

MINUTES OF THE BUCKLAND BREWER ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

HELD ON

WEDNESDAY, 24th JUNE 2015 AT 8:00PM AT

BUCKLAND BREWER VILLAGE HALL

Members Present: Mrs Barbara Babb, Mr George Heywood, Mr Jim Lowe, Mr Trevor Mills, Miss Sally Nicholls, Mrs Shirley Tilley and Mr David Watson.

Also in attendance 13 members of the public, Cllr. Barry Parsons (DCC), Cllr. Robin Juian (DCC) and PCSO John McGovern

Clerk: Patrick Blossie

1 Introduction and review of the year by the Chairman of the Parish Council Trevor Mills welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the guest speaker, Cllr. Barry Parsons, who is the DCC representative for the Holsworthy Rural Division and the Cabinet Member for Performance and Engagement. The growth of Hillpark had been a significant development this year. Trevor also highlighted that TDC had accepted all of Buckland Brewer's proposals in respect of the draft Local Plan and that this was now under consideration by the Planning Inspectorate. Although the Parish Council had objected to another wind farm application during the past 12 months, TDC had approved the plan. Trevor was pleased to announce that the Parish Council was now up to its full complement of 9 having recently co-opted Marie Douglas. Austerity cuts were continuing to have an impact. Although the Council was happy to continue to salt the roads, it had turned down requests to cut verges and fill pot-holes. He asked whether the proposed changes to the bus service for the village will eventually cut it off. A number of barn conversions had been presented for planning consultation, many of which had been unsuccessful, and he wondered whether TDC was having second thoughts about these. Trevor said that the biggest success this year had been the development of 8 social houses in Hillpark and the influx of new families (including 5 babies) as a result of the whole development. Trevor offered his thanks to Jim Lowe, who had opted not to stand for Chair of the Parish Council this year due to health reasons. He said that he was introducing a 'cabinet approach' to the new parish council with each councillor taking responsibility for a different aspect of the Council's work. This way parishioners would be able to go straight to the appropriate councillor with any issues. E-Planning was changing the way that meetings were being held. All meetings now needed to be held at the school where broadband was available, and there needed to be more extra meetings to meet the 21-day consultation deadline. Trevor closed by thanking the Clerk for his help and the Parish Councillors for their hard work throughout the year.

2 Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 28th May 2014: The minutes of the previous year's Annual Parish Meeting were confirmed and signed.

3 Annual Crime Report: PCSO John McGovern said that there were 11 crimes listed for the past year but that 9 of these related to historic incidents (from 2011/12) at the Velstone Care Home. The true figure for Buckland Brewer for the year was therefore just 2 crimes, making the area one of the lowest in a district that is itself a very low crime area. John said that some concerns had been expressed about the impact of the Atlantic Park development with places like Macdonald's leading

to more littering or possibly bad behaviour. He said that they were trying to tighten up on litter and that if any were found it should be handed to the police as evidence might be found that could lead to a prosecution. Two articles had been sent to Village Scene about Operation Jessica (relating to scams). John had recently been promoting Farmwatch, trying to get rural communities signed up to the Community Messaging Service. 28 farms were signed up so far and he would like 100 by the end of the year. He will be attending the Summer Fete and will continue to make regular visits to the shop. He had obtained £1,000 of funding for a Speedwatch camera and will be restarting the School Speedwatch in September. His team had attended 27 Action Days this year where crime prevention initiatives were promoted. John was proud to say that he had won the Community Officer of the Year Award and that his team had been put forward for a Neighbourhood Watch Award. George Heywood asked whether any progress had been made about a flock of sheep that had been attacked by dogs. John said that there had been some incidents with a mastiff at Parkham and another incident in Buckland Brewer. It was believed that the dog was known and details were being passed to the Dog Warden for enforcement.

4 Defibrillator Trevor Mills said that the Community Shop had offered to site a defibrillator on their decking, which was felt by most people to be the most suitable place for it. It might be possible to get about £700 towards the scheme from the TAP Fund, if it could be spent before 31st March 2016. The Clerk explained that the cost of a machine, heated box and electrical installation would cost £1,500 – £2,000 and there would be some ongoing revenue costs. He gave a short explanation of how they worked and that although they were meant to be essentially ‘fool-proof’ some training could and should be organised for those who wanted it. Trevor explained that the Parish Council was hoping that someone would come forward to take charge of the scheme and to raise the balance of the money needed. Jim Lowe said that the Parish Council might be able to contribute some more funds. Cllr, Robin Julian offered £1,000 towards the scheme from his Locality Budget. Shirley Tilley thanked him for generosity but felt that it was important that parishioners take ownership of the scheme themselves. Barbara Babb and Sally Nicholls agreed with her point of view. The Clerk pointed out that the TAP Fund Grant could be used for an alternative project. Cllr. Julian offered to match fund any monies that could be raised by the parish up to his earlier offer of £1,000. Trevor Mills asked for a show of hands among the parishioners and it was agreed by 11 votes with one abstention that a defibrillator ought to be purchased for the parish. Trevor asked for a fundraiser/organiser to come forward.

5 Guest Speaker: Cllr Barry Parsons, Cabinet Member, Devon County Council: Barry Parsons introduced himself, saying that he was previously the leader of TDC but now represents Holsworthy Rural as a Devon County Councillor. He said that this was a difficult time for the County and Districts. The County had to save a total of £212 million over the period from 2010 to 2017 and he wanted to give a clear message about where he stood on these cuts. He was especially concerned about cuts to the Highways budgets, especially the impact on rural roads. He said that years of underfunding the road network made it an “exponentially deteriorating asset”. There was a backlog of over £700 million of repair works needed that would take 12 years to complete. In the face of this he was not in favour of the proposed spending on HS2. He felt that there was not enough focus on preventative funding and he was due to attend a meeting in London next week to press the case for Devon’s road network. Barry also explained the Boundary Commission’s Review of Devon, saying that it was likely

that the new divisions would bring Buckland Brewer into the Holsworthy Rural Division that he represents.

5 Question and Answer Session: Cllr Parsons had asked for questions to be submitted to him in advance and made the following responses:

1. Why is it that the rural communities are suffering disproportionately in respect of the financial cuts imposed by Devon County Council?

RESPONSE: This is politics. Devon is a rural county and suffers in comparison to others. Under the Barnett formula Scotland gets £1,000 more per head (to keep Scotland within the UK). This needs to be attacked by MPs. Rural areas get 50% less in grant funding per head than urban areas and equality laws ought to be used to improve this.

2. It looks as if our bus service will drop from ten journeys a week to just two a week to Bideford and Barnstaple. Is Devon County Council trying to cut this village off?

RESPONSE: The subsidy per person on the 372 service is far in excess of the average. Over the past 12 years far more money has gone into Cornwall (£1,100 per head) than into Torridge (£89 per head) from Objectives I and II. Barry was hoping for more funding from Europe and felt that Torridge needed more support.

3. We have heard a lot of talk in recent months from the government regarding creating a number of northern power houses in terms of local government. HS2 seems a world a way to the state of our local trains, which are not much better than cattle trucks and over 40 years old. Are we going to be left behind again in Devon?

RESPONSE: Devon is working with Somerset and the Department of Transport to improve services in Devon. Barry had met with the Police Commissioner, Tony Hogg, South West councils, The Chair of the Local Government Association to suggest ways that the different organisations could work together. Unfortunately, Cornwall had little interest in working jointly. However, ideas are being put forward through the Devon Strategic Partnership.

4. We see that Devon County Council is adjusting and reducing its County Council Wards. It even might result in you becoming our County Councillor. Would you agree that the 1972 Local Government Act and subsequent reorganisation is dead and finished and no longer fit for purpose? Should we looking at creating more single tier authorities to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

RESPONSE: Barry felt that he had answered this question earlier in his explanation of the impact of the Boundary Commission's Review.

5. When will all the Devon County Councillor employees sing from the same hymn sheet, to be in harmony with the tax payers?

For example an issue we've had for some years now has been brought to the DCC's attention

- through the length's-man
- through a contractor
- at least one of their up-line
- and recently for the second time, the Torrington based Highways related man - Mr Simon Philips

who has just provided us with a map showing us that the easement in question has been established since the mid 1980's. In reality the map shows the well-established easements no-one's disputing but not two that have been added in later years, yet the men out on the roads service them!

Perhaps the conductor should hear the singers from each section, and write a score for everyone to appreciate.

RESPONSE: Barry said that he did not have sufficient knowledge to answer this fully but appreciated the concept of the question. He recognised the need to be consistent, open and transparent. He felt that Devon was doing well generally in that it was one of only two shire counties recognized as 'Open Data' champions.

6 Open Forum: Beverley Cheeseman recognized the need for the 372 bus service to be reduced but said that the bus now being used by the new provider is disgraceful. There had been many accidents in the past few weeks. Most users are elderly and they cannot get their trolleys and mobility aids on board. One elderly man had recently fallen from the bus and now has a thrombosis. The aisle is only 8" wide. Beverley said the bus is "not fit for purpose". The bus can only carry 15 people and no shopping. Barry Parsons suggested that she get in touch with Damien Jones at DCC. He was concerned that the safety issues must be addressed and asked to be kept involved. Audrey Hollins also said that she'd had a similar experience with the bus and had not been able to get on to it when she had just come home from hospital. Barbara Babb said that she had already been in touch with DCC who had agreed that it was unacceptable and would take it up with the contractor. Robin Julian asked to be copied in to any emails.

George Heywood suggested to Barry Parsons that he should get the decision makers from London to visit the area and actually drive the roads; a view that was endorsed by Brenda Mills. Barry Parsons explained that it was difficult to get people out of their powerhouses but that he had spoken to David Cameron about it personally. He said that he felt more investment should be directed at wave power in the Taw/Torridge estuary to generate additional revenue for the area. Sally Nicholls felt that higher car taxes could be used to generate more funds for road maintenance.

Trevor Mills thanked Barry Parsons for his contribution and also the parishioners who had come and taken part.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9:10 pm

Chairman: **Date:**