the Chair in due course.

258. Public Participation None

259. Introduction of Nominees and Appointment of Co-opted Member: The Clerk explained that 2 candidates, Jo Miles and Henry Trew, had withdrawn their nominations due to the pressure of other commitments. Shane Harding had not responded to any emails or Zoom invitations.

a. Shane Harding Not present

b. Frits Takken Frits introduced himself saying that he had lived in the parish for 11 years. He had previously run his own computer firm, had been a parish councillor in Langtree for 10 years, had worked on a farm in Putford and was now retired but running a micro-brewery at Thornhillhead. **His appointment was proposed by Jim Lowe, seconded by David Watson, and approved unanimously.**

260. County and District Councillors' Reports

- a. Councillor Barry Parsons (Devon County Council): Cllr. Parsons had supplied written reports dated 10th September and 11th October that are attached at Appendix 1. He talked about the impact of Covid-19 on the Devon economy which had fallen by 8%. Unemployment had increased by 6%. Recovery is starting to happen but is patchy. Debts are rising. Market and coastal towns are disproportionately affected, and it is thought that 5-15% of people currently on furlough will not return to work when the scheme ends. Devon County has approved £6 million to help with the recovery. Torridge District is as safe a place to live as anywhere in the country at the moment, with fewer cases than Cornwall. With the exception of Exeter, where an outbreak is confined mainly to the university, all of Devon is reporting low incidence of cases. It is thought that, in terms, the current increase in cases nationwide, the West Country is about 3 weeks behind the north of the country. He reminded everyone about the importance of wearing PPE and following the guidelines about social distancing and hand-washing. Councillor Phil Pennington wondered whether the low number of cases in Torridge was related to its poor economy. Councillor Parsons felt that it was more likely to reflect the care that local people took of each other.
- b. Councillor Phil Pennington (Torridge Council): Councillor Pennington said that, as requested, he had called-in the Coach and Horses planning applications should officers want to approve them, and that Councillor Bob Hicks has also called them in in they would otherwise be refused. This will guarantee that whatever the possible outcome, the applications will go before the Plans Committee for their consideration.
- c. Councillor Bob Hicks (Torridge Council):
 - i) Planning White Paper Cllr. Hicks started by giving an overview of the changes in planning law since 1947, before which time there had been little restriction to what could be built and where. The earliest rules were strict and forced land prices up. Later legislation introduced the National Planning Policy Framework which requires planning authorities to demonstrate that they can supply 5 years land supply for development purposes. One drawback of the scheme is that by holding back information about land holdings, developers can bypass local plans and get developments approved on land that is not in the local plan. Central Government has decided that the system needs a shake-up. The latest white paper purports to permit the public more involvement in drawing up local and neighbourhood plans. The local plan will become the 'bible' and virtually any development that is already in a local plan will be approved automatically, taking away some of the powers of the Planning Departments. Many planning authorities are objecting to these changes, but Torridge's submission is not yet available. The District Councillors' main concern is for the rural areas. Cllr. Hicks said that Buckland Brewer and other parish councils should be considering developing neighbourhood plans. David Watson asked about the impact on social housing. Cllr. Hicks thought that, although Torridge was keen to develop more affordable houses, the Central Government policy is to let the open market force house prices down and that, in future, there will be a lower ratio of affordable to

market rate houses. It was agreed generally that the village needed facilities like the shop and pub if it is to thrive. Cllr. Hicks said that Buckland Brewer had lost all its shops except for the community run shop and that the pub is under threat. Without these facilities the parish will drop down the hierarchy. Andrew Hewitt said that it was important to attract more young people to keep the village thriving and agreed that the **Parish Council should develop a neighbourhood plan.**

261. Clerk's Report

- a. Correspondence There had been 73 items of correspondence forwarded by email since last month's meeting. He highlighted one item: a letter of thanks from the Community Shop for their annual grant. Most of the correspondence is routine newsletters and general information but sometimes he asks for feedback because some issues could be dealt with outside of Council meetings, usually when an item has been agreed in principle previously. Often these get very few responses. He said that in future he will be indicating a 'priority' on emails that he sends. 'High' will indicate that a response has been requested and 'Highest' will mean that a response is required as soon as possible. As an example, he had drafted a letter to go to the owners of properties adjoining Back Lane and had asked for opinions about street cleaning equipment but had received no responses in either case.
 - i) Back Lane: The Clerk read out a letter that he had drafted. **It was approved unanimously, and Bob Wilson will be asked to hand deliver them soon.**
 - ii) Street Cleaning Station: It was decided that the price charged by the 2-Minute Street Clean company for an 'A-board' and equipment was too high. **The Clerk will supply a couple of litter-pickers, gloves, and bags to be stored in the telephone box.** David Watson said that he would be happy to clear away any bags of rubbish left in the telephone box but the Clerk will prepare signage encouraging people to use the nearby litter bin or to take the litter home for disposal/recycling.
- b. Internet Scam/Website Security: Some members had received emails on their bucklandbrewer.org.uk addresses that had supposedly come from Andrew Hewitt but was a scam. Luckily, the scam was spotted early enough, and no damage was done. It is possible that the hacking of the email addresses was due to the fact that Clystnet had reduced the level of firewall security following a complaint from the Clerk that he had been unable to access the calendar function. He has reported to Clystnet that it is unacceptable to have to offset functionality against security and asked members to be wary and to report any suspicious emails.
- c. Community Orchards Grant Scheme: The Clerk had submitted a claim for a grant of £300 which should be enough to purchase 8 to 10 apple trees and tree supports. If successful, the trees will be planted in the amenity field.

- d. Large hole at entrance to Barton Court: A large hole had appeared in the shared driveway into Barton Court from Barton Road. Keiran Stanbury, the local Highways Manager has been stopped the buildings works as the contractor was working unsafely and has instructed the Enforcement Officer to attend. The work is to supply cables for a new 3-phase transformer for the separate properties being developed at Barton Court, and the work will continue in the coming month
- e. Update re Coach and Horses: Since last week's meeting the Clerk had spoken to Martin Rich from Devon Communities Together who had advised him that, on further investigation, the activities of the consortium interested in acquiring the Coach and Horses were, in his opinion, of a purely commercial nature rather than a community bid, and therefore he could not offer them any further help or advice. As a result, Martin understood that the consortium was dropping its plans to apply for community asset status and Richard Hooper confirmed this. Martin repeated that he felt that the Parish Council was right not to try to take on the responsibility of bidding for and potentially managing the pub itself. David Watson reported that some interest was being shown on the Buckland Brewer Community Facebook page in bringing together a different team to buy and run the pub. Richard Hooper did not want to be involved with that potential scheme but it was suggested that they could be put in touch with Martin Rich or could ask the Parish Clerk for advice. Cllr. Phil Pennington said that when the Clinton Arms in Frithelstock applied for a change of use it was first turned down, but the change was approved on appeal.

262. Street Naming Application: To Consider and Approve a Request to Name the Development of 5 Dwellings to the West of Tower Hill as 'Horizon West': It was felt generally that the name Horizon West proposed by the developers for these properties did not have any relationship to either the history of the parish or to the locality. Jim Lowe proposed the name Edward Capern Close in honour of the postman/poet who delivered post in the village in the 1800s. This did not have the support of many members and it was suggested that the primary school should be asked to offer some alternatives. **David Watson will ask at a governors' meeting next week.**

263. Consultation: Planning White Paper Following advice from Cllr. Hicks that any comments from parish councils are unlikely to have any effect and bearing in mind that Torridge Council has not yet submitted its own response, it was agreed to make no comment.

264. Playing Field Maintenance, Report of Informal meeting with officers of PFA: The Clerk, Chair and Vice-Chair had attended an informal meeting with the Chair and Secretary of the Playing Field Association on 5th October. The PFA had appreciated the additional grant paid this year and it had been agreed that it would be recommended to both organisations that from 1st April 2021 the Parish Council takes responsibility for the grass cutting at the playing field in addition to providing an annual grant to the PFA to cover the cost of insurance. In total, this would amount to approximately £1,800 falling on the precept (or £1,500 more than the current budget for its annual grant). **This proposal was agreed unanimously.** The Clerk had spoken to the contractor who did the last cut at the playing field. He is keen to take on the work for both the playing field and amenity field and would be willing to offer a discounted price if he were offered both

fields. At present, the amenity field is being cut at no cost by Bob Wilson. Members agreed that the contractors offer could be reviewed at a later date if Bob was no longer able to continue cutting the amenity field. (Full notes of the meeting held on 5th October 2020 are at Appendix 2.) Jim Lowe proposed that the Parish Council's relationship with the Playing Field Association should be the same as that with the Community Shop and Village Hall, with a representative of the Parish Council sitting on the committee. Richard Hooper offered to undertake the role. **The PFA will be asked to consider the proposal and appoint Richard with effect from their AGM ON 25th November 2020.**

265. South Church Park

- a. Footpath redirection Nothing to report
- b. Gateway and drainage works Trevor Mills has not obtained a 3rd quote yet.

266. School Field Rental Agreement and Proposed Licence to Gain Access No response yet from the County Solicitor. The Clerk will chase up the Parish Council's solicitor and ask Cllr. Barry Parsons to take it up directly with the County Solicitor. David Watson will bring it up the school governors.

267. Forestry Consultation: No comments

268. Thornhillhead Mast: The Clerk had contacted Cellnex, the Spanish company that has taken over Arqiva. They have confirmed that the mast currently houses 3 antenna and 1 dish using 4G technology.

269. Members Reports:

Barbara Babb (i) asked if the 'no parking' sign requested for the chapel wall could be provided soon as the building work there seems to be coming to an end. **David Watson will try to get this organised.** (ii) Barbara also pointed out that the potholes near Higher Coombe had not yet been filled in. **The Clerk will report again.**

Andrew Hewitt asked Trevor Mills to deputise for him in laying the wreath at this year's memorial service as he would not be able to stand for long enough. The Clerk had prepared a cheque for £50.00 for the Royal British Legion and arranged for the wreath to be delivered to Andrew.

Richard Hooper said that he had received complaints about tractor movements through the village, and suggestions that they were exceeding the 20mph speed limit. It was agreed generally that tractor movements were an unavoidable part of country life and that it was unlikely that the large vehicles could travel at more than 15mph.

Jim Lowe (i) asked the Parish Council to write a letter to the Member of Parliament to seek a stop to the 10:00 pub closing time as it encourages binge drinking, more mingling on the streets and unnecessary hardship to business owners and their staff. **This was agreed unanimously. Jim Lowe will draft a letter to be sent by the Clerk to Geoffrey Cox, MP.** (ii) **Jim Lowe and Richard Hooper will be repainting the benches round the village green in the near future.**

Trevor Mills (i) reported that the road from Thorne Cross to Tythecott would be closed for 3 days next week. (ii) He also asked if the council had sufficient stocks of salt. **The Clerk will talk to the Snow Warden, George Heywood, and ask him to order more salt if necessary.**

David Watson (i) had attended the DALC AGM. A new board had been elected and it had been agreed that membership fees would increase by 2.9% next year. (ii) David said that a set of accounts for Youth Project 2018 will be available soon.

270. Planning

- a. Application: 1/0657/2020/FUL, East Hele, Roof over a livestock gathering area as part of Mid-Tier Countryside Stewardship Trevor Mills pointed out that works like this are helping to keep the rivers clean by avoiding some of the wash off. **The application was supported unanimously.**
- b. Application: 1/0845/2020/FUH, 12 Hillpark, Erection of a children's climbing frame in the rear garden of dwelling **The application was supported unanimously.**
- c. Decision: 1/0504/2020/FUL, Land to West of Tower Hill, Reserved matters application for 5 dwellings, pursuant to outline application 1/0784/2016/OUT (Variation of condition 1 of planning permission 1/0634/2018/REM) (Amended plans to include Plots 1 & 2) – Granted permission – noted
- d. Decision: 1/0505/2020/FUL, Land to West of Tower Hill, Outline application for 5 dwellings, including access and parking for 1 & 2 Bell Cottages and 1 & 2 Tower Hill (Affecting Public Right of Way)- (Variation of condition 3 of planning permission 1/0784/2016/OUT (Amended plans to include Plots 1 & 2) – Granted permission – noted
- e. Decision: 1/0513/2020/FUL, Thornebere, Thorne Farm, Proposed change of use of annexe to holiday let accommodation, including replacement lean-to – Granted permission – noted
- f. Decision: 1/0626/2020/FUL, The Beeches, Variation of condition 3 (relating to fencing and planting) of planning permission 1/0293/2020/FUL – Granted permission - noted

271. Accounts and Audit:

- a. Receipts and Payments to date 2020/21
 - i) Bank balances as at 30th September 2020 (£67,017.75):
 - (1) Parish Council Current Account was £16,515.69
 - (2) Thornhillhead Moor Account was £3,224.20
 - (3) Savings Account was £47,277.86

ii) Fund balances as at 30th September 2020 (£67,017.75):

- (1) General Account - £35,793.55
- (2) Thornhill Head Account - £31,224.20

iii) Payments due (£1,430.82 + VAT)

- (1) P G Blossie, September salary - £591.57 (including £98.70 PAYE and £75.97 re purchase of 2 irons and an ironing mat by way of grant to the Patchwork Group)
- (2) E.on, Electricity - £8.02 + VAT
- (3) Buckland Brewer Playing Field Association, Grant (insurance) - £781.23
- (4) Royal British Legion, Memorial Wreath - £50.00

iv) Receipts (£6,354.40)

- (1) Torridge Council, 2nd instalment of precept - £6,250.00
- (2) Field Rents - £104.40

- b. Budget Monitoring Report, Year to September 2020 The Clerk had distributed a budget monitoring report as at the end of the 2nd quarter of 2020/21 (see appendix 3), which was noted and **approved unanimously**.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9:55 pm

Dates of Future Meetings:

Parish Council, Wednesday 11th November 2020 (7:30pm, remotely via Zoom))

Signed as a true record:

Chairman: **Date:**

County Councillor Reports from Cllr. Barry Parsons

Holsworthy Rural – County Councillor Update

10 September 2020

Members/Officers,

One of our most valued assets locally is that of our tremendous Holsworthy Community Transport (HCT- Tel: 01409 259001). It has respect county-wide and I know just how much so many of us in our town of Holsworthy and surrounding parishes appreciate its services. Of late there has been lots of changes to ensure the service is up-and-running again and the Ring & Ride service re-started on 3 September.

The nature of the business says so much about where we live. Sarah and Jane who own 'Food on the Go' in The Square now give up their time to support as volunteers and I want to say a big thank you on behalf of us all. A very special thanks, too, to recently retired, Les Slade, who has been with HCT for many years. Les has helped so many and we wish him a very happy retirement. On a sad note, HCT has lost, recently, two members of the team – Jeremy Dickson and Keith Hunkin – volunteers who will be missed greatly and most fondly remembered. Our great thanks go out to all alongside; colleagues who make such wonderful provision possible.

I will, purposely, make this 'Update' brief as there is a particular message that I wish to share with you at this time. It comes not directly from me but from the Chief Executive at Devon County Council, Dr Phil Norrey, and, it reads, "Coronavirus is still a very real threat to us all. You may have heard England's Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Professor Jonathan Van Tam, describing the latest "big change" in coronavirus infections across the UK as a "great concern" and that he believes we are in for a "bumpy ride over the next few months" if people did not adhere more stringently to the social distancing rules.

Your health, safety and wellbeing, and that of your family and friends, remains our first priority and, with this rise in the incidents of COVID-19 across the country, it is absolutely vital that we do all we can to protect ourselves and our loved ones. We are also very alert to the fact that we have an ageing demographic in Devon and that older people can be particularly susceptible to the virus."

I relate very strongly to these sentiments and ask that we all remain especially vigilant in these testing times.

With every best wish, as always.

Barry

Dear Members and Officers,

I know that these figures below are in the public domain. For ease of reference and information please see the latest update below:

Coronavirus in the South West Peninsula

- 29 September to 4 October there were 539 laboratory confirmed cases in Devon. [53 in Torbay; 77 in Plymouth; 118 in Cornwall and c61,000 in England]

East Devon 41; Exeter 378; Mid Devon 15; North Devon 22; South Hams 14; Teignbridge 48; Torridge 9; West Devon 12. You can see that Torridge is well-placed by comparison.

Currently - confirmed cases per 100,000: Devon 67.2; Torbay 38.9; Plymouth 29.4; Cornwall 20.6; England 108. (However, if you take away incidences at Exeter University Devon's figures are much the same as elsewhere else in the peninsula).

- 31 January to 4 October there has been 2,241 confirmed cases in Devon and 218 deaths.

[Torbay 406 cases and 58 deaths; Plymouth 1,022 cases and 92 deaths; Cornwall 1,530 cases and 208 deaths; England 453,948 cases and 52,205 deaths]. Please Note: deaths only up to 25 September.

There were 3 deaths in the Peninsular (all in Plymouth) attributable to Coronavirus in the period 18 to 25 September. 215 recorded in England.

Please note that all deaths are not necessarily by Coronavirus, just that the person tested positive at some stage – at this time it is impossible to separate the cases without going back and scrutinising each death certificate. Later figures are markedly more accurate than earlier in the Pandemic.

Confirmed infection cases show a marked increase in Devon and smaller rises in Torbay and Plymouth. The Devon County Council figure includes a spate of positive cases at Exeter University (378), due to enhanced testing, making up some 70% of the Devon figure although there is no evidence as yet of wider community transmission.

With Autumn here and less people affected to date in the Peninsula, it does really highlight the importance of social distancing, hand hygiene and good local communication in keeping a potential second surge in check.

Still on health matters, I am delighted to see the commencement of the new recording system, 'MY CARE', which is the sharing of critical information digitally and the first programme in England to go live with a new comprehensive electronic patient record (EPR) system (provided by software experts, Epic) in both an acute hospital as well as in community-based health services. As a member of the NHS Sustainability and Transformation Partnership Digital Board I am thrilled to see this development coming to fruition. It is set to replace traditional paper/patient notes and mean that for the first time, every aspect of a person's care will be recorded in real time and available to many partners.

Things like upcoming appointments, change of appointments, patient results, and the requesting of direct communications with care team members should become so much more fluid and convenient. MY CARE is the first programme to go live with Epic and officers and partners of the RD&E Hospital are to be commended on their efforts over the past two and a half years to bring this project to fruition.

My thanks, too, to all staff at our local schools and to those supporting their local schools in ensuring as safe as possible a return to educational settings. The work done here has been phenomenal and my thanks, in particular, go to leaders associated with our schools who, despite the huge pressures of late have done brilliantly in looking after staff and getting our youngsters formally educated again.

The pandemic, I know, has caused much uncertainty but I would like to assure one and all that staff across so many agencies are working incredibly hard to look after our communities. A bit like the above with our schools, many alternative arrangements have been put in place for those youngsters needing to travel by bus to school, socially-distanced, of course. Because of the re-deployment of staff there will be some areas of work for the County Council which will not always be the priority and I would ask all residents to be mindful of the, seemingly, ever-changing scenarios currently confronting so many of our organisations.

Please stay safe and be mindful of 'washing hands, covering face, and keeping space'.

With every best wish, as always.

Barry

Notes of the informal meeting regarding playing field maintenance and the future relationship between the Buckland Brewer Playing Field Association and Buckland Brewer Parish Council.

Conducted via Zoom, Monday 5th October 2020, 8:30pm

Present: Patrick Blossie, Parish Clerk

Harvey Brown, Chair, BB PFA, Teresa Hector, Secretary BB PFA

Andrew Hewitt, Chair, BB PC, Trevor Mills, Vice-Chair, BB PC

It was acknowledged that it had been a difficult year, financially, for the Playing Field Association. The coronavirus epidemic had made it difficult to raise funds as events had to be cancelled. This was coupled with a year when the grass had grown faster than usual, requiring more cuts. Also, it was noted that the contractor who had been cutting the grass for most of the year did not have equipment that could cope with the longer and tougher grass. Some complaints had been received and the original contractor no longer wanted to continue cutting the grass. One cut had since been done another contractor (at the same price) and it was expected that a couple more cuts might be needed before the winter and cutting would probably restart in March or April 2021.

At the last parish council meeting it had been agreed that, in addition to the usual annual grant of £300, the parish council would meet the cost of this year's playing field insurance premium (£781.23). It had been suggested by Cllr Jim Lowe that the parish council should take responsibility for paying for both the insurance and grass cutting costs and that these should be added to the council's precept. This would allow the Playing Field Association to use most of its income from fund raising for the upkeep of the children's play area and for new projects.

It was also noted that the parish council had a generous offer from Cllr Bob Wilson to cut the amenity field (next to the village hall) at no charge. However, it was felt by all the attendees that, although this offer was very welcome, it was not known how long Bob, whose business interests would need to take priority for him, could sustain the offer. The contractor who had done the last cut at the playing field had spoken to the Parish Clerk and had offered not only to match the previous contractors prices for both fields, but to offer a discount if he were given the contract for both fields.

It was not thought appropriate to try to change the legal relationship between the Playing Field Association and the Parish Council.

Any change in arrangements or additional funding from the parish council would need to be agreed formally by a full meeting of the Parish Council.

It was agreed unanimously that it would be proposed to both parties that the Playing Field Association should continue to take responsibility for grass cutting until 31st March 2021 and that the grants recently awarded by the Parish Council would enable them to do this. From 1st April 2021 the Parish Council would budget to provide an annual grant of about £800, sufficient to cover the PFA insurance premium, and that it should pay directly for

grass cutting, budgeting for 15 cuts a year at £60 per cut (£900). In the meantime, Bob Wilson would be asked to continue to cut the amenity field until such time that it become too onerous for him to continue or the arrangement breaks down for any other reason. The Parish Council will then be in a position to negotiate the best deal that it can for all grass cutting. These suggestions will be presented to the Parish Council on 14th October 2020 and the Playing Field Association at its AGM on 25th November 2020.